

Abstracts

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Attributes of different ministries from the politician's perspective

One central question of democracy research is that of government formation. During the latter, parties mainly bargain over the allocation of ministries as well as future policy. Coalition theory oftentimes applies a one-dimensional, purely office-oriented perspective on ministries by disregarding their impact on policy outputs. In order to alleviate this problem, our contribution investigates which attributes politicians typically associate with which portfolios, based on a survey of German state politicians.

Our results show that there are key portfolios which are evaluated as highly influential by politicians regarding various attributes. At the same time, the evaluation of different portfolios clearly varies depending on the specific attribute. Furthermore, there are pronounced differences between parties. These results will aid a more differentiated interpretation of government formation in the German states as they allow for inferences from the allocation of particular ministries to the parties' motivations.

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Encouraging political participation by playing simulation games?

Characteristics of simulation games as didactical-methodical arrangements for action-oriented learning

Due to profound transformation processes concerning the political participation of young people political education is confronted with at least three challenges. Firstly, adolescents have to be enabled to (further) develop their skills required for participating in the political process of decision-making and the formation of objectives. Secondly, political education aims at generating the disposition for participation and mobilizing especially young people for political questions and problems. Given the rapid increase of new forms of civic participation, political education, thirdly, has to enable citizens to identify, assess and use existing chan-

nels of participation according to their interests and objectives. Due to their central characteristics simulation games are didactical-methodical teaching and learning arrangements eminently suitable to foster these three aspects of participation. Because of their multidimensional methodical design they allow realistic test actions that demand changes of perspectives and roles and, for their immanent recipient and problem orientation, trigger a sustainable learning effect.

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Public support for reforms and its stability in times of the Euro crisis – an experimental study on the influence of counter-arguments

In democratic systems, public support for reforms is an important but unstable element. In this study we use an experimental design implemented in a representative online survey to analyze the influence of two arguments on the stability of public support for reforms in Germany, which may overcome the Euro crisis. Both arguments – the first on disparities in the common currency area, and the second on fairness – are prevalent in the public discourse and speak against reform making in Germany. Our results provide evidence that public support in Germany decreases significantly when respondents are confronted with fairness. This effect is especially distinct for women as well as individuals with low income.