Globalization has profoundly changed the political process. Political decisions are increasingly being taken by international, transnational, or local institutions and less and less by nation states to which democracy has traditionally been tied. Does this lead to a weakening of democracy since these new decision-making bodies are not elected and therefore, democratically speaking, not legitimized? An NCCR research module seeks answers to this question.

By Yvonne Rosteck

The growing worldwide interdependence of economic, social, and cultural processes has made national boundaries more and more irrelevant. No longer is any state capable of effectively dealing alone with transborder problems such as environmental protection, financial stability, tax evasion, or migration. As a result, policy-making has been shifted away from the national level to other levels: upward to the international level, sideways to transnational organizations, or downward to the regional and local levels. On all these levels, new forms of governance have emerged and non-elected actors increasingly play an important role in political decision-making:

- At the international level, political decision-making has been shifted to international institutions such as the WTO, the IMF, or the UN. In particular the EU enjoys powers unparalleled in any other international institution: it creates authoritative rules and takes decisions that are binding, applicable, and enforceable in its member states.
- The transborder effects of policy-making and the growing complexity of policy issues have also led to the delegation of authority to independent regulatory agencies at the transnational level. These agencies have become powerful actors in fields such as financial regulation. As they do not consist of elected politicians but of non-elected technocrats and experts, they are largely beyond political control.
- Globalization and the consequent international competition between cities have led to a regionalization process.
cess and the emergence of metropolitan areas which have expanded continually during the 20th century. In these areas, political decisions are increasingly taken and implemented by complex networks of political actors, networks which lack transparency.

**Assessing the new forms of governance brought about by globalization**

One NCCR Democracy module consisting of three research projects is devoted to analyzing how these new developments are affecting the role of elected and non-elected actors in the policy-making field. What are their strategies? How can they be held accountable? And is policy-making under these conditions legitimate, that is congruent with important democratic principles? Does decision-making respond to citizens’ needs and priorities? Democratic principles are ensured via political institutions, but also, as the researchers of the NCCR Democracy argue, via communication processes as the media are increasingly independent and constitute feared forums in which political actors are held accountable. All three projects therefore also examine the role of the media in these new forms of governance in order to gain insight into the mutual influence between the media and political actors. This is an area which is yet to be researched.

- The project of Thomas Bernauer, Vally Koubi, and their colleagues at ETH Zurich addresses the role civil society groups play in negotiating agreements at the international level. The aim is to find out whether their interaction with national governments in the negotiation process strengthens the accountability of both actors and contributes to a better outcome.
- Fabrizio Gilardi, Yannis Papadopoulos, and their colleagues at the universities of Zurich and Lausanne focus on the topic of regulation at the trans-national level. They seek to assess the accountability and performance of independent regulatory agencies in the financial and energy sectors.
- The regional and local levels are the centre of interest of the project of Daniel Kübler, Frank Marcinkowski, and colleagues at the universities of Zurich and Münster. They investigate the democratic legitimacy of metropolitan institutions.

The three projects will conclude in fall 2013 and the results will be disseminated in collaboration with international publishers and in major journals in political- and communication sciences. The researchers are also seeking to transfer their research findings to the policy-making field. The project team that analyzes metropolitan areas, for example, was already commissioned by the *Swiss Office of Territorial Development to contribute to an assessment of the Swiss federal government’s strategy for such areas. The team is also participating in an international project of the Canada-based think tank *Forum of Federation* on the finance and governance of metropolitan areas in federal countries.

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How civil society groups influence international environmental governance

Civil society groups (CSGs) such as non-governmental organizations and business groups have become very important in global governance in recent decades. An NCCR project investigates how these groups interact with governments in international climate negotiations and how they impact outcomes. The research provides evidence that these groups’ influence is stronger on non-democratic governments.

By Thomas Bernauer, Vally Koubi, Tobias Böhmelt, and Carola Betzold

The involvement of CSGs in global governance has become a prominent subject of research. A substantial body of this research seeks to analyze the conditions for this growing role of CSGs in international environmental politics and to investigate the consequences of this phenomenon for both domestic and global environmental governance. Our research project contributes to this debate by examining how CSGs and government representatives interact in the context of global environmental policymaking. While some authors claim that the relationship between CSGs and governments is oppositional or even zero-sum in nature, we argue that it is better understood as being supplementary and that both state and non-state actors can benefit from this collaboration. This seems to be the case in international environmental negotiations where CSGs effectively collaborate with, and are sometimes even part of, national delegations. At the most recent climate change negotiations in Durban, South Africa, for example, more than 70% of the 193 countries involved included at least one civil society representative in their national delegation, and around 18% of all members of national delegations came from CSGs. Few studies, however, have investigated the links between these actors systematically – a gap in the literature that this project aims to fill.

Specifically, we examine how CSGs and governments interact and how this affects international climate negotiations. In particular, we seek to uncover what type of countries CSGs lobby and what strategies they employ. On the governmental side, we ask what incentives there are for governments to allow CSGs access to their delegations. Does the interaction facilitate global environmental governance? Are the resulting national and international policies more “environmental-friendly”? How does CSG involvement affect voters’ evaluations of the legitimacy of international environmental agreements?

Regarding the behavior of CSGs, the project expects these groups to engage in a wide range of advocacy activities including direct contact with negotiators or indirect contact via the media, depending on their resources such as membership or expertise. In addition, it argues that CSGs are more likely to approach responsive delegations that are open to input from these groups, for example because they advance similar positions. Turning to governments, it is claimed in the literature that govern-
ments are, a priori, hesitant to formally include representatives of CSGs in international policymaking, because such inclusion constrains governments’ autonomy in the sense of affecting their traditional prerogative to negotiate international agreements with other governments. However, governments are embedded in broader networks of interstate relations. Hence their behavior towards CSGs is likely to be affected by what other governments do. This is because contact and information flows among governments facilitate the diffusion of ideas and the adoption of common practices. Consequently, we expect governments that are more central to the global governance network to be more likely to include CSGs in their delegations if other governments do so as well, as such inclusion precludes ceding a potential advantage in terms of legitimacy to their governmental counterparts.

The role of CSGs in climate negotiations

To empirically test our theoretical arguments, we collected data on CSGs’ inclusion in national delegations to climate negotiations from 1995 to 2008. In addition, we attended the climate summit in Durban in December 2011 and conducted surveys of government delegates and civil society representatives. In particular, Thomas Bernauer and Vally Koubi interviewed government delegates regarding their view of CSG’s participation in the negotiations. Representatives from countries as diverse as Denmark, Mauritania, and the USA explained whether and how their respective governments involve CSGs in international policy making. In parallel, Carola Betzold focused on how CSGs participate in and seek to shape negotiations. These two weeks at the conference taught us a lot about how this extremely complex process works and how the different actors interact.

Analyses of the surveys provided evidence that CSGs engage in a wide range of advocacy activities. Environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) communicate via the public and the media, while business groups tend to contact negotiators directly. All groups target their advocacy strategically, approaching government delegations based on a delegation’s openness to CSGs as well as their influence in the negotiation process. Hence, democratic governments, large greenhouse-gas emitters, and hosts of the annual climate change summits are lobbied significantly more often than other delegations. We also found that governments include CSGs in their delegations primarily for reasons of legitimacy, as their own citizens, given a choice, would prefer to include civil society actors in national delegations to climate negotiations, primarily representatives of environmental NGOs and the scientific community, rather than business representatives.

The democracy–civil society paradox

Finally, the project examines whether ENGOs as a particular type of civil society group can increase states’ participation in international environmental agreements. We argue that although ENGOs can enhance states’ participation in such agreements, their impact is likely to be smaller in countries that are highly democratic. In other words, even though democracy and ENGOs per se should increase the prospects that a country ratifies an international environmental agreement, we suggest a democracy–civil society paradox, i.e., the impact of ENGOs on states’ cooperative behavior in the field of global environmental governance is likely to be weaker for democracies than for non-democratic regimes. The main reasons for this are that democracies provide multiple channels – besides ENGOs – through which environmental information can be disseminated and environmental concerns expressed; democratic policymakers have strong incentives to satisfy “green” demands even when ENGOs are weak or absent; and finally, democracies are characterized by stronger competition for political influence between ENGOs. We test this argument using new data on ENGOs for the period 1973–2006. The results offer strong support for the democracy–civil society paradox.

The research findings are of interest to both policymakers and scholars alike. For instance, if we are interested in creating stronger environmental agreements we should a) strengthen ENGOs in autocratic or less democratic countries, since ENGOs can help considerably to improve the willingness of such regimes to collaborate at the international level, and b) encourage as many states as possible to include ENGOs’ representatives in their national delega-
The National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCR) are a research instrument of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

Publications


**Böhmelt, Tobias and Carola Betzold.** “The impact of environmental interest groups in international environmental negotiations: Do ENGOs induce stronger environmental commitments?” *International Environmental Agreements*, June 2012.

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**Project:** “Civil society - government interactions in global governance”

**Duration:** 2009 – 2013

**Team:** Prof. Thomas Bernauer, Prof. Vally Koubi, Dr. Tobias Böhmelt, Carola Betzold (all ETH Zurich).

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**Transnational networks of independent regulators as instruments of governance: The cases of the energy and financial markets**

Following the privatization of former state-owned companies and the liberalization of markets in recent decades, regulation has increasingly been delegated to independent agencies. The fact that they are not elected and independent from elected politicians raises the question of how accountable these institutions are. An NCCR project aims to assess their performance by examining how networks of independent regulatory agencies shape national policies and possibly contribute to the promotion of best practices among its members.

By Martino Maggetti and Fabrizio Gilardi

Independent regulatory agencies have become powerful actors in the governance of different policy domains across Europe and many of them are embedded in transnational networks. Transnational regulatory networks are responsible for promoting regulatory cooperation through the production and dissemination of soft rules on a variety of issues that require cross-border coordination, such as finance, energy, and telecommunications. In Europe, regulatory networks have been initiated by national regulatory authorities, which have decided to combine their forces to exchange information and coordinate their operations at the transnational level. At the same time, the European Commission has supported the creation of networks to facilitate the harmonization of rules and to promote competition in the single market, in a context in which member states were reluctant to divest their independent regulatory agencies in favor of pan-European regulators. European regulatory networks are considered increasingly important for policy-making because they institutionalize a multi-level governance structure that is expected to be more flexible and effective in managing policy issues than traditional hierarchical modes of coordination.

According to the scientific literature, networks might allow participants to catalyze innovative decisions and diffuse best practices in member states. However, empirical evidence remains scarce. One of the main goals of the NCCR Democracy project “Internationalization, mediatization, and accountability of independent regulatory agencies” is to gain knowledge of the interaction patterns of agencies within these networks, as well as to examine the networks’ impact on national policies. We expect that networks’ structures shape their decision-making styles and that how members are positioned within the network will have an influence on the adoption of rules on the domestic level.

**The energy sector**

In the energy sector, the national regulators of electricity and gas cooperate through the *Council of European Energy Regulators* (CEER) to promote the exchange of best practices and the convergence of rules in the energy market. We examined factors that determine the position of independent regulatory agencies in the structure of the CEER and subsequently explored the impact of this structure on the domestic adoption of soft rules developed at network level. In
face-to-face interviews with key players in the network (senior managers, directors, and chairpersons) we collected information on the intensity of collaboration between national authorities and used the methodology of social networks analysis to evaluate it.

Results of the analysis show that regulatory agencies’ resources do not explain their central position in the CEER and their structural power. The position of the regulatory authorities within the network is rather influenced by the degree of domestic competitiveness. In other words, the influence of national regulators at the transnational level does not depend on their material resources, but on the incentives for agencies that regulate competitive markets to be active in a European network that promotes competition and the harmonization of the single market.

In order to examine if and how the soft rules developed by the CEER are adopted in domestic politics, we have selected the guidelines for the management of information and transparency in the electricity markets. These voluntary guidelines aim to establish a consistent approach to the provision of information to all stakeholders active in the energy market. They were adopted at the network level in 2006 and have since progressively spread to member states. The rate of domestic adoption is currently over 60% and still rising. Our analysis shows that there is a significant relationship between the central position of agencies in the CEER and the degree of domestic adoption of the guidelines. Thus, there are indications of a self-reinforcing process: domestic competitiveness increases the influence of agencies in the transnational network, which in turn facilitates the adoption of harmonized pro-competition rules supporting the single market.

The financial sector

The Committee of European Securities Regulators (CESR) constitutes the leading network of the Lamfalussy process that aims to implement a new system of regulation of the European financial markets. The CESR was set up in 2001 to harmonize securities regulation in Europe. More precisely, it is responsible for improving coordination among securities regulators and it acts as an advisory group to assist the EU Commission in ensuring a consistent and timely implementation of community legislation in the member states. As they do not have European Community law status, CESR standards are not mandatory, which means that CESR members introduce them into their day-to-day regulatory practices on a voluntary basis.

CESR standards consist of sector-specific corporate governance measures to promote harmonized pro-competition rules in the security markets of member (and some non-member) states. They seek to improve transparency and investor protection while eliminating market barriers and reducing costs for investors and fund management companies. For instance, the standard 1 on financial information of 2003 represents a key contribution to the task of developing and implementing a common approach to the enforcement of International Financial Reporting Standards in Europe. It provides the principles by
which a harmonization on the institutional oversight systems in Europe may be achieved.

Our analysis of the adoption of standard 1 over time shows that the regulators of countries with larger financial industries tend to occupy more central positions in the network, and that this association is stronger among newer member states. Like in the energy sector, regulators’ resources are not a decisive factor. This finding suggests that agencies representing countries with higher stakes in financial market regulation have both the incentives and the legitimacy to join the network and to engage themselves more actively on the network board, in permanent groups, and in working groups. The fact that this dynamic is particularly strong for newcomers might suggest that, given their weaker integration within EU structures, they rely even more on this particular type of horizontal coordination to put forward their point of view and protect their national interests. Moreover, while most countries adopted the financial 1 standard developed by 2010, regulators that were more central within the network adopted it more quickly. Network centrality is associated with a more prompt domestic adoption of standards.

Networks shape national policies

These results have two main implications. First, contrary to much conventional wisdom, the resources of agencies do not determine the centrality of their position when developing soft rules in transnational networks. Instead, conditions related to the competitiveness of the domestic energy and financial markets influence the centrality of independent regulatory agencies within European networks. Second, the domestic adoption of the soft rules developed at network level is related to the centrality of agencies within the network. These findings confirm the relevance of network structures in shaping national policies.

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Publications


Project: “Internationalization, mediatization, and the accountability of regulatory agencies”

Duration: 2009–2013

Team: Prof. Fabrizio Gilardi (University of Zurich), Prof. Yannis Papadopoulos (University of Lausanne), Dr. Martino Maggetti (University of Zurich and Lausanne), Jan Biela (University of Lausanne).
How urban growth affects democracy

Be it Zurich, Grand Lyon, or Greater London: all around the world cities are growing and becoming “metropolitan areas”. Their territorial expansion has created a need to adapt the way in which these areas are governed. In Western Europe various policy-making models have been chosen. How democratic they are, however, is an open question.

By Adrian Ritter

It was a turning point: in 2008, for the first time in history, the majority of the world’s population were living not in rural but in urban areas. Growing “metropolitan areas” are spreading across the confines of cities, regions, and even nations. The “city region” of Zurich, for example, consists of 132 municipalities and cities in three different cantons.

Metropolitan areas typically face challenges in such fields as providing transportation infrastructure or promoting their economic space. Another new and important challenge is the growing mismatch between their territorial expansion and their institutional organization. How should these areas be governed?

Government or network

Merging into bigger municipalities is one possibility. Most areas however have chosen other ways to get organized on the metropolitan level. London with its Greater London Authority (GLA) as executive and the London Assembly as legislative power is one example of what political scientists call the “old regionalism” approach: political institutions such as governments and parliaments are created and given competencies for policy-making on the metropolitan-area level.

A different solution emerged from the approach of “new regionalism”: here, the municipalities’ political actors cooperate in policy related networks. While metropolitan governments are either elected by the people or consist of already elected politicians, networks, with their far from transparent decision-making processes, are problematic with respect to democratic legitimacy. No wonder then that political scientists are currently raising a number of questions about this very area: Is the emergence of metropolitan areas to be paralleled by new, political decision-making spheres at the same level? What is the role of the media in metropolitan governance? Do they contribute to transparency and therefore to democratic legitimacy?

No international comparison of the impact of these different approaches on the democratic quality of metropolitan policy-making exists. In 2009, to fill this gap, the NCCR Democracy started the project “Cleavages, governance and the media in European metropolitan areas.” In this interdisciplinary project, political scientists from the Center for Democracy Studies Aarau (ZDA) at the University of Zurich collaborate with communication scientists at the University of Münster.

The media play their part

In another study, the researchers compared the metropolitan areas of Berlin, Paris, Zurich, (representing the network approach) and London. This time, they focused on the way in which media report metropolitan politics. Particularly in metropolitan areas possessing non-
The National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCR) are a research instrument of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

The results show that even in a complex network of actors, the media show a quite differentiated and appropriate picture of the relevant policy actors and their responsibilities. Praise and criticism are well distributed in the news”, says Karin Hasler, PhD student on the project. Another finding was that the way in which media report on metropolitan areas highly influences citizens’ perception and acceptance of decisions taken on the metropolitan-area level.

In a follow-up project starting in autumn 2013, the researchers intend to focus more in detail on how citizens perceive metropolitan areas and their democratic legitimacy.

Growing importance of metropolitan areas

Daniel Kübler is convinced that metropolitan areas will continue to grow in importance: “They will be the leading political spaces of the 21st century. That’s why our future depends on their public governance capacity.” Kübler expects networks to be the predominant organizational structure for metropolitan areas of the future: “For reasons of democratic legitimacy, metropolitan areas around the world need a debate about how they should and can be governed.”

The consensual decision-making specifically found on metropolitan levels may create an opportunity to address certain problems. But it has its limits: “Metropolitan areas are capable of dealing with issues like public transportation or economic promotion. But they often fail to take decisions concerning environmental protection or social cohesion. Networks and elected metropolitan governments are overextended when they have to deal with issues that are highly regulatory or involve the redistribution of finances”, Kübler says.

For Kübler, a way to make metropolitan areas more democratic is to strengthen the power of parliaments. Creating more metropolitan parliaments is only one possibility. “Even more important is that the parliaments of municipalities and cantons discuss metropolitan issues more, creating public awareness and thereby influencing the agenda-setting of the metropolitan area”, says Kübler.

All in all, Kübler is optimistic about the future of metropolitan areas: “The urbanization of the world strengthens democracy. Cities are more likely to have strong middle classes. They will take action to back up their political claims. That will create a strong impulse for governments to establish more democracy.”

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Congratulations!

NCCR Knowledge Transfer Award 2012

Karin Hasler and Nicole Greuter are the winners of this year’s NCCR Democracy Knowledge Transfer Award. They receive the prize in recognition of their longstanding involvement in the annual Swiss Youth in Science (SJF) study week through which they have managed to get young people interested in NCCR Democracy research. The study week encourages high school and vocational school students between 16 and 20 years of age to delve into the world of social sciences and explore their own potential for research.

Since the very beginning of the collaboration between SJF and NCCR Democracy in 2010, Karin has been devising research projects for the young participants and supervising their work during the study week. Nicole joined her in the second year. The projects they devised dealt with topics closely related to the subjects of their own dissertations such as how young people are influenced by the media or how the Swiss media portray the political debate on the prohibition of euthanasia. By studying the role of the media in democracy, the students have not only discovered the positive and negative effects of a “mediatized” society, but have also learnt how social scientists work and how content analysis and empirical measurements are conducted. Moreover, they have been encouraged to become critical media consumers themselves.

Although it is a very challenging task to devise research projects for students of this age who cannot yet understand how social science research works, Karin says that she has also benefitted tremendously from the study week: “I recommend all researchers, especially those who are also teaching, participate at least once in such a study week. It makes you a better teacher. If we fail to put our research across in an understandable manner, the chain between science and society is broken.”

The NCCR Knowledge Transfer Award brings with it a prize of CHF 4,000 and was presented to the winners at the annual NCCR Democracy conference in Thun in November.

Living Reviews in Democracy Award

In October, the Board of the NCCR Doctoral Program granted the first Living Reviews in Democracy Award to NCCR PhD students Nils-Christian Bormann, Rinaldo Kühne, Antoinette Scherz, and Thomas Winzen. The prize recognizes...
The best articles published in the open access online-journal *Living Reviews in Democracy* (LRD), which publishes review articles that survey progress in democracy research and guide readers to the most important literature in the field. LRD articles are regularly updated by their authors to incorporate the latest developments on the theme.

The jury selected the award-winning articles particularly due to their completeness and originality:

Nils-Christian Bormann’s review summarizes the discussion of Lijphart’s typology of consensus and majoritarian democracies and challenges the typology’s usefulness for understanding democracies beyond the OECD world.

Rinaldo Kühne’s article focuses on the question of how the appeal to citizens’ emotions made by media coverage of political issues influences political opinions. It offers a review of the literature on the effects of mood, arousal, and emotions in judgment processes and analyzes if all affects, whether relevant to a judgment or not, have the same impact.

Questions on the legitimacy of the demos are the topic of Antoinette Scherz’s review. Democracy needs a clearly delimited demos to be able to make decisions. But who are the people that constitute the demos? The article aims to clarify the legitimacy of the demos’s boundaries, a question that has gained considerable importance due to migration and globalization.

Thomas Winzen deals with the question of whether political integration challenges democracy by undermining the impact of national parliaments and parliamentary elections on policy making. The paper reviews the literature on the role of national parliaments in the European Union and observes that the question of how national parliaments relate to citizens in EU affairs is a rarely-studied field.

**SIAF Award 2012**

The SIAF Award 2012 for outstanding doctoral theses presented by the Swiss Institute of International Studies and Ernst & Young has been given to former NCCR PhD student Tina Freyburg. Her dissertation explored how the European Union promotes democracy in neighboring countries in North Africa through transnational exchange, conditionality, and sector-specific cooperation. She showed that functional cooperation can be considered a promising way of yielding subtle processes of democratization. By participating in transgovernmental networks with the aim of solving policy-specific problems, state officials in authoritarian countries become acquainted with democratic governance and their attitudes towards such governance alter significantly in a positive way during the collaborative process.

The SIAF Award recognizes PhD theses that help us to understand the political, economic, social, and cultural relations in a globalized world and that stand out due to their scientific soundness, innovation, and original and independent thought. It is accompanied by a check for CHF 10,000. It is not the first time that Tina’s work on the topic has been honored: in 2011, she received the *Carl Beck Award of the International Studies Association* and the *Best Graduate Student Paper Award of the ECPR Standing Group on International Relations*, and in 2009 the prize for the best conference paper awarded by the *European Union Studies Association*. 

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The NCCR Democracy is a Swiss research centre for the multi-disciplinary study of the challenges to democracy in the 21st century.
In this issue of our alumni series we feature two former doctoral students who both work on highly topical European issues: the financial crisis and the EU’s democracy promotion policy.

Anna Kalbhenn, Economist, European Central Bank (ECB), Frankfurt.

What has been your career path after leaving the NCCR Democracy?

After leaving the NCCR Democracy, I held a PostDoc position at ETH Zurich for a few months and then joined the ECB where, until recently, I dealt with financial stability issues. I have just changed division and am now part of the Directorate General International and European Relations (DG-I). DG-I prepares the policy positions of the ECB, the European System of Central Banks and the Eurosystem on international on international as well as European issues. It also acts as primary contact for and maintains working relations with European and international institutions.

My business area reports to Executive Board member Jörg Asmussen, who is very active in explaining this movement towards a new architecture of EMU, as well as the ECB’s role in the current crisis, and related topics, at various events and in interviews. Speech writing and interview briefing are thus part of my everyday work.

Being part of the EU Institutions and Fora division, I also monitor legislative processes in the European Parliament that are under the aegis of the ECON committee, for example the banking supervision proposal that has received broad media coverage, and coordinate related work such as dealing with inquiries by Members of the European Parliament.

What was the topic of your dissertation?
The title of my dissertation is “Democracy, International Interlinkages and Cooperation over Shared Resources”. It deals with the international political economy of environmental politics, with a special focus on the management of transboundary resources. While international environmental politics might at first sight seem remote from central banking, the international political economy approach I took to the topic easily transfers to the issues I am currently working on. Supported by the NCCR, I also had the excellent opportunity to graduate from the doctoral program in economics offered by the foundation of the Swiss National Central Bank in Gerzensee. The knowledge gained in these comprehensive courses in econometrics, macro- & microeconomics is very helpful for my current work.

Does the experience gained in the NCCR help you in any way in your present position?

Some recent developments in financial markets can only partly be explained by financial metrics; and politics are important to an understanding of the full picture. The interdisciplinary approach advocated by the NCCR certainly adds value to gaining a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of current developments.

Furthermore, I benefit from the training provided within the scope of the NCCR. Transferable skills such as project management, giving effective presentations, dealing with media, or English writing skills are much appreciated for my everyday work.

Has being a part of the NCCR Democracy network helped you in any way, and – if so – how?

Having been part of the network has definitely helped, not only from a professional point of view, but also regarding social aspects. I am still in close contact with some of my NCCR fellows...
and always look forward to meeting and catching up with them.

What are the greatest challenges in your current work?

At present, Economic and Monetary Union is at an important stage. Working for a European institution at the heart of this process is very exciting and motivating. However, some of the recent developments have evoked euro-skepticism and nationalistic feelings. It can sometimes be challenging to explain the current situation to friends and family. Personally, I think that any fundamental changes to Europe’s institutional architecture will only be sustainable if they enjoy the support of Europe’s citizens.

What are your plans for the future?

Having just changed division, I feel I can still learn a lot in my current position. I am looking forward to becoming more of an expert in topics related to European central banking. All of the papers I started while being part of the NCCR have now been published and I am currently thinking of a new analytical project to take advantage of the ECB’s approach to underpinning its applied work with in-depth research.

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Anne Wetzel, Post-doctoral Fellow at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES), University of Mannheim, Germany.

After completing her PhD in July 2010, Anne Wetzel was awarded a one-year fellowship for prospective researchers by the Swiss National Science Foundation. During this year, she began collaboration with a group of researchers from the Centre for European Union Studies (CEUS) at Ghent University in Belgium. The team began to investigate the substance of the European Union’s (EU) policy on international democracy promotion (see www.eu-ipods.eu). The central question of this collaborative project was what exactly the EU advances in third countries through democracy promotion activities and which factors shape this substance. While this topic emerged from Anne’s PhD thesis on the EU’s promotion of democratic governance in neighboring countries, it shifted the focus away from instruments and impacts towards the content of democracy promotion which, at that point in time, had not attracted systematic attention. However, ‘substance’ is fundamental to any democracy promotion strategy and since the EU even today lacks a definition of ‘democracy’ for its external support activities it is far from obvious what it promotes.

The project was soon joined by several researchers from other European universities. A special issue of the European Foreign Affairs Review edited by Anne Wetzel and Jan Orbie of Ghent University and published at the end of 2011 summarized the findings of the first project phase: the editors concluded that the EU does not limit its focus to elections, rather it puts a great deal of emphasis on supporting the context conditions for democracy such as socioeconomic development. At the same time, it turned out that the EU does not have a clear conception of how these conditions relate to ‘core’ democratic values and does not engage in discourses on democracy in target countries.

In October 2011, Anne took up her current position at the MZES. During her first year there, along with Jan Orbie, she led an EU-funded Jean Monnet information and research activity, constituting the second phase of the project on the substance of EU democracy promotion, which was devoted to possible explanations of content. In order to discuss the research findings with officials from various EU institutions, representatives of civil society, citizens of the target countries, researchers, and the broader public, she co-organized two academic workshops and several dissemination events at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels. The research results will soon be published in a book and a special issue by
several researchers from Europe and the US.

For all these activities, she concludes, the experience gained in the NCCR Democracy has been extremely helpful. Particularly useful elements include PhD supervisors who showed how to critically assess research designs and arguments, the doctoral program colloquium where students learn how to peer review the work of colleagues, and the opportunities offered by the doctoral program such as method training and conference participation. The various activities organized in the peer mentoring group Stepping Stone, teaching opportunities, and the great network of colleagues spanning a number of universities also proved invaluable. Another positive experience was the excellent childcare provided by the Foundation for Childcare in the Zurich University Area. While new places should be created, the very existence of university crèches and a kindergarten represents a precious support for young researchers who combine work and a family, support that is still not self-evident for all universities.

Anne is currently developing a new research project. She wants to break new ground and investigate the status of regional organizations, above all the EU, in international organizations and study the conditions that enhance or hamper their participation.

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New NCCR Publications


Bernauer; Thomas & Vally Koubi. „Are bigger governments better providers of public goods? Evidence from air pollution.” *Public Choice*, 2012.


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Understanding democracy: Teaching and learning materials for civic education

In order to transfer knowledge gained in NCCR research projects into the classroom, the NCCR project "Civic education" develops teaching units for Swiss secondary levels I and II. The project recently launched the website politiklernen.ch which offers teachers didactic material on the topics of politics, globalization, and the media.

By Alexander Lötscher, Claudia Schneider, and Béatrice Ziegler

The website politiklernen.ch is a freely available teaching resource in the German language. Its content is based on the knowledge and research of the NCCR Democracy and illustrates current challenges to democracy through didactic material on six topics:

1) The first unit, Politics ("Politik"), introduces the basic concepts of politics, policy, and polity, as well as democracy as a form of government, as a type of (civil) society, and as a way of life. It is indispensable that pupils have an idea of what democracy is before pursuing the learning process further.

2) The unit Media ("Medien") illustrates the interactions between the media and politics (mediatization).

3) Globalization ("Globalisierung") depicts democracy under the influence of globalization and is based on the data of the NCCR Democracy's Democracy Barometer (www.democracybarometer.org), a project that measures just how democratic democracies are.

4) "Nation" deals with the role of citizens in a democracy and the naturalization process in Switzerland.

5) Vote ("Abstimmung"), closely connected to the unit "Nation", contains teaching material created in collaboration with the project baloti run by the Centre for Research on Direct Democracy (C2D) at the Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau. baloti.ch is a website that allows foreigners and minors to participate virtually in Swiss referendums.

6) The last topic, Class Council ("Klassenrat"), includes a handout for teachers who conduct "class councils" at secondary level on understanding democracy as a way of life in schools.

Cycle of political learning: Problem – contradictions – judgment

The teaching units follow the cycle of political learning designed by the authors for the baloti platform. It aims to widen pupils’ political conceptions, in particular concerning democracy and its challenges, and to motivate pupils to reflect on their own standpoint and worldview. (Political) problem solving is analyzed by detecting contradictions (e.g. between political standpoints and worldviews) which improve pupils’ ability to judge political problems. Judgments and opinions guide social behavior, which is confronted with new problems in the pursuit of interests, freedom, or happiness.

For example, pupils may be worried about violence in everyday life or in society in general (problem). Pupils describe how they perceive violence (awareness). Concepts of democracy facilitate the orientation of pupils within the political and societal system and raise awareness of the relationship between democracy and violence. Democracy as a way of life bans violence as a legitimate means of pursuing personal interests. The (democratic) state’s monopoly on violence (Max Weber) exists to guarantee law and order, e.g. by punishing criminals. This monopoly may be abused by the police and/or other state authorities and such abuses are reported by human rights activists as a functioning of civil society. This systemic view of violence illustrates contradictions in the interpretation of violence in our society, an interpretation which is influenced by media reports and media logic. Referring to normative standpoints enables pupils to make sense of contradictions and to justify their behavior, whether it results in trying to reduce the causes of violence in our society or not.

First evaluation of teaching units

As this learning process is quite demanding for teachers, special attention has been given to the evaluation of the project. Before politiklernen.ch was launched, its teaching units were evaluated by twelve future teachers, students of the School of Teacher Education Northwestern Switzerland (PH FHNW). How teaching units are evaluated depends on the beliefs of the teachers and their normative ideals regarding the behavior and competences of good citizens, and their understanding of how democracy and society should work. The future teachers listed political
knowledge, consciousness, interest, and Mündigkeit (responsibility) as the most important aims of civic education. Therefore, they suggested making the units more action-orientated and enabling individualized learning including tests to test the skills pupils have acquired. Furthermore, they asked for more background information for teachers as, in Switzerland, teachers do not receive vocational training in civic education. All in all, the results of the evaluation were encouraging, especially regarding the acceptance of the teaching units as a tool for trans-disciplinary civic education based on scientific findings and connected to the everyday life of pupils.

Civic education in Switzerland

As a complementary project, a reader on the history and tradition of civic education in Switzerland is being developed to enhance training for future teachers of the subject. The reader will also be used in further education. Teachers need to understand historical concepts of civic education in order to position themselves in current controversies regarding such education's aims, methods, and contents. These controversies have become apparent in the ongoing discussion concerning the introduction of a new curriculum for the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Civic education will probably be part of this curriculum as a trans-disciplinary topic based on the normative concepts of democracy and human rights, and will be implemented mainly within the subject of history.

In order to combine history and civic education and to avoid the risk of civic education being neglected, new didactical materials must be created. This has been done by the NCCR Democracy’s civic education team with its first e-learning tool Policy Cycle www.politikzyklus.ch and now with www.politiklernen.ch. Both constitute important contributions to supporting teachers in their civic education lessons and to motivating and empowering Swiss youth to participate in decision-making processes and political discussions. In order to actively promote the use of these two websites among teachers, the project team is now presenting them at educational conferences and in specialist magazines.

NCCR Civic education project

2005–2009: Development of the e-learning tool www.politikzyklus.ch enabling pupils to better understand and analyze the political process.

2009–2013: Development of the website www.politiklernen.ch with teaching and learning materials on the challenges to democracy, for civic education lessons at secondary levels I and II in Switzerland.

Team: Alexander Lütscher, Claudia Schneider, and Prof. Béatrice Ziegler at the Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau (ZDA), School of Teacher Education Northwestern Switzerland (PH FHNW).

Publications


“Swiss Youth in Science”: Young people research the consequences of globalization

Since the launch of the collaboration between NCCR Democracy and Swiss Youth in Science (SJF) in 2010, political- and communication science projects have become an integral part of the annual SJF study week for the social sciences and humanities. This year we welcomed eight young prospective researchers to the Department of Political Science / NCCR Democracy in Zurich. In two projects they analyzed the effects of globalization on labor markets and on the media.

By Yvonne Rosteck

Around 40 young people between 16 and 20 years of age from all over Switzerland studied the topic of globalization during the Swiss Youth in Science study week from 12 to 17 November 2012 at the universities of Basel, Geneva, and Zurich. Under the guidance of social science and humanities scholars they carried out their own small research projects. At the Department of Political Science / NCCR Democracy of the University of Zurich, doctoral students had devised two projects dealing with the consequences of globalization on different aspects of life. Eight young students were selected by the SJF to take part:

Christine Zollinger and Lineo de Vecchi prepared the project “Globalized labor markets – a blessing or a curse?” in which students Nino Biasotto, Dominik Ess, Milena Stojkovska, and Johanna Jean-Petit-Matile critically examined the implications of globalized labor markets. The University of Zurich was selected as a case study and the four students had the opportunity to interview UZH employees in order to find out why the university has an interest in hiring foreigners and why they, in turn, wish to work in Switzerland. The students thus not only learned about qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating research data but also gained an insight into everyday work at a university.

Nicole Greuter and Karin Hasler encouraged the students to reflect on how globalization has an effect on the media. As newspapers increasingly rely on information provided by news agencies and journalists no longer research news stories themselves, the question arises whether news content has become uniform nowadays. In the project “Globalization and media: same news for everybody?” students Eveline Hutter, Daria Maslennikova, Jonna Scheibler, and Cara-Dorothea Schneider examined, by means of a newspaper content analysis, if the media still provide us with a variety of news.

At the end of the week, the young people presented their research findings to a wider audience including family, friends and members of the public at the study week’s closing event and poster session at the University of Zurich. Their research reports have been published on the SJF website at www.sjf.ch.

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Eight young students (seated) worked on short research projects during the SJF study week under the guidance of four doctoral students (standing).
International workshop on “Demoi-cracy” in the European Union

In November 2012, researchers of the NCCR project “Designing demoi-cracy in the EU” held an international workshop on the topic at ETH Zurich to discuss their preliminary research results with external colleagues. Starting from the assumption that the idea of democracy in the EU has to take into account the existence of multiple demos, they discussed what demoi-cratic institutions are, how and why they evolve, and how they operate.

By Thomas Winzen

The concept of demoi-cracy starts from the view that a consolidated European demos is unlikely to emerge in the near future. For the time being, the EU lacks a strong European identity and sense of solidarity, an integrated public sphere, and system-wide intermediary political organizations such as political parties. From a demoi-cratic perspective, the EU is best seen as an association of liberal democracies. In this association different national demos agree on common decision-making procedures that represent their interests as collectives as well as the interests of individual European citizens.

In the introductory presentation, Francis Cheneval, Sandra Lavenex, and Frank Schimmelfennig argued that demoi-cracy is relevant in situations of tension between national autonomy and European cooperation. Such tensions emerge, first, when EU member states lose their veto power in supranational decision-making and, second, when EU competences extend beyond unstructured, technical regulation to redistributive, identity, and security relevant policy areas. The speakers raise questions such as when and why “demoi-cratisation” in the EU happens and whether it contributes to the EU’s legitimacy in the eyes of citizens and demos.

The contributions to the workshop addressed a number of specific questions on this research agenda. Jan-Pieter Beetz, Achim Hurrelmann, Andrea Schlenker, and Rebecca Welge presented studies of how individual citizens and news media perceive the EU. They emphasize the complexity and removed nature of EU policy-making. Citizens find it difficult to evaluate whether and how their interests as individuals and nations are represented in European decisions. The contributions highlighted the question of whether demoi-cratic institutions such as European citizenship could raise public understanding of EU politics.

Julia Sievers, Susanne Schmidt, Soeren Keil, and Sean Mueller studied whether innovative policy instruments have the potential to balance national autonomy and European integration. First, the principle of mutual recognition keeps national standards in place but demands tolerance of standards elsewhere. Yet applying this principle to the area of criminal law in the form of a European Arrest Warrant has created challenges to the protection of individual rights. Second, a system of fiscal transfers may help to remedy imbalances in the European market. Yet while in Switzerland such a system seems to function, it relies on a large contribution from the federal level, which the EU budget cannot deliver.

Michael Buess, Aron Buzogany, Mette Christensen, Christilla Roederer-Rynning, Frank Schimmelfennig, and Thomas Winzen examined institutional questions. They show that national parliaments have created stronger institutions to control EU decision-making, especially if skeptical of the desirability of a European Parliament. In Denmark, and perhaps elsewhere, parties use domestic parliamentary institutions to control their government in EU decision-making. Yet there are few signs of party strategies that extend to the European level or to other countries. Most recently, the Lisbon Treaty created the opportunity for national parliaments to cooperate transnationally in the monitoring of subsidiarity. Beyond parliaments, European regulatory agencies maintain lines of accountability to national governments, though to varying degrees across countries and agencies. For the positive theory of demoi-cracy, the contributions raise the question of under what conditions domestic institutions strengthen their powers over the European level and how actors use new institutional opportunities in practice. Finally, Matthias Vileyn showed that demoi-cratic questions are relevant beyond the EU. Many federal states also display high levels of internal diversity and encounter claims to sub-federal representation.

Contact

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Upcoming events

The diffusion of democracy

31 January 2013, 17:15, University of Zurich main building KOH B 10
Public panel discussion with Beth Simmons (Harvard University), Valerie Bunce (Cornell University), and Kurt Weyland (University of Texas at Austin). The panel discussion takes place in the framework of the annual congress of the Swiss Political Science Association in January 2013 at the University of Zurich.

Further information
www.svpw-asp.ch/plenary2013.html

Democracy in crisis

15/16 March 2013, Lucerne
Conference organized by the foundation Stiftung Lucerna in collaboration with NCCR Democracy.

Democracy finds itself today in a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, democracy is the guiding model for managing the way in which people live together in a beneficial and just way. On the other hand, citizens in western democracies are nowadays increasingly disillusioned with their political leaders and institutions, and democracy is challenged by economic and societal changes. Democracy’s accomplishments are taken for granted and we do not strive to cultivate them. The aim of this conference is to engage scientists and the public in a dialogue on the current state of democracy. As a starting point, the organizers have asked Swiss citizens to participate in a survey on how they perceive democracy today. The responses and results will be discussed at the conference, which will bring together politicians, scholars of political science and jurisprudence, civil society actors, and the general public. The event is part of a series of three public conferences and two scientific workshops on current topics in democracy taking place from March 2013 until March 2015. Findings will be published in a book early in 2016.

Further information
www.lucerna.ch

5th Aarau Democracy Days: Democracy and the European Union

21–22 March 2013, Kultur- und Kongresshaus Aarau

Euro-crisis, rescue packages and calls for stronger political and economic integration: Europe is challenged and in transition. But what might solutions look like? Political union? Increased technocracy? More direct democracy such as, for example, the new “Citizens’ Initiative” which allows citizens to collect signatures and petition the European Commission to address certain topics? Are there parallels between the political integration of Europe and of Switzerland? Could Switzerland be a role model for the EU?

The 5th edition of the Aarau Democracy Days will bring together representatives from academia, politics, media, and the general public to discuss these questions. The program of this two-day public event includes academic workshops, a lecture by former vice-president and member of the European Commission Günter Verheugen, and a panel discussion with Verheugen, Konstantinos Chryssogonos of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and Gerald Häfner, member of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament.

As part of the cultural program there will be an exhibition on the 19th-century political reformer and promoter of democracy Heinrich Zschokke.

The Aarau Democracy Days are organized annually each March by the Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau (ZDA).

Further information
www.demokratietage-zda.ch