

Workshop: Methodological dimensions of the RECON democracy models

Vienna, 18 December 2009

Manos Sigalas (WP 3)

The challenge of operationalising and analyzing political claims under the RECON models

Abstract

We first present briefly the SHARE research programme and the research questions we want to answer. Following that, we explain how we dealt with the challenge of operationalising the three Recon models and how we developed a series of testable hypotheses. For the data analysis we use a series of 'soft' data including personal interviews, political manifestos, party rules of procedure and political claims found in the national press. The text material is processed with the help of Atlas.ti for the purposes of qualitative rather than quantitative analysis, although the latter possibility is not excluded.

Olga Brzezińska and Magdalena Góra (WP 8)

Collective identification and the RECON models

Constraints of the conceptualization and operationalisation.

Abstract

The proposed paper will sum up the two and half year of the experience gathered within the JUK team researching the nexus between the collective identification in Europe and the models of European democracy. Firstly, we would discuss the theoretical concepts and conceptualization difficulties within WP8 "identity formation and Enlargement". Secondly, we will describe the operationalisation and factor analysis for the qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews, participatory observation and focus groups). We would like to raise the issue of difficulty in comparison of such data and its possible solutions. Finally, we will present the Q-methodology used for cross-country analysis and operationalisation of RECON models for this research. Q methodology provides a foundation for the systematic study of people's attitudes, opinions and beliefs. Respondents are presented with a set of statements, called the Q-set, and asked to rank them according to their preference and judgement. The respondents' individual rankings are then subject to factor analysis. The research teams have jointly transposed the RECON models into statements. Since the study is seeking identity patterns (and not distributions among a population), the relevance of the findings is not restricted to the category of students.

Eric Miklin (WP 2/3/9)

Patterns of MEP co-ordination within the EU's multilevel parliamentary field

Abstract

As European and national politics get ever more intertwined, it becomes important to understand the work of Members of the European Parliament in the context of the wider European political network of parliamentary representatives (see e.g. Crum/Fossum 2009). Drawing on the results of a survey sent out to all MEPs during the 6th parliamentary term, this paper aims at charting the relations that MEPs maintain within this network that is both transnational and multilevel in nature. In particular, it focuses on differences in co-ordination practices between and within member states (i.e. between parties), as well as between policy fields.

Chris Lord and Dionysia Tamvaki (WP3)

The content and quality of representation in the European Assembly Towards building an updated Discourse quality index at the EU level

Abstract

In this paper, we apply a revised version of the discourse quality index (DQI) developed by Steenbergen et al. on European Parliament debates in an attempt to evaluate the democratic quality of representation at the EU level. This updated measurement instrument, after the inclusion of new indicators, helps us identify not just the principles of EU deliberation but most importantly the patterns of representation embedded in the multilevel European setting. We illustrate the new DQI coding for selected debates over the last EU parliamentary term and across the three pillar structure of the Union. We discuss how these data can be employed to assess whether the EU system of representation develops towards the three RECON models of democratic reconstitution.

Pieter De Wilde (WP 3)

Claims-making analysis in Atlas.ti and SPSS: Between quality and quantity

Abstract:

This presentation elaborates on ways of using Atlas.ti and SPSS using the method of claims-making analysis developed by Koopmans and Statham on newspaper articles and parliamentary debates concerning the last three EU budgets in Denmark, the Netherlands and Ireland. It combines a deductive approach of fixed variables with inductive construction of values. Based on this employment of Atlas.ti software, gathered data can be exported to SPSS to allow statistical analysis. Advantages over exporting to Excel are shown as subtext units of analysis are kept in tact. The result is a mixed-method incorporating aspects of qualitative research with aspects of quantitative research and accompanying richness of possible analyses and triangulations.

Ewelina Pawlack (WP 5)

Four arenas of political communication in the EU constitutional process mapped through different data sets in empirical test of ideal types of public spheres

Abstract:

Based on empirical findings it is intended to test the viability of the RECON models as ideal types of public spheres. The question for the empirical analysis is: which of the normative models is empirically present, does one of them dominate the European communication practice and how do they vary in cross-country and cross-arena comparison? Empirical indicators to measure the viability of the RECON models are determined along the scope and performance of EU polity building, transforming and receiving in four receptions of political communication: national parliamentary debates on EU Treaty ratification, European election campaigns in the mass media, EU post-referendum mass media debates and public opinion on the EU constitutional process; in three old and three new EU member states (Germany, UK, France, Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary) with the focus on the EU Treaty reforms in the time period between 2004 and 2009. To answer the question comparative quantitative analyses of patterns of political discourses defined through empirical indicators and a public opinion survey are introduced. Therefore the Atlas.ti and the SPSS software are used.