

Call for Contributions on Committees

from Hilmar Rommetvedt and Sven T. Siefken
for the Research Committee of Legislative Specialists (RCLS)
of the International Political Science Association (IPSA)
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Call for contributions to a publication in 2020:

Parliamentary Committees in the Policy Process – Their Role in Legislation, Oversight, Scrutiny and Communication

Committees are important units of modern parliaments and legislatures. Academic textbooks and political practitioners alike often mention them as the central place of policy making where substantiated debate, negotiation and deal making take place. But recent studies indicate that this may not – or no longer – be the case. However, committees' role is not limited to making laws: they can be active in oversight, scrutiny and communication, too. All in all, many details of committees' activities remain unclear, not the least because they often meet behind closed doors.

The formal and informal institutional settings for committees also have a great variation between political systems and their work and policy relevance may differ accordingly. We aim to identify these differences by in-depth country case studies and shed light on their consequences. To this end, we will bring together contributions from country specialists on parliaments in the various political systems, both for established democracies and those in transition.

The publication will proceed by developing a framework of unified questions on the role of committees in the policy process. It will cover the institutional setting, legislative and oversight influence and numerous questions of their policy making power as well as their communication and outreach activities. In bicameral systems, the relevance of the respective committees in each house will also be addressed. Contributions should cover these aspects in a general analysis, but there will be room for specialized topics with regard to committees that the authors develop individually. Suggestions for (small-N) comparative analyses of parliamentary committees are also welcome.

First drafts for the chapters will be discussed during an authors' workshop in the fall of 2019, tentatively planned to take place in Valencia, Spain. The final chapters are to be submitted by the beginning of 2020. If you are interested in contributing to this publication, please send a short abstract of around 400 words to Hilmar Rommetvedt (hiro@norcereasearch.no) and Sven T. Siefken (politik@siefken.org) by March 15, 2019.