

Seminar

Cooperation in Networks: Political Parties and Interest Groups in EU Policy-Making in Germany

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Abstract

In order to realize their political goals, political actors cooperate with others to create awareness, convince them of a certain position or to organize formal and informal support. In this paper, co-authored with Sebastian Haunss (Universität Bremen), we describe and explain such cooperative behavior between parliamentarians of the Bundestag within and across political parties and institutions as well as with different types of interest groups. Analytically we treat parties as networks to see how political information flows within and between institutions and actors. In a first step we describe these information flows to discuss whom parliamentarians rely upon as cooperation partners in order to advance their political goals. In a further step we identify clusters of parliamentarians and describe how cooperation patterns vary between subsets of parliamentarians. Finally, we test the explanatory power of individual attributes, institutional positions and (shared) political ideas and interests to account for patterns of cooperation we identified in the information networks entertained by German parliamentarians in European Union (EU) policy-making. For our empirical analyses we rely on original survey data collected in 2009 which we analyze with quantitative network analytical tools, cluster analyses, and exponential random graph models.