ONLINE PARTICIPATION PROCESSES IN THE GREEN PARTY GERMANY

Gefion Thuermer
g2g14@soton.ac.uk
@GefionT

Questions

1. How do party members react to the introduction of new online participation processes and tools?
2. Does ideology influence the adoption of online participation tools? If so, how?
3. Are there differences in views and tool adoption between grass-roots members and party leaders?

Methods

- **Observe & Interview**
  - Discussion and decisions about participation Party members engaged in these discussions
  - Discussion and decisions on implementation Party leaders, members, experts & staff
  - Re-assess status quo and views

Results

- Quite universal expectation that new tools will be beneficial, though mostly for ‘others’
- Reinforcement: New tools increase participation of already active members
- Self-fulfilling prophecy: Higher rating of tools, and belief that they will empower participants, increase activity
- Ideology contributes to tool adoption

Factors for planned increase in participation

- **Poll Befragung**
  - Education (comp. to PhD)
  - Own Position
  - Gender (f)
  - Age (comp. to 70+)
  - Internet Use (comp. to Every Week)
  - Anticipated increase through Befragung

- **Petition Begehren**
  - Preference Vote
  - Institutional Activity
  - Participation Online Activity & own Position
  - All the Time
  - Every Year

Background: *Including everyone vs. including everyone*

Democratic processes should allow for equal opportunities to participate, but use of and benefit derived from the internet are inherently unequal: They vary with socio-economic status. The Green Party wants to achieve equal and increased grass-roots participation through online tools. These goals are at odds, reflected in the digital divide.

Green Party Germany

- Founded in 1980, out of ecology, feminist and peace movements
- Committed to grass-roots participation, though success led to reduction of member influence
- Introducing online processes to enable more members to participate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Mobilisation</th>
<th>Reinforcement</th>
<th>Replacement</th>
<th>Non-Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inactive members begin to participate</td>
<td>Already active members participate more</td>
<td>Online processes replace offline processes</td>
<td>No engagement with online processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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