Political Networks

First session on 14 April!
Mary-Sommerville-Str. 7, Entry via Haus Wien

1) Aims

Political decisions usually are not made by individual and isolated actors. Instead the political landscape is structured by political networks – coalitions of actors who directly cooperate in parties, interest groups, associations and organizations or coalitions of actors who share similar perspectives, convictions and/or arguments. To analyze the role and influence of political networks an explicitly relational perspective is needed, including methods that are able to operationalize the political space sets of relations. Social network analysis provides such a method and conceptual framework. This MA course provides theoretical and practical insights into the research on political networks. We will thus read and discuss important contributions to the research on political networks. In addition the course will provide an introduction to two software packages for network analysis and visualization.

2) Course Requirements

Students are expected to read the required literature, as it builds the basis for collective discussion in the course. During the course you will learn to use two software packages for network analysis of which one depends on the statistical computing environment R. No prior knowledge of R is required, but students have to be willing to learn some R program code. For this all students have to bring their own laptop to the course (the programs run on Windows, Linux and Mac OS). All participants have to present in at least one session. Students can decide whether they will develop a small empirical research project or address a theoretical question in their term paper.

To receive your credit point it is required to
- regularly participate in the course
- give a PowerPoint presentation
- write a term paper until 15 September 2016

3) Course Schedule

1 14.4.16 Introduction
   • Introduction Network Analysis

2 21.4.16 Network Society
3 28.4.16 The Relational Perspective


4 12.5.16 Network Analysis

Granovetter, Mark (1973): The Strength of Weak Ties, in: The American Journal of Sociology 78(6): 1360–1380.]

Movie: Connected: The Power of Six Degrees

5 19.5.16 Intro to R & Visone

• Install R: https://www.r-project.org/
• Install RStudio: https://www.rstudio.com/
• Install Visone: http://visone.info/

6 26.5.16 Networks in International Politics


Exercise: World Trade Data

7 2.6.16 Interest Group Networks


8 9.6.16 Network Measures

Exercise: Diverse Network Measures

9 16.6.16 **Interlocking Directorates**


10 23.6.16 **Discourse Coalitions**


11 30.6.16 **Discourse Networks**


12 7.7.16 **Coding Discourse Network Data**


Exercise: tba

*Texts with bullet points (•) are required readings for all students, texts in square brackets are optional readings and are the basis for the presentations.*