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| Title of Workshop: | Analyzing Organization in Parliaments: Causes and Consequences |
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| Outline of topic: | <p>Parliaments are present throughout the world and play a central role in almost all political systems. They engage in a wide variety of tasks including linking citizens to the government, executive oversight, and policy making. However, even if extensive powers are formally granted, parliaments run the risk of being wholly ineffective in their operation. How parliaments organize determines in large part their actual influence <i>vis à-vis</i> the executive.</p> <p>There is a large variation in how parliaments choose to organize themselves. Despite being elected equally, after each election a process of differentiation among members is initiated. Conceptually, this process of differentiation can be thought of as <i>legislative organization</i> – a process by which “resources and parliamentary rights [are assigned] to individual legislators or groups of legislators” (Krehbiel, 1992: 2).</p> <p>Numerous parliamentary resources and positions are distributed in this process. Alongside the parliamentary party group, parliamentary committees are, almost without exception, the basis for this internal organization of parliaments. These functional sub-groups, consisting of a subset of legislators who deal with a specific task, are the prime organizational structure for the preparation of plenary sessions and documents and provide a focal point for research on parliamentary activity. Research on these internal structures and the issue of ‘who gets what’ has, for a long period, almost exclusively focused on the U.S. Congress.</p> <p>While the assignment of parliamentary positions and resources in U.S. legislatures, especially with regard to committees, has been extensively studied, how the variation in internal organizational structures and resource allocation affects the daily operations in other remains understudied. Understanding which factors explain this process of power differentiation within parliaments and what it means for the individual legislator and the policy-making process as a whole is of fundamental importance and deserves further scholarly attention. Although research on parliaments outside of the U.S. has gained a lot of momentum in recent years, this research is highly, arguably overly-, influenced by congressional research. First attempts have been made to formulate alternative perspectives and to go ‘beyond’ the congressional theories. Rather than directly transferring the assumptions and predictions of the congressional theories scholars have started to take into consideration the institutional background of parliaments outside the U.S., like the strong standing of parliamentary party groups, the case-specific political setting and the consequences of coalition government. This approach has shown clear merit. The proposed workshop intends to bring together interested scholars to improve our insight into how legislative work is organized within various European parliaments and across the world. How do internal structures, such as committee systems, vary and how have they evolved, both in terms of design and</p> |

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| | <p>assignment procedure? European scholarship is in a particularly suited position concerning the advancement of our understanding of the internal organization of parliaments. The variation of institutional arrangements of both the long-standing Western European parliaments as well as the new institutions of the European Union and Central and Eastern Europe which differ with regard to their electoral systems, political culture and government structure provide excellent ground for empirical scrutiny and the development of a more realistic theoretical model. The workshop will provide a unique setting for pooling these insights.</p> |
| Relation to existing research | <p>The comparative research on committees, and, more recently, committee membership allocation, is guided to a great extent by concepts derived from congressional theories of legislative organization, usually labeled distributional, informational and partisan theories. The focus on legislative committees is not surprising given that these are a significant structural feature of legislatures' internal organization (Longley & Davidson, 1998) which fulfill a number of important functions with regard to policy-making, housekeeping and monitoring the executive. The importance of a well-functioning committee system for a legislature has long been acknowledged in political science research (see e.g. LaPalombara, 1974).</p> <p>Over the last fifteen years an impressive amount of empirical research on the topic has been produced. The European Parliament, whose committee system is "one of the most distinctive and developed features of the legislature" (Settembri & Neuhold, 2009: 130) is by now relatively well-researched with numerous studies published on the assignment of individual committee members (Bowler & Farrell, 1995; Whitaker, 2001, 2005; McElroy, 2006; Yordanova, 2009, 2011). National legislatures of parliamentary systems did not undergo the same systematic analyses for a long period of time. Recently a number of studies on the committee assignment issue (Stratmann & Baur, 2002; Ciftci, Forrest, & Tekin, 2008; Hansen, 2010, 2011; Battle, 2011; Fujimura, 2012; Raymond & Holt, 2013; Mickler, 2013) and formal structures (Mattson & Strøm, 1995; Martin & Vanberg, 2011; Martin, 2011) were conducted. These studies have shown great variation in structural features and assignment patterns across and within systems but the theoretical implications of the studies has been inconclusive.</p> <p>Apart from committee membership, our understanding with regard to other differentiations and roles of legislators lags even further behind. With initial studies with regard to the selection of party leaders (Cross & Blais, 2012), committee chairs (Santos & Renno, 2004) and rapporteurs (Kaeding, 2004; see also Yoshinaka, McElroy, & Bowler, 2010) there is considerable room for further scientific scrutiny.</p> <p>While the concepts derived from the congressional theories proved to be somewhat helpful to understand the process of legislative organization there is agreement among scholars that the study of the internal organization of parliaments needs to evolve from drawing too heavily on the congressional literature (see e.g. Yordanova, 2011; Hansen, 2011). More comparative research is needed in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of legislative organization which take into account cross-national variation in political culture and rules.</p> |
| Likely participants: | <p>We are aware of a considerable number of researchers currently working on this topic and are confident that many more scholars remain to be identified. Research on parliamentary organization is a growing subfield in political research (recent Joint Sessions Workshops organized by the Standing Group on Parliaments attracted between 40 and 85 applications each time). The Standing Group on Parliaments supports this application.</p> |

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| | <p>Our aim would be to bring together established and emerging scholars working on committees and legislative organization. Apart from scholars associated with the Standing Group on Parliaments, likely participants include members from the ECPR standing group on “Political Parties” and collaborators of various comparative research projects. We are confident that the workshop will attract scholars interested in the wider fields of legislative studies, parties and comparative politics, in a variety of legislatures (the European Parliament, national and sub-national legislatures). The topic is sufficiently broad and open in order to insure contributions with regard to all facets of legislative organization, from all parts of Europe and beyond.</p> <p>Achieving a geographical and gender balance will be very important to us.</p> |
| Type of Papers: | <p>We seek papers that improve our insight into how work is organized within parliaments and how functions and resources are distributed between parliamentarians. This workshop invites papers which fall into any of the following thematic categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What are the internal organizational structures (committees, intra-party groups) available within parliaments? What formal power do these groups possess and how can the variation across and within legislatures be explained? How have these changed over time? 2) How are the hierarchical and functional differentiations among members formally assigned? What factors account for the allocation of particular positions to members across and within legislatures? 3) Once functionally differentiated, how are interactions between individual legislators or groups of legislators and other groups structured? How does the position influence the work of the members; what are relations between the members and their respective parliamentary groups? <p>We are interested in papers that theorize these processes of legislative organization and/or empirically study the processes with regard to a range of situations and positions. We specifically encourage scholars to submit contributions which go beyond the congressional theories of legislative organization. We welcome both comparative analyses and case studies from a wide range of methods.</p> |
| Biographical note: | <p>Shane Martin (PhD, Dublin City University, 2002) is Reader in Comparative Politics at the University of Leicester, UK. His research focuses on the internal structures of legislatures and executive oversight. Recent research by him has appeared in the <i>British Journal of Political Science</i>, <i>Comparative Political Studies</i>, <i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i>, <i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>, <i>Political Studies</i>, <i>West European Politics</i>, and <i>Irish Political Studies</i>. He is co-editor (with Kaare Strøm and Thomas Saalfeld) of the <i>Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies</i> (Oxford University Press 2014). He was founding Co-Convenor of the ECPR Standing Group on Parliaments and was founding Co-Director of the European Summer School on Parliaments.</p> <p>Tim Alexander Mickler is currently completing his PhD at the Institute of Political Science at Leiden University, the Netherlands, under the supervision of Professor Dr. Rudy Andeweg. His research project deals with the selection criteria and reporting requirements of committee members in the Dutch Tweede Kamer, the German Bundestag and the Irish Dáil Éireann. He has published in <i>German Politics</i> on committee assignments of the German Bundestag.</p> |
| Funding: | <p>Some funding is available to offset the travel costs of those for whom participation would otherwise be difficult (please contact the organizers directly if you need to be considered) and to prepare the output from the workshop for publication.</p> |

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| <p>Literature:</p> | <p>Battle, M. (2011). Second-Class Representatives or Work Horses? Committee Assignments and Electoral Incentives in the Scottish Parliament. <i>Parliamentary Affairs</i>, 64 (3), 494 – 512.</p> <p>Bowler, S., & Farrell, D. M. (1995). The Organization of the European Parliament: Committees <i>British Journal of Political Science</i>, 25(2), 219-243.</p> <p>Ciftci, S., Forrest, W., & Tekin, Y. (2008). Committee Assignments in a Nascent Party System: The Case of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. <i>International Political Science Review</i>, 29(3), 303–324.</p> <p>Cross, W., & Blais, A. (2012). Who selects the party leader? <i>Party Politics</i>, 18(2), 127-150.</p> <p>Fujimura, N. (2012). Electoral incentives, party discipline, and legislative organization: manipulating legislative committees to win elections and maintain party unity. <i>European Political Science Review</i>, 4(2), 147-175.</p> <p>Gamm, G., & Huber, J. D. (2002). Legislatures as political institutions: Beyond the contemporary Congress. In I. Katznelson & H. V. Milner (Eds.), <i>Political Science: State of the Discipline</i> (Vol. 3). New York / London: W.W. Norton & Company.</p> <p>Hansen, M. E. (2010). Committee Assignment Politics in the Danish Folketing. <i>Scandinavian Political Studies</i>, 33(4), 381–401.</p> <p>Hansen, M. E. (2011). A Random Process? Committee Assignments in Dáil Éireann. <i>Irish Political Studies</i>, 26(3), 345-360.</p> <p>Kaeding, M. (2004). Rapporteurship Allocation in the European Parliament: Information or Distribution? <i>European Union Politics</i>, 5(3), 353–371. doi: 10.1177/1465116504045157</p> <p>Krehbiel, K. (1992). <i>Information and Legislative Organization</i>. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.</p> <p>LaPalombara, J. (1974). <i>Politics within Nations</i>. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.</p> <p>Longley, L. D., & Davidson, R. H. (1998). Parliamentary committees: Changing perspectives on changing institutions. <i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>, 4(1), 1-20.</p> <p>Martin, S. (2011). Electoral Institutions, the Personal Vote, and Legislative Organization. <i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i>, 36(3), 339-361.</p> <p>Mattson, I., & Strøm, K. (1995). Parliamentary Committees. In H. Döring (Ed.), <i>Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe</i> (pp. 249-308). Mannheim: MZES.</p> <p>McElroy, G. (2006). Committee Representation in the European Parliament. <i>European Union Politics</i>, 7(1), 5-29.</p> <p>Mickler, T. A. (2013). Standing Committee Assignments in the German Bundestag - Who Gets What in Within-Party Negotiations. <i>German Politics</i>, 22(4).</p> <p>Nelson, G. (1974). Assessing the Congressional Committee System: Contributions from a Comparative Perspective. <i>The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>, 411, 120-132.</p> <p>Raymond, C., & Holt, J. (2013). Due North? Do American Theories of Legislative Committees Apply to Canada? <i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>.</p> <p>Santos, F., & Renno, L. (2004). The Selection of Committee Leadership in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. <i>Journal of Legislative Studies</i>, 10(1), 50-70.</p> <p>Settembri, P., & Neuhold, C. (2009). Achieving Consensus Through Committees: Does the European Parliament Manage? <i>Journal of Common Market Studies</i>, 47(1), 127-151.</p> |
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| | <p>Stratmann, T., & Baur, M. (2002). Plurality rule, Proportional Representation, and the German Bundestag: How Incentives to Pork-Barrel Differ Across Electoral Systems. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, 46(3), 506-514.</p> <p>Whitaker, R. (2001). Party Control in a Committee-Based Legislature? The Case of the European Parliament. <i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>, 7(4), 63-88.</p> <p>Whitaker, R. (2005). National Parties in the European Parliament. An Influence in the Committee System? <i>European Union Politics</i>, 6(1), 5-28.</p> <p>Yordanova, N. (2009). The Rationale behind Committee Assignment in the European Parliament: Distributive, Informational and Partisan Perspectives. <i>European Union Politics</i>, 10(2), 253-280.</p> <p>Yordanova, N. (2011). The European Parliament: In need of a theory. <i>European Union Politics</i>, 12(4), 597-617.</p> <p>Yoshinaka, A., McElroy, G., & Bowler, S. (2010). The Appointment of Rapporteurs in the European Parliament. <i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i>, 35, 457-486.</p> |
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