

Institutionalization and De-Institutionalization of Political Parties in Young and Established Democracies

Panel Chairs

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Abstract

In many young and established democracies, trust in political parties and their linkage function towards the electorate is at historic lows, and once-dominant parties are being pushed aside by different types of newcomers. The papers of this panel explore the processes of institutionalization and de-institutionalization of new and/or established parties in democracies from empirical and theoretical as well as conceptual standpoints.

In international political party research, there is little consensus on how the institutionalization of political parties should be theoretically and conceptually defined, reconstructed, operationalized, and measured. Nevertheless, a multidimensional approach is gaining increasing traction, which, despite the field's diversity, can be summarized in three key components: objective, internal party and external party aspects. Objective aspects comprise indicators such as the age of the party, number of members, electoral success, and parliamentary strength. Internal party aspects include internal organizational behavior and attitudes, material and human resources, the routinization of decision-making processes, and value infusion. Lastly, external party aspects consider the perception as a relevant actor by third parties, as well as societal embeddedness.

Paper proposals should follow the outlined multidimensional understanding of political party institutionalization and examine objective, internal and / or external party factors influencing (de-) institutionalization.

Research questions that could be addressed are:

- How can the institutionalization of political parties be theoretically conceptualized, operationalized, and empirically depicted?
- Which regional particularities deserve consideration and how can regional limitations be overcome?
- Which aspects of party-institutionalization matter for a party's 'success'?
- Which factors and processes allow a political party to grow into an institutionalized "player" or lead to their demise?
- What role do contextual factors (e.g. type of democracy, transition status, regionally differing conflict line developments, electoral system, party financing, party in opposition vs. party in government) play in the institutionalization of political parties?

- In what ways do (new) populist, far right and far left parties electorally benefit from the de-institutionalization of an established once-dominant party and its perceived lack of linkage?

We welcome different approaches and methodologies, including conceptual, comparative and case study analyses as well as the employment of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Paper proposals should include an abstract (max 500 words) and 3-8 keywords. Proposals should be sent to the Panel Chairs, kristina.weissenbach@uni-due.de and ivanv@email.gwu.edu, by February 12. The Panel and Paper proposals will be submitted collectively by the Panel Chairs by February 15. Presenters and Authors of Papers should have or create a MyECPR account.