

Abstracts

Dominic Nyhuis

Are more votes more democratic? Negative effects of the complexity of electoral rules on the composition of the electorate

This contribution considers the effects of electoral rules' complexity on the socio-demographic composition of the electorate. It investigates the reform of the Hessian local electoral system that was introduced in 1999 to assess outcomes while keeping other conditions constant. The core of the reform introduced the possibility to cast one vote for each seat on the local councils.

The analysis focuses on the effect of the reform on turnout and the percentage of invalid ballots. The results show that turnout has disproportionately decreased in disadvantaged districts while the percentage of invalid ballots has disproportionately increased. There is thus a systematic effect of the reform on the composition of the electorate. The article closes with a recommendation for a simplification of the Hessian electoral law.

Heiner Meulemann

From Value-Claims to the Acknowledgement of Societal Constraints

The development of political value attitudes among former German high school student at the age of 16, 30, 43, and 56 between 1969 and 2010

The development of political value attitudes between youth and late mid-life is followed up in a cohort of 1.301 former German high school students. It is examined whether value claims and the acknowledgement of societal claims depend upon starting conditions and the political socialization at age 16 as well as upon their respective former measurements and occupational experiences up to age 30, 43 and 56. The stability of value claims is lower than that of the acknowledgement of societal constraints; the former is constant, the latter increases. The negative impact of value claims on the acknowledgement decreases, and the negative impact of the acknowledgement of societal constraints increases. The impact of occupational experiences upon both sides decreases.

Moritz Küpper

Shadow Cabinets in German Politics

What do shadow cabinets look like in German politics? And finally: Are they a success-story? Starting in 1961, in twelve campaigns the chancellor candidate nominated a shadow cabinet, which isn't appropriate in the political system. The goal has been to present an alternative to government, but it was also used to attract the media and draw attention, mainly by nominating political late comers or experts from outside. In some cases, the – in average 15 persons – were used to integrate the own party. Looking at the track record, it can be pointed out, that in two of the overall twelve attempts (four campaigns tried without a team) the candidate with his team could be put in power. Not an outstanding record, but on the other hand, it had been the only two cases, in which the opposite could get into power. Whether the shadow cabinets have been the determinant factor can't although be finally answered.