

Abstracts

Peter Becker

Subsidiarity checks in the EU – legal or political tool?

The Lisbon Treaty strengthened the role of national parliaments in European Union's political system. The national parliaments gained influence especially with the new instrument of subsidiarity scrutiny by the so-called early warning mechanism. Despite high obstacles, in summer 2012 national parliaments could for the first time successfully advance a subsidiarity objection and thus enforce a stop to an European legislative project. However, the new procedure is still in the testing phase and the possibilities and limits of the new mechanism are still to be explored. On the one hand the subsidiarity check opens new political participation and design channels for national parliamentarians. On the other hand there is a risk to devalue the early warning mechanism by politically exploiting and instrumentalizing the new mechanism along national interests.

Marlen Niederberger, Verena Keierleber and Isabel Schneider

Acquirement of competence and formation of opinion in Citizen's Conferences

The article deals with the evaluation of the outcome of political participation processes, which means with long-term learning results and effects on the participating citizens. In order to figure this out, we collected data in a standardized inquiry in the context of the evaluation of the "Dialogue with Citizens Future Technologies", supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Among the diverse effects on the participating citizens in the current state of research two dimensions can be detected: the acquirement of competence and the formation respectively the shift of opinion. Moreover, it is analyzed to what extent differences among groups, for example among sex, age and education, are striking.

The results show effects on both dimensions: Through their participation citizens acquire knowledge, their interest increases and their opinions shift. Thus it is confirmed that participation processes are not only about political participation in decision-making.

Nadine Meidert and Kerstin Nebel

Abortion regulation as morality policy. Attitudes of society and political actors in Germany. A comparative longitudinal analysis

In the research field of morality policies, the regulation of abortion has been proven to be highly controversial both in politics and society. Objective of our research is, on the one hand, to identify the relevant actors in the political discourse. On the other hand, the predictive power of different determinants of attitudes towards abortion is tested. Thus, we enter into the question if attitudes on the individual level are reflected in the political actors' reasoning. Furthermore, we investigate if policy change involves attitudinal change in the society. For the time frame between 1974 and 2009, both content analyses on the policy level based on parliamentary documents and analyses of individual data based on the ALLBUS data set are conducted. We employ a qualitative-quantitative method mix. The results show that there are coalitions in the political arena and that both politics and society discriminate between different reasons evaluating abortions. Thus abortions due to medical and criminological reasons are rather supported than abortions due to female self-fulfillment.