Az TÁMOP-4.2.2/B-10/1-2010-0023 projekt keretében a Politikatudományi Doktori Iskola meghívására kompakt PhD kurzust tart Prof. Dr. Thomas Zittel, a Goethe-University Frankfurt professzora Comparative Politics: Theories and Practice címmel.

Az előadások helye a C épület 510-es Dékáni tárgyaló

Időpontok és témák:

- 2012. szeptember 18. 14.00 -15.20: The Personalization of Politics: How Personalized are Campaigns at the Grassroots, Why, and does it Matter?


- 2012. szeptember 20. 11.00-12.20: Democracy and new Information Technology. Towards a new Century of Participatory Politics?

The Personalization of Politics: How Personalized are Campaigns at the Grassroots, Why, and does it Matter?

Thomas Zittel, Goethe-University Frankfurt

Content

Personalization is a vividly debated concept among students of electoral politics. It suggests that candidates increasingly take center stage vis-à-vis political parties and issues. Furthermore it suggests that this might concern vote choices and campaign politics as well. With regard to vote choices, the concept of personalization argues for an increasing effect of candidates on the electoral behavior of voters. With regard to campaign politics, it assumes an increasing prominence of candidates and candidate characteristics in the campaign strategies of the contenders as well as in the media’s campaign coverage.

This lecture addresses three puzzling and hitherto uncharted questions related to the debate on personalized politics. First, it gauges the quantity and quality of personalized election campaigns at the constituency level. Most of the available research focuses on the national level and thus on main party candidates. The scope and frequency of personalization across levels of candidacy remains sketchy. Particularly, we have little comparative research on the role of constituency candidates and on the range of personalized campaign styles at that level of politics. Second, the lecture asks about the sources of personalized politics. Since previous research has been constrained to few cases and particular types of candidacy, we have little solid evidence on the prerequisites of personalized campaign efforts. Particularly, we know little about the question whether personalization can be considered a strategic reaction structured by specific contextual factors in systematic ways or whether it rather must be viewed as an erratic occurrence that is candidate specific and therefore hard to model. Thirdly, the lecture addresses the relationship between personalized campaign politics and personalized vote choices. Since personalization is considered a complex phenomenon...
enclosing campaign and electoral behavior as well, it raises the question of the relationship between these two dimensions of personalized politics, whether personalized vote choices can be considered a result of personalized campaign strategies or whether these two phenomena indicate two distinct faces of personalization that by and large remain unrelated to each other.

Selected Readings
II.

Democracy and Participation: How Much Participation, and what Form?

Thomas Zittel, Goethe-University Frankfurt

Content
During the past decade, in many established Democracies, participation increasingly became subject to public policy making. Negative trends in conventional forms of participation such as voting both triggered a sense of crisis and efforts to increase citizens’ proclivity to politically participate by allowing for new institutionalized opportunities to participate.

This lecture focuses on a question that has been rarely raised in the context of most current efforts to democratize established democracies but that is nevertheless a classic among students of democracy and comparative politics as well. The question asks about the role of participation for democratic government, whether it is needed, to what degree it is needed, and in what form it is needed. Why are we nervous about declining rates of participation, what trends should we be particularly nervous about, and what should we do about it? In this lecture I will discuss these question in light of established normative theories of democracy. By adopting this approach, I will be able to demonstrate the lack of an unequivocal answer to the questions raised. This means that current debates on a “crisis of democracy” might indicate changing perceptions and norms of democracy rather than an actual crisis. Furthermore, by adopting this approach, the lecture is able to show that across all models of democracy, participation is considered a demanding concept that cannot be maximized at the institutional level without taking its context and its many prerequisites into account.

Selected Readings

*Political Science Quarterly* 109: 23–34.


III.

Democracy and new Information Technology. Towards a new Century of Participatory Politics?

Thomas Zittel, Goethe-University Frankfurt

Content
Currently, the technological context of modern democracies is in flux. Particularly, we experience dramatic changes in telecommunication technology with the advent of new digital media in general and the Internet in particular. This lecture addresses the ramification of these changes for democratic government. Its special focus is on far reaching claims made in the literature on electronic or digital democracy. This literature argues for a “democratic revolution” brought about by the Internet and resulting in a new century of participatory politics. To shed light on these claims, the lecture sketches its theoretical underpinnings as well as its empirical validity. Among others, it discusses the state of e-voting, protest on the Internet, trends towards virtual types of representation, campaign politics on the Net, and patterns of electronic participation. The lecture also briefly touches upon the question whether the Internet is able to help democratizing non-democratic systems.

Selected Readings


Ward, Stephen/Wainer Lusoli. 2005. From weirded to wired. MPs, the Internet and representative politics in the UK. Journal of Legislative Studies 11: 57–81.


IV.

Political Representation. Past, Present, and Future

Thomas Zittel, Goethe-University Frankfurt

Content
In most established large-scale democracies, laws are predominantly being made via representative assemblies that are accountable to voters through recurrent competitive elections. Thus, generally, in most established democracies, a limited number of individuals take center stage in processes of authoritative decision-making. What do we know about their behaviors, about the normative and institutional sources of distinct behavioral patterns, and also about the larger effects of representative behavior at the systemic level of politics? These are the questions this lecture aims to address. To address the questions raised, the lecture will first provide an overview on the historical development of representative democracy and the key concepts and structural prerequisites that emerged over time. It will then discuss present patterns of representation in comparative perspective and in light of prescriptive theories and empirical concepts dating back to the past. The lecture concludes with some considerations on the future of political representation in light of far reaching contextual changes.

Selected Readings


