Parliament Austria

Programme

Day of Parliamentary Research

20 June 2024

Schedule and Overview

08:15 am   **Doors open and coffee**

📍 Elise Richter | Lokal 2

09:15 am   **Welcome by Wolfgang Sobotka** (President of the National Council)
Introduction

📍 Elise Richter | Lokal 2

09:30 am   **Keynote speech: What are parliaments for and how do they perform?**

Emma Crewe (SOAS University of London)

📍 Elise Richter | Lokal 2

10:00 am	**Response to keynote speech**
	Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik (University of Vienna)
	📍 Elise Richter | Lokal 2
10:15 am	**Discussion with Emma Crewe and Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik**
	Moderator: Christoph Konrath (Parliamentary Administration)
	📍 Elise Richter | Lokal 2
10:35 am	**Coffee break**

11:00 am	**Panel I: How do parliaments strengthen and/or undermine democratic resilience?**
	Discussant: Sven T. Siefken
	(Federal University of Applied Administrative Sciences, Berlin)
	📍 Elise Richter | Lokal 2

Presentations:

Wartime parliament in operation: Lessons learned from Ukrainian democracy

Stanislav Ivasyk

(USAID RADA Next Generation Program; National University of „Kyiv-Mohyla Academy")

The concept of tailor-made laws and legislative backsliding in Central-Eastern Europe

Rebeka Kiss (University of Public Service, Budapest)

Parliaments' role in strengthening democratic resilience

Cristina Leston-Bandeira (University of Leeds)

Parliaments as an example of "generative artificial intelligence": The new parliamentary encyclopaedia

Giovanni Rizzoni (Italian Chamber of deputies Research Service; University of Rome)

11:00 am

Panel II: What do plenary debates tell us about power relations and democratic culture?

Discussant: Katrin Praprotnik (University of Graz)

📍 Theophil Hansen | Lokal 3

Presentations:

What parliamentary rhetoric tells us about changing democratic culture

Karin Bischof (University for Continuing Education Krems),

Marion Löffler (University of Vienna)

Words of power. A quantitative analysis of speeches of the Austrian National Council and their linguistic change on a temporal, geographical and political level

Albert Erik Gruber (University of Vienna)

Decoding discourse: Gender dynamics in German Bundestag debates (1949–2021)

Teresa Hailer (Heidelberg University)

Speech and spatial dynamics in the Austrian Parliament: The influence of seating row on speaking time and sentiment of members of the National Council

Nada Ragheb, Maria Schreiner, Julia Leitner (University of Innsbruck)

12:15 pm

Lunch break

📍 Säulenhalle

01:15 pm **Panel III: New ways of understanding and supporting (pre-)parliamentary decision-making processes?**

Discussant: Cristina Leston-Bandeira (University of Leeds)

📍 Elise Richter | Lokal 2

Presentations:

Predicting tax treaty formation using machine learning: Implications for parliamentary practice

Dmitry Erokhin (International Institute for Applied System Analysis, IIASA)

Helping parliaments perform: The impact of differences within parliamentary staff on the agenda setting of standing committees

Jeroen S. Kerseboom (Research Department at the Netherlands House of Representatives; Tilburg University)

Narratives of election promises in Austria

Katrin Praprotnik (University of Graz),

Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik (University of Vienna)

Cartography of the legislative process in Germany

Sven T. Siefken (Federal University of Applied Administrative Sciences), Philipp Cartier, Frederik Kampe, Jule Helene Leinpinsel (all Gestaltungs-zentrale Politik e. V.), Kevin Settles (Institute for Parliamentary Research, Berlin)

01:15 pm

Panel IV: How do MPs navigate between various kinds of pressure (public, party, voters)?

Discussant: Christoph Konrath (Parliamentary Administration)

 Theophil Hansen | Lokal 3

Presentations:

Political changes of position under public pressure- using the example of party donations in Austria

Nina Bianca Dohr (Andrássy University Budapest)

Silent conflict in parliament. Investigating the role of absences in scaling MPs' ideological positions under conditions of high party unity

Fabian Habersack, Marcelo Jenny (University of Innsbruck)

A less likely, but increasing phenomenon? Parliamentary party switching in Germany

Danny Schindler (Institute of Parliamentary Research, Berlin)

Where do we go now? Explaining preferences for the location of capitals

David Willumsen (University of Innsbruck)

02:30 pm	**Coffee break** 📍 Elise Richter	Lokal 2

02:30 pm	**Poster session** 📍 Elise Richter	Lokal 2

Showcases and the Open Data offer of the Austrian Parliament

Simon Hofer (Parliamentary Administration)

ParlAT: An R-package to simplify access to the API of the Austrian Parliament

Roland Schmidt (werk.statt.codes)

Budget visualization of the budget service of the Austrian Parliamentary Administration

Friedrich Sindermann (Parliamentary Administration)

Comparative assessment of women and youth representation in national parliaments: Insights from EU member and candidate countries

Besarta Vladi, Irena Gjika, Stela Babasi (Parliamentary Institute, Parliament of Albania)

| 03:00 pm | **"Research Year in Parliament"** |
| | 📍 Elise Richter | Lokal 2 |

Presentation of the research project 2023:

Reception of scientific discourses in the debate culture of the Parliament

Bianca Winkler (University of Vienna)

Presentation of the newly selected project 2024

Susanne Janistyn-Novák

(Deputy Secretary General of the Parliamentary Administration)

03:45 pm **Panel discussion: Why does performance matter?**
Different perspectives on performance and parliaments
📍 Elise Richter | Lokal 2

Panelists:

Lotte de Beer (Artistic director of the Volksoper Wien)

Emma Crewe (SOAS University of London)

Thomas Hofer (Political Consultant, H&P Public Affairs)

Moderator: Philipp Blom

Panel I: How do parliaments strengthen and/or undermine democratic resilience?

📍 Elise Richter | Lokal 2

Day of Parliamentary Research | 20 June 2024

Presentations:

- **Wartime parliament in operation:**
  Lessons learned from Ukrainian democracy

- **The concept of tailor-made laws and legislative backsliding**
  in Central-Eastern Europe

- **Parliaments' role in strengthening democratic resilience**

- **Parliaments as an example of "generative artificial intelligence":**
  The new parliamentary encyclopaedia

Wartime parliament in operation: Lessons learned from Ukrainian democracy

Stanislav Ivasyk

The world is stepping into an era of uncertainty. Experts and politicians forecast the rise of possible armed conflicts and tensions. Thus, the crucial priority is increasing the resilience of democratic institutions. When the executive's powers expand, as often happens during wartime, the parliament shall ensure a country does not devolve into autocracy.

Since 24 February 2022, Ukraine's Parliament – the Verkhovna Rada – has been functioning under war conditions. Parliament took numerous measures to preserve its existence during Russian full-scale aggression.

USAID RADA Next Generation Program has already conducted two studies of the operation of Verkhovna Rada under martial law. The first one examined the first year and half of a Russian full-scale invasion[1], and the second one looked at the latest parliament session (September 2023 – February 2024)[2]. Both papers take a comprehensive look at aspects of parliamentarianism, such as the constitutional role and functions of Ukraine's parliament during wartime, its legisla tive activities, parliamentary oversight, and communications with voters. The research is based on the analysis of open data on parliament's website and other resources and in-depth interviews with MPs and Parliament's staff.

Our study has already identified that certain measures taken at the beginning of war become questionable over time. For instance, to avoid Russian missile attacks and leaks of

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1 | „Parliament Under Conditions Of War: Ukraine's Example. An Empirical Report.“ USAID RADA Next Generation Program, 2 August, 2023. https://internews.ua/rang/materiale/vru-under-war-conditions.

2 | "Parliament Under Conditions of War: Ukraine's Example. Report on 10th Session Of VRU." USAID RADA Next Generation Program, 26 March, 2024. https://internews.ua/en/rang/materiale/vru-under-war-conditions-2.

information, the legislative agenda, broadcasts, and even dates of plenary meetings were closed to the public. The measure was taken without objections from the public, who understood the need for limited transparency. According to the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology poll in May 2022, the level of trust in the Verkhovna Rada reached its historical peak and amounted to 58%.[3] However, now, when the openness of the legislature remains limited, the distrust of the parliament rises. In October 2023, only 21% of Ukrainians trusted the Verkhovna Rada (see the research of Kyiv International Institute of Sociology referred to above).

In this regard, our research is a handful for those democratic parliaments who wish to prepare for possible emergencies and, looking at Ukraine's experience, discover what measures help increase the legislature's resilience and how they should be adapted in a changing situation.

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3 | "Dynamics of Perception of the Direction of Affairs in Ukraine and Trust in Certain Institutions Between May 2022 and October 2023." Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. Anton Hrushetskyi, executive director of KIIS, 31 October, 2023. https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1321&page=1.

The concept of tailor-made laws and legislative backsliding in Central-Eastern Europe

Rebeka Kiss

This article examines the concept of tailor-made laws and their empirical implications. We define tailor-made laws as legislation that codifies an individual case under the guise of a general one. These laws are designed directly or indirectly to affect only certain individuals or institutions, thereby disadvantaging or favouring their target at the expense of the broader public interest. We argue that the normative assessment of these laws is partly dependent on the availability of judicial remedy for restoring the generality of the legal norm in question. By developing case studies from Central-Eastern Europe, we use this concept to argue that tailor-made laws are a feature

of both liberal and illiberal regimes. At the same time, the prevalence of such targeted legislation makes it only a central feature of legislative backsliding in illiberal regimes where–besides public procurement–it serves as a key instrument of implementing discretionary reward and punishment policies.

Parliaments' role in strengthening democratic resilience

Cristina Leston-Bandeira

This presentation will undertake a reflection about the ways in which parliaments can strengthen democratic resilience in our political systems. We live in paradoxical times. On one hand, we have never had as much information, means to express our views and accountability; on the other hand, never have misinformation, polarization and populism thrive so much. And never have levels of trust in politics been so low, with a sense of disconnect between people and political institutions. In such environments, parliaments perform a really important role in providing the connector between people and governance, and in doing so nurture democratic resilience. Not just in terms of

providing legitimacy through elections to representative institutions, but also in ensuring effective communication mechanisms during the period between elections to facilitate effective 'listening'.

I will identify key questions we need to ask ourselves about the role parliaments play in building democratic resilience. Specifically, I will outline the role parliaments play as mediators between governance and people, and the importance of this to identify people's needs and communicate these to decision-makers, whilst ensuring spaces to deliberate a diversity of views. I will explore the potential mechanisms parliaments may have in place to provide for this role, from parliamentary procedure mechanisms such as post-legislative scrutiny, to citizen focused mechanisms such as education provision and opportunities for public participation in parliamentary proceedings. I will also consider the different audiences that parliaments need to engage with, beyond the 'usual suspects' of those who naturally engage, to include future generations. I will finish by identifying key challenges in the development of effective parliamentary structures, practices and cultures that affirm their role in strengthening democratic resilience.

The presentation will draw from a considerable body of research which I have undertaken over the past 20 years on the relationship between parliaments and citizens, which has utilized mainly qualitative methods such as documentary analysis, interviews, focus groups and ethnographic observation. It will be of great relevance to parliamentary practice, as parliaments strive to develop effective approaches to connect with the public.

Whilst our democratic systems have their foundations in representative institutions, which are legitimized by elections, increasingly the type of challenges we face require new approaches which integrate participatory with representative processes effectively. Through this presentation, I hope to develop these ideas further and use it as the foundation for a grant application to undertake a comparative project on this topic.

Parliaments as an example of "generative artificial intelligence": The new parliamentary encyclopaedia

Giovanni Rizzoni

My presentation will focus on the findings of my recent book "Parliamentarism and Encyclopedism. Parliamentary democracy in an age of fragmentation"[1]

My research aims to explore a specific aspect of modern parliamentarism: its ability to produce and organise political knowledge. My central thesis is that the very meaning of modern parliamentarism cannot properly be understood without considering the cognitive value which is inherent in the represen

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1 | (Hart, Oxford, 2024) https://www.bloomsbury.com/au/parliamentarism-and-encyclopae-dism-9781509963935/.

tative function discharged by parliaments vis-a-vis the political community.

Representative institutions are responsible for not only processing already available knowledge, but also for generating new knowledge. From this perspective, parliaments can aptly be described as an example of "generative artificial intelligence" as they provide constraints and opportunities to shape new humans' comprehension of the world. Parliaments, in particular, play a crucial role in supporting the community's reflexive knowledge of itself.

The patterns underpinning this activity have the capacity to strongly influence not only the inner functioning of parliaments, but also their role within the constitutional system, and, more generally, the democratic quality of a society.

My presentation will focus on one of these patterns that I consider particularly crucial: the "encyclopaedic pattern". I employ this term to mean the tendency for parliaments to produce and organise knowledge according to comprehensive circular structures. Via these structures, the representative assemblies were able to offer a space for debate in which a kind of epistemic division of labour emerged among the MPs. This feature

can be traced back to the origins of modern parliamentarism and can be studied, together with the parallel emergence of the great national encyclopaedias, as one of the predominant intellectual enterprises of modern Europe. I maintain that the encyclopaedic pattern remains relevant to understanding the operation of parliaments in contemporary democracies, although through a radical reconsideration of the traditional paradigms that inspired parliamentary encyclopaedism.

The final part of my presentation will consider how, in order to remain the living encyclopaedia of democratic politics, parliaments' approach to knowledge can adopt some of the suggestions deriving from the wikipedian experience, combining physical presence with digital forms of public engagement. Parliamentary innovation and reform seem as necessary as ever in order to foster a political culture of complexity, that is, in finding new modes of democratic government for our increasingly fragmented societies.

Panel II: What do plenary debates tell us about power relations and democratic culture?

📍 Theophil Hansen | Lokal 3

Day of Parliamentary Research | 20 June 2024

Presentations:

- **What parliamentary rhetoric tells us about changing democratic culture**

- **Words of power. A quantitative analysis of speeches of the Austrian National Council and their linguistic change on a temporal, geographical and political level**

- **Decoding discourse: Gender dynamics in German Bundestag debates (1949–2021)**

- **Speech and spatial dynamics in the Austrian Parliament: The influence of seating row on speaking time and sentiment of members of the National Council**

What parliamentary rhetoric tells us about changing democratic culture

Karin Bischof, Marion Löffler

Parliamentary plenary debates are often viewed as a kind of political spectacle that primarily serves party political self-representation and takes the character of a permanent campaign. In our project, in contrast, we conceptualize the parliament as the symbolic center of (representative) democracy and focus on the plenum as the most visible parliamentary public. In this perspective parliamentary rhetoric is more than decorative words, but indicate a democratic culture – i.e. the expression of democratic equality in the publicly sayable. Consequently, analyzing parliamentary speeches over time offers a way to scrutinize democratic shifts.

In our FWF-funded project "Antisemitism as a political strategy and the development of democracy: the case of the Austrian Parliament 1945-2008", we explored such shifts by focusing rhetorical strategies for dealing with antisemitism, hypothesizing that antisemitism posed a significant challenge to Austrian democracy after the Holocaust. In our paper we present the findings of this study and further research which is concerned with current developments.

The overall aim of our research is to explore the nexus between parliamentary rhetoric and democracy in depth. We do so, firstly, by identifying the successive postwar rhetorical strategies for dealing with antisemitism in their (historical) political context and, secondly, by delineating how those strategies mark shifting boundaries of the sayable in relation to antisemitism in Austrian postwar parliamentary rhetoric. Thirdly, we show how those strategies and shifts signify transformations of Austrian democratic culture and democracy and that this process has a gendered dimension. Methodologically, we draw on a multidisciplinary mix of qualitative approaches, combining discourse and rhetoric analysis, specialized approaches to the analysis of parliamentary debate and Conceptual History.

Our research illuminates the relevance of plenary debates for democracy and offers a valuable contribution to elaborate on (self-) reflexive parliamentary practices.

Words of power.
A quantitative analysis of speeches of the Austrian National Council and their linguistic change on a temporal, geographical and political level

Albert Erik Gruber

Never have researchers looked upon the vast majority of all words spoken in debates of the National Council. Most projects focus on certain political affinities or rhetorical patterns. These methods have an inherent observation bias towards patterns of change we already assume or know to exist. Other patterns will rarely be discovered or investigated that way.

My goal is of course to discover changes, but also to highlight the existence of patterns not obvious on first glance. My research and subsequent doctoral thesis will focus on four linguistic features to highlight change within the speeches of the Austrian National Coun

cil: the use of dialect, neologisms, „Austrian" German and „everyday" language.

All these questions I plan to look upon from different perspectives. I will examine regional (as in place of birth or residence), personal (as in sex, gender, age, education) and political factors (as in party) of individual members of the NC.

The centerpiece of my project will be a database, derived from the protocols of the NC. Within this database, linguistic units („words") are tagged as being dialect, neologisms, „Austrian" German and / or „everyday" language, based on their standing in

history and research. I will also determine their statistical relevance, measured by comparison to large linguistic corpora. Currently, this database is being built and filled with the protocols of the NC.

Following the creation of the database there will be an evaluation regarding the scope to which the main questions can be answered and the statistical methods which are best suited. Then, the magnitudes of linguistic change will be determined and its implications discussed. Since this second stage of the project is not yet reached, I will talk briefly about planned methods and goals.

I plan not only to publish my findings, but also my database and all tools I may create on the way to help my own research. I will also continue to add new protocols and tools in the future. This will make it easy for other people to research the whole corpus. Currently many projects are bound to trends we already know exist, mostly due to limited time, resources and tools to look for unknown ones. I hope to make a small contribution to change this.

Decoding discourse: Gender dynamics in German Bundestag debates (1949–2021)

Teresa Hailer

Male politicians in the German parliament are under scrutiny for alleged sexist behavior, particularly through the disproportionate interruption of female politicians during their speeches compared to their male counterparts. In general, parliamentary debates are characterized by a culture of discussion where interruptions determine the debate: Opponents pose difficult questions or shout out disrupting comments while supporters express approval through applause or affirming remarks. Examining whether gender influences reactions in parliamentary debates becomes crucial in unravelling these dynamics.

This paper delves into the examination of behavior towards women in parliamentary debates, utilizing interruptions as a proxy for reactions to speeches. The analysis scrutinizes debates in the German parliament, the Bundestag, covering a complete sample of speeches from its formation in 1949 to the conclusion of the last legislative period in 2021. The data on plenary debates derives from protocols of the parliament which document not only all speeches but also their interruptions. Two kinds of interjection are taken into consideration: Supportive reactions are measured through applause, and disruptive ones are proxied through heckles. The empirical examination aims to test whether female politicians face different reactions compared to their male colleagues. A dummy variable is employed to identify the gender effect, distinguishing between male and female politicians.

In the first step, a regression analysis is performed to estimate the effect of gender on interjections by implementing an Ordinary Least Squares estimation. The analysis reveals a small but significant positive effect of gender on supportive behavior in the earlier periods, but this effect vanishes over time. When testing negative responses, a small yet significant negative effect emerges in the beginning. Again, this effect diminishes

over time. These results indicate that women receive initially more applause and less heckles, while more recent periods show no difference. Several tests for heterogeneity and robustness are conducted to explore dependencies on parties, roles, and topics.

The effects on both positive and negative reactions are contrary to the anecdotal evidence from experiences of female politicians. To enhance the research, the constellation of interruptions is analyzed. By taking into account not only the speaker but also the interrupter and pattern for heckles is established. In a further step, the analysis will consider the heterogeneity of the effect across different topics or parliamentary groups.

Speech and spatial dynamics in the Austrian Parliament: The influence of seating row on speaking time and sentiment of members of the National Council

Nada Ragheb, Maria Schreiner, Julia Leitner

Our study "Speech and spatial dynamics in the Austrian Parliament: The influence of seating row on speaking time and sentiment of members of the National Council" investigates how seating arrangements in the Austrian Parliament affect the engagement of its members, focusing on their speaking duration and sentiment during plenary speeches. Parliaments, once viewed as mere spatial artifacts, are now gaining renewed scholarly attention for their architectural and organizational dimensions, previously overlooked and superficially addressed, indicating a direct link between space and political practices. Utilizing data from the 27th legislative period available on the parliament's Open

Data platform, and employing regression and sentiment analyses, the study explores the hypotheses, that the location of members within seating rows correlates with (1) the length of their speeches, with those occupying front rows speaking for longer durations and (2) the sentiment of their speeches, with backbenchers tending towards a more positive sentiment. Additionally, the analysis controls for variables such as party affiliation, club leadership positions, and committee chair roles among other things. While procedural speaking time limits play a considerable role in the Austrian parliament's plenary sessions, preliminary findings still reveal significant effects of the seating row on both speech duration and sentiment. Results indicate that members seated in the front rows – as expected – tend to speak for extended periods and exhibit slightly more negative sentiment in their speeches. These findings underscore the importance of seating arrangements, with party affiliations, and other factors also playing a significant role in shaping parliamentary interactions and decision-making processes. This study contributes to research on the situational aspect of policymaking that is otherwise often overlooked. Further research could build upon these findings and expand the research objective to provide additional insights into parliamentary seating dynamics.

Panel III: New ways of understanding and supporting (pre-)parliamentary decision-making processes?

 Elise Richter | Lokal 2

Day of Parliamentary Research | 20 June 2024

Presentations:

- **Predicting tax treaty formation using machine learning: Implications for parliamentary practice**

- **Helping parliaments perform: The impact of differences within parliamentary staff on the agenda setting of standing committees**

- **Narratives of election promises in Austria**

- **Cartography of the legislative process in Germany**

Predicting tax treaty formation using machine learning: Implications for parliamentary practice

Dmitry Erokhin

This study delves into the predictive potential of machine learning algorithms for tax treaty formations between countries, addressing a critical gap in international economic relations. Our research question investigates the capability of machine learning to accurately predict future tax treaty engagements based on economic determinants. We utilized a comprehensive dataset comprising variables such as foreign direct investment, trade volumes, GDP, and geographical distance, applying various classification algorithms, with the random forest algorithm demonstrating superior accuracy. Our methodology included training the model on 2018 data and validating it with 2019 data, successfully identifying 59 country

pairs likely to engage in tax treaties.

The findings indicate that economic factors coupled with machine learning provide a robust framework for predicting tax treaty formations, which traditional econometric methods fail to match in predictive power. This research innovates by integrating advanced machine learning techniques into the domain of international economic policy, significantly enhancing predictive accuracy and decision making efficiency.

The potential relevance of this research to parliamentary practice is profound, particularly in understanding how new technologies like machine learning can enhance the capacities of parliaments. By equipping policymakers with predictive insights about tax treaty formations, this study aids in better resource allocation and strategic planning in international relations and economic policies. Furthermore, it prompts legislative bodies to consider regulatory frameworks that incorporate technological advanceme nts to improve governance and policy effectiveness in global economic interactions. This research thus not only contributes to academic literature but also serves as a vital tool for legislative and economic strategists, enhancing the proactive capabilitie s of parliaments in a digitally evolving landscape.

Helping parliaments perform: the impact of differences within parliamentary staff on the agenda setting of standing committees

Jeroen S. Kerseboom

One of the aspects of parliamentary performance is the use of evidence in scrutiny and legislation. Most of the statements about and explanations for the (non)use of knowledge in the political debate are based on the (report of) the final public debate (e.g. Wiesner, Palonen, en Haapala (2017)). No insight is given in how knowledge is used in the preparation of the political debate or the agenda of that debate.

In helping Parliaments perform, various parliamentary civil servants play a role in supporting the Members of Parliament and the standing parliamentary committees. There is very little descriptive and/or comparative

research into the organization and division of tasks of parliamentary staff (Christiansen, Griglio, en Lupo (2023), Otjes (2022)). Some literature exists on the different, ideal-typical tasks of their performance (Brandsma en Otjes, 2024), but this does not provide insight into the nature and circumstances of the work.

This paper focuses on just that, based on the work of two groups of civil servants in the Netherlands House of Representatives: clerks and knowledge coordinators. To identify the characteristics of their respective contributions to parliamentary performance, the framework of Bruno Latour's "modes of existence" was used (Latour, 2013). Using anthropological interviews and insider viewpoints, preliminary results of this study suggest that there is more than meets eye than Weber's distinction between Dienstwissen and Fachwissen.

The data was gathered by focusing on the agenda setting procedures (on paper and in practice) that are followed when external evidence is presented to the House of Representatives. The descriptions of the differences between the various parliamentary staff in significant symbols or 'silent traditions', perceived measures of success, what to avoid and what to overcome, might

give insight in how to possibly increase the
impact of knowledge in parliamentary per-
formance.

Brandsma, G. J., & Otjes, S. (2024). Gauging the roles of parliamentary staff. Parliamentary Affairs. doi:10.1093/pa/gsae001

Christiansen, T., Griglio, E., & Lupo, N. (Eds.). (2023). Routledge Handbook of Parliamentary Administrations. Londen: Routledge.

Latour, B. (2013). An Inquiry Into Modes of Existence. An Anthropology of the Moderns. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Otjes, S. (2022). What explains the size of parliamentary staff? West European Politics, 1-27. doi:10.1080/01402382.2022.2049068

Wiesner, C., Palonen, K., & Haapala, T. (2017). Understanding Debate as Politics (pp. 1-24).

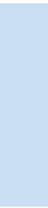# Narratives of election promises in Austria

Parties make pledges during an electoral campaign. Parties aim to adopt these pledges in a government program and to implement them during the legislative term. This is the story of mandate theory in a nutshell. Previous empirical research on pledge fulfilment in Austria as well as in other countries have shown that the program-to-policy-linkage is indeed working: Government parties are able to follow up on a substantial amount of their pledges. Furthermore, these studies shed light on the mechanisms that make pledge adoption in the coalition program and fulfilment in the legislative period more likely.

Katrin Praprotnik

While studies thus have made considerable progress in enhancing our knowledge on the functioning of modern representative democracies, they neglected one key aspect and that is the historic perspective. The studies focused on the program-to-policy-linkage and hence the time span between an election and the end of a legislative term. This is reasonable in the light of mandate theory, it fails, however, to acknowledge the independences over time. Put differently, while some pledges are "new" in the sense of not having been promised before, other pledges are "old" and have been on the political agenda in the past. For example, imagine a welfare state initiative that was proposed by a social democratic actor in one election, that similarly reappears in a radical right-wing party's program in the next election – or the other way around. Or, to give another example, think of a conservative's party pledge to introduce a reform in tax regulations in one election, the fulfillment of this pledge in the following term and, at the party's next program, a matching status quo pledge that promises to keep the newly enacted tax regulations in place.

Knowing about the history of pledges enhances our understanding of political competition – ultimately at all stages of the political process, i.e. during electoral campaigns,

coalitions talks and legislative periods. Our manuscript aims to add to our knowledge on pledges in Austria specifically, but also on pledges and their role in political competition in a comparative perspective more generally. In so doing, we dug deeper into the data coming from studying more than 30 years of pledge making in Austria.

Cartography of the legislative process in Germany

Sven T. Siefken

Typical illustrations of the legislative process begin with the introduction of a bill into parliament. This leaves out the most relevant phase of bill-drafting, the pre-parliamentary phase. It usually takes place within the executive branch of government, namely in the ministerial departments. Bills can also be drafted in parliaments, by individual MPs (in some systems) or parliamentary party groups (in most systems), and by the states (in federal systems).

Cartography of Legislation is an ongoing interdisciplinary research project by political scientists and design practitioners and researchers. It brings their diverse knowledge,

methodologies, and approaches into fruitful resonance. The project maps the central steps of bill preparation by tracing the respective processes of strategy, drafting and coordination in Germany. They are based on the legislative framework set in the constitution, in simple laws and the executive and parliamentary rules of procedure or standing orders. Beyond the formalities, we include steps that take place within and before the formally required ones, questioning, documenting, and understanding the complexity of informal politics and the arcane dimensions of the process. Such discursive formations are the subject of the practical and interpretive methods of aesthetic research and design practice, and of the analysis of informal politics in political science methodology. Therefore, in addition to the analysis of the legal setting, we analyze parliamentary documentation and statistics as well as media reports. We have also conducted interviews and workshops with practitioners from parliamentary and executive branches in Germany, both at federal and state levels.

The project's main objective is to better understand the entire process from "idea to law" and, for the first time, present it in comprehensive visualizations at different levels of complexity. The cartography highlights how drafts move between relevant actors

and institutions, notably: parties, coalition negotiations, strategic planning, ministerial drafting, parliamentary proceedings, presidential promulgation, and evaluation. Links to various ongoing initiatives by the German government, parliament and CSOs to digitize the process ("e-legislation") and make it more transparent ("monitoring") have been established. Furthermore, our findings will serve as a basis for redesigning (parts of) the process, e.g. in terms of strategic planning, horizontal coordination, and public engagement. At the Day of Parliamentary Research, we also plan to discuss if and how the approach can help in the comparative study of parliaments.

Panel IV: How do MPs navigate between various kinds of pressure (public, party, voters)?

 Theophil Hansen | Lokal 3

Day of Parliamentary Research | 20 June 2024

Presentations:

- **Political changes of position under public pressure- using the example of party donations in Austria**

- **Silent conflict in parliament. Investigating the role of absences in scaling MPs' ideological positions under conditions of high party unity**

- **A less likely, but increasing phenomenon? Parliamentary party switching in Germany**

- **Where do we go now? Explaining preferences for the location of capitals**

Political changes of position under public pressure – using the example of party donations in Austria

Nina Bianca Dohr

Do political positions change under public pressure? How does public opinion affect agenda setting? This dissertation investigates the dynamic interplay between public pressure, political positions, and agenda setting in Austria. Despite initial hypotheses suggesting resistance from political parties to tighten party laws, recent instances of regulatory changes in party donations challenge this assumption. Drawing from distinct contexts — the aftermath of the Ibiza scandal 2019, the ÖVP's tenure 2022, and the emergence of the Stronach political movement 2012-2017 — the research explores why parliamentary majorities yielded to public demands for increased regulation

and transparency. Through a political science lens, the study delves into the evolution of party priorities and strategies under public scrutiny, analyzing communication tactics and media influences. Beyond donations, the study considers various forms of party financing, culminating in discussions on control and transparency. Moreover, the example of the development of party financing closely aligns with shifts in parliamentarism, as Konrath points out in his research [1]. Parallel patterns of action and reactions to external expectations emerge in both domains.

The scientific methodology employed in this research project encompasses interdisciplinary approaches to theoretical grounding and empirical investigation. Drawing from the fields of communication science and decision-making theory, the study utilizes McCombs and Shaw's agenda setting approach and Cohen's trash can model to provide theoretical frameworks for understanding the dynamics of political posi

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1 | Zeitschrift für Parteienwissenschaften (2023). Sonderausgabe „Parlamentsentscheidungen in eigener Sache" in Kooperation mit Verfassungsblog und Stiftung Wissenschaft & Demokratie. Zeitschrift für Parteienwissenschaften (Nr. 2)

tions, public pressure, and agenda setting. McCombs and Shaw's theory elucidates the role of media in shaping public opinion and influencing political agendas, while Cohen's model offers insights into decision-making processes within political contexts. Complementing these theoretical perspectives, the research incorporates document and literature analysis, as well as qualitative, semi-structured expert interviews, to enrich empirical understanding and validate theoretical constructs.

The current status of the research project involves the completion of literature review and the refinement of research questions.

Through extensive literature research, relevant scholarly works were analyzed to identify key themes, theories, and empirical findings pertinent to the study's focus on political positions, public pressure, and agenda setting. Subsequently, the research questions were narrowed down to address specific aspects of the phenomenon under investigation. This phase marks a critical step in laying the groundwork for the empirical inquiry, providing a comprehensive understanding of existing knowledge and informing the direction of the study.

Silent conflict in parliament. Investigating the role of absences in scaling MPs' ideological positions under conditions of high party unity

Fabian Habersack, Marcelo Jenny

The existing literature on parliamentary behavior and party unity provides substantial insights into how legislators' policy positions are scaled, by drawing primarily on their voting patterns and methods such as DW-NOMINATE or Optimal Classification. However, as MPs face various incentives to toe the party line, high party unity in many cases obstructs the use of these methods. Given this challenge, we know surprisingly little about the role of absenteeism. In this study, we argue that motivated absences can serve as an alternative dimension for scaling MPs' ideological ideal points especially in cases like the Austrian National Council, which are marked by strong party discipline. Con

sidering MPs' absences from plenary voting sessions in the current legislative term of the National Council, we scale MPs' ideal points and validate our measure externally against alternative scaling approaches. Our study contributes to our knowledge of how MPs navigate the challenging relationship between party allegiance and individual policy stances, especially in scenarios where voting records may not fully capture these nuances.

A less likely, but increasing phenomenon? Parliamentary party switching in Germany

Danny Schindler

Parliamentary party groups (PPGs) hold a crucial position in German parliaments. Most rights within the legislative business rest with the groups. For instance, bills and minor questions from the floor can only be introduced by the PPGs in most cases. Due to the leverage and the resources provided for groups, leaving the party team to become an independent MP is not advisable from a rational angle. Similarly, joining other PPGs is risky since MPs build their long-term careers within their group. Also, a change of party affiliation makes it difficult to get re-selected (as candidate) as well as re-elected (given that personal votes hardly matter). For those reasons, and in the face of Germany's highly

institutionalized party system, political divorces within parliament can be considered a rarity in a cross-national perspective. While this largely holds at the federal level, the phenomenon has received scant attention for the 16 German state parliaments with their roughly 1,900 members. To address this research gap, we compiled a novel data set of all changes at federal and state level since German reunification. It includes more than 400 cases of party switching (broadly understood). The paper provides initial, descriptive findings as to such questions as: Do party affiliation, gender or timing within the electoral cycle matter? Do we observe more MPs jumping ship over time (maybe due to a less stable party system following the emergence of the AfD)? How does abandoning one's party affect the defector's political career? Investigating the rather underestimated phenomenon for the unlikely case of Germany contributes to two debates with practical relevance, namely whether there are underlying system-wide conditions for (more) party switching and whether switching affects the functioning of parliaments and the quality of political representation.

Where do we go now? Explaining preferences for the location of capitals

David Willumsen

The choice of the location of a state capital can have wide-ranging consequences for representation, influencing both representatives' behaviour and centre-periphery dynamics in the electorate. While a geographically central location has normative appeal, as it minimises the collective distance between voters and the seat of government, proximity to electoral constituency may be preferred for self-interested reasons by both voters and representatives. Despite the importance of the the (re-) location of capitals, we have little empirical knowledge about such placement decisions, in part because they are often taken without public debate. By drawing on four cases where the

revealed preferences of individual voters and representatives, as well as their residence/constituency, can be observed, this paper analyses the decisions on where to locate the capital of Germany (1991), Thuringia (1991), Switzerland (1848), and Lower Austria (1986). Drawing on parliamentary votes (Germany, Thuringia, Switzerland) and parliamentary debates (Germany), as well as voter surveys (Germany and Lower Austria), I show that the key driver of the preference for the location of the capital is proximity to where a voter lives, respectively the constituency a legislator represents.

The respective authors are responsible for the content of their own texts.