

Laufende Forschungsprojekte

1) „Voice Without Vote- Herausforderungen für den Europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialausschuss und den Ausschuss der Regionen? Der Einfluss beratender Ausschüsse im Vergleich“

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There are hardly any political systems in and beyond the nation-state that do not incorporate committees. While decision-taking committees are often in the limelight of research, we do not know much about consultative committees, although they are as wide-spread as decision-taking committees. Consultative committees have access to decision-making arenas and can give non-binding advice to political decision-makers, but do not possess formal voting power.

This project sheds light on the influence of consultative committees and addresses the following research question: How and under which conditions can consultative committees exert influence although they have a voice, but no vote?

In the current stage of the project, we developed a sender-receiver model that is based on the notion that consultative committees as senders offer *information in exchange for influence* to legislative actors as receivers. From the model, we derived a set of hypotheses specifying demand and supply sides of the information-influence nexus. In using the European Union with its two consultative committees (the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) as an empirical example, we comprehensively test the hypotheses with a mixed methods approach. This reveals that information supply of the CoR and the EESC has to match an information demand on the side of the European legislative actors (the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament) for the former to be influential. This is most likely if senders produce recommendations quickly that reflect a high level of expertise, whilst receivers have flexible preferences and lack administrative capacities to gather policy-specific expertise themselves.

2) “The General Assembly of the United Nations. How Size-Differences Influence Negotiation Activities and Prospects for Success of Member States”

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Most international organisations (IOs) are based on the principle of sovereign equality, according to which all member states have equal rights and equal weights in the policy-initiation, negotiation and decision-taking stages of an IO’s policy cycle. However, while the states are formally equal, they differ immensely with regards to the financial and staff capacities that they can utilise when participating in the policy-cycle, and the resources that they can draw on when trying to be influential in negotiations and successful when it comes to passing hard or soft law. For example, in the United Nations in New York, states with small delegations of less than five diplomats, such as Somalia, Sao Tome and Principe, Papua New Guinea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Timor-Leste, Palau or Dominica, face diplomatic missions more than ten times their size, such as the US, Russia, China, Germany or Japan, that can additionally draw on over a thousand times more financial resources than the smaller states.

This project analyses the role played by size-related capacity differences in the active and effective participation of states in multilateral negotiations whose decision-making rules are based on the equality-of-states principle. Empirically, it draws on the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The UNGA is the ideal testing ground for the effect of capacities on the conduct of states, as is not only the IO with the highest number of member states, but also of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the one that most strongly expresses the sovereign equality of states. The institutional rules guiding the UNGA’s policy cycle strongly reflect the equality principle, most notably in the procedures governing policy-initiation, negotiation participation, and as the one-state, one-vote rule in the decision-taking stage. At the same time, the member states are very heterogeneous concerning financial, staff, administrative and political and ideational capacities, as microstates face very big states.

Thus, the project sheds light on the antagonistic relationship between formal rules and factual capacity differences and answers the following *research questions*: Is the institutionalised equality-of-states principle an effective equaliser in IOs or are bigger and better equipped states in a more superior position than smaller and poorer states when it comes to actively participating and effectively making their voices heard in multilateral negotiations? What type of capacities

influence a state's ability to actively participate in the policy-initiation, the negotiation and the decision-taking stages of a policy cycle in an IO? Are smaller states less active than bigger ones? To what extent do size-related capacity differences translate into differences in influence over the content of policies and into differences in the prospects of successfully passing resolutions? Are smaller states as influential in the negotiation stage and as successful in the decision-taking stage as their bigger counterparts in IOs that are based on the principle of sovereign equality of states?