

## Laudation for Nir Kosti, winner of the 2022 Rudolf Wildenmann Prize

The transformation of the state is one of the central themes of enquiry in political science. Our understanding of the change of regimes, of political cleavage structures, of policy processes or, in IR terms, the power of the state in a multilateral world has significantly progressed since the establishment of political science as a discipline. The 2022 Wildenmann Prize Winner Nir Kosti's paper sheds light on one specific aspect of these state transformations: the change in the regulatory discretion of the executive.

In his paper, Conceptualization and Measurement of the Regulatory Discretion: Text Analysis of 120 Years of British Legislation, Nir Kosti, a PhD candidate at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, seeks to measure the variation of regulatory discretion in the British legislation from 1900 to 2020. In distinguishing between delegation, content and procedure of regulatory discretion, Kosti first identifies provisions delegating regulatory powers to governments and examines then the extent to which the exercise of regulatory power is constrained. Based on a Natural Language Processing (NLP) methodology, his findings show the rise of a new regulatory state in Britain and the replacement of the so-called "UK club government" identified by Michal Moran. Hence, while after World War II and until the 1970s, the number of delegations was relatively low, the author convincingly illustrates that the number

of permissive delegations almost doubled until the 2000s. From the 2010s onwards, however, the increase significantly dropped. Kosti shows that although discretion has been constrained, primarily through regulatory content, the inclusion of provisions about what regulations may do rather than what regulations must do reveals the executive attempt to maintain high levels of discretion.

The jury particularly appreciated the methodological rigor in this paper as well as the systematic presentation of the results. While based on a single case study – the UK – Nir Kosti analysed over 120 years of variance in regulatory discretion of the executive, offering promising insights, which allow for future comparative research designs.

The study opens important questions which will have further repercussions for comparative political science on the transformation of the regulatory state. Which factors explain the increase of regulatory discretion? Is this increase linked to specific political cleavages, governance paradigms, economic situations, veto players or more generally power constellations? And finally, if regulatory discretion is, as Nir Kosti shows in the article, mostly linked to executive power, what degree of regulatory discretion do agencies indeed have?

## Laudation for Angelos Angelou, honourable mention

The jury has decided to award a honourable mention to Angelos Angelou's paper on Purposeful learning from crises: the European Commission in times of financial volatility. In his study on what drives crisis-induced learning at the meso-level, Angelou concentrates on the reasons that lead bureaucracies to pick specific lessons from crises while ignoring others, by focusing on the European

Commission's experience with financial crisis-management. The jury was particularly impressed by the carefully formulated and well-executed hypotheses on a timely and important topic.

### SABINE SAURUGGER

Chair, on behalf of the Rudolf  
Wildenmann Prize Jury

European Consortium for Political Research

