

Abstracts

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The power of rankings? International rankings of performance indicators in the german policy process

Rankings seem to be ubiquitous and also International Organizations use them as policy-instruments to influence national policies. Especially a rather new type of rankings based on complex indicators do have the potential to gain impact on national policies. Yet, an analysis of the policy processes around the first PISA study and the World Health Report 2000 in Germany show that specific aspects of national policy processes like actors and their interests or the point of time in election cycles and policy reform cycles mainly influence the reaction to an international ranking. Characteristics of rankings can make a difference but are subsequent to those aspects of the national policy process. Hence, we suggest to understand rankings analytically rather as external interferences in national discourses than as shocks.

Thomas Kestler

Dilemmas of democracy: reflections on the relationship between representation and participation

The concepts of representation and participation reflect fundamental dilemmas and ambivalences of liberal democracies. A systematic, typological analysis reveals a complementary relationship between these seemingly irreconcilable concepts. Different modes of representation correspond to different modes of participation. This relationship can be modeled along a continuum between two poles marked by the representational roles of delegate (which stands for identity and special interests) and trustee (which stands for difference and the common good). Building on Milbrath, the corresponding types of participants can be described as (active, issue oriented) gladiators and (largely passive, person-oriented) spectators. Representational relationships therefore acquire different forms which apply to different issues or targets. Democracy cannot be defined exclusively by one or the other mode. Instead, a functioning democracy is characterized by diversity and reciprocal adaptation of representational relationships.

Detlef Sack

Parliaments of Crafts – Institutional Rules, Social Structure and Representation in North Rhine-Westphalia 1989-2011

Political science is chronically not well informed about the German economic chambers which are a crucial political collective actor. As part of the functional self-government in the German political system the economic chambers are equipped with obligatory membership for the enterprises. They are internally organized in a democratic structure. The plenary meetings which represent the different regional corporate groups are the central decision-making bodies. A study on the institutional and social structure of seven chambers of craft in North Rhine-Westphalia between 1989 and 2011 (N=1.798) reveals both the representativeness of these decision-making bodies and the social change of the members. Regarding the first, biases with respect to the population of the companies to be represented adequately are identified. In view of the social structure of these parliaments of crafts it can be shown that the age of entry of the members decreases slightly from about 53 to 52 years. We see also an increase of the share of women from 4,8% to 9,7%. The average share of persons with master craftsman's diploma and university degree did not change within the last twenty years (70%). The study reveals notable differences between the chambers. These are to be explained by the size of the organization, the regional population density, and the policy of the organizations.