

country's modern history. It also builds a bridge from the failed democratic experiment of the 1950s to the current democratic state and its Islamic parties. Hence, the book is

certain to enrich the debate on Indonesia's immediate post-independence period as well as on the historical roots of the country's democratic party system.

Simona Bevern, *Party Communication in Routine Times of Politics: Issue Dynamics, Party Competition, Agenda-Setting, and Representation in Germany*, Mannheim, Germany: Springer VS, 2015; XXI + 233 pp.: ISBN 978-3-658-09204-7; 978-3-658-09205 4, £42.99 (softcover); £33.99 (e-Book)

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Simona Bevern's book, *Party Communication in Routine Times of Politics: Issue Dynamics, Party Competition, Agenda-Setting, and Representation in Germany*, is a quantitative PhD research. It investigates political parties' communication behaviour in modern democratic regimes during the period between two national elections and how this behaviour is related to factors such as inter-party competition, public opinion and Europeanization. It addresses the main question of what and why political parties communicate in routine times of politics? The study focuses on five parties sitting in the German Bundestag during one legislative term spanning 2005–2009 (p. 46). The main variable of the study is party communication. The explanatory variables cover issue salience, ownership and parties' policy positions, the parliamentary agenda (i.e. issues in the parliament), the public agenda (i.e. the most important issues in public opinion), the distribution of competences in the European Union and European events.

For the analysis, Simona Bevern used a census of more than 25,000 press releases issued by the five parties along the targeted period of study. Those press releases were coded using the Comparative Policy Agendas (CAP) project-coding scheme, which consists 'of 26 exhaustive and mutually exclusive policy domains for the manual coding of the press releases' (p. 11). She also conducted biweekly representative surveys that contained questions about public and partisans' opinion. Using CAP, she also coded the official minutes of the plenary sessions in the Bundestag and party manifestos issued for the elections in 2005 and 2009. Furthermore, she used survey data on party positions from the Chapel Hill Expert database for the purposes of her study (p. 47).

The analysis is based on time series and multilevel regression models. Namely, vector auto regression models (VARs) as time series technique and a logistic regression approach as multilevel model. Bevern justifies her choice of VAR because such a technique explains the relationships between variables over time and which factors drive such variables. In addition, because of its ability to give answers

to questions such as 'if we observe the communication of party A and party B, what will be the present and future implications for party B if party A raises the attention on a particular issue at a certain point in time?' Or, 'if the attention of the public for a particular issue increases, what are the implications for the communication behaviour of party A and party B?' (pp. 81–82). The logistic regression approach as multilevel model was used to test the relationships between the Europeanization of party communication and the various independent variables of the study (p. 87). However, to understand the study design and its approach, the reader needs to be familiar with at least the basics of the quantitative methods as some statistical tests are used for the analysis.

The study tested 21 hypotheses distributed into four main areas from the research's theoretical framework: inter-party competition, party–parliament links, party–public links, and multilevel context (p. 44). Bevern conducted several statistical tests to conclude that party communication in Germany is connected to parliamentary activities, inter-party competition, public opinion, and the Europeanization. Thus, the study argues that political parties function 'to provide a link between citizens and government, act as interest aggregators and mediators, contribute to opinion formation through information activities, mobilize public support, propose policies, and structure the choices and alternatives along different issue dimensions' (p. 210).

The key contribution of the book is threefold. Firstly, most of the other studies in the field of political communication focus on investigating political parties, groups or movements during conflict times such as war, violence and uprisings. Alternatively, other studies in the field focus on radical or terrorist organisations to understand their agenda, ideology and political behaviours. Some books discuss party political communication behaviour within authoritarian regimes. Even papers studying party political communication in democratic political systems investigate a specific campaign or focus on election times. However, this study can be considered as one of the few that deals with party communication behaviour during routine times of politics. Secondly, most of the studies in the field of party political communication follow qualitative approaches using Harold Lasswell's formula – *Who says what to whom via which channels with what effects* – to explain the political parties' communication, which make most such studies more descriptive. Nevertheless, the current study is an explanatory research that pursues a quantitative approach and examines variables and causation

chains that makes the study's results more empirical and generalizable. Thirdly, Bevern's study connects theories of communication, party competition, agenda setting and representation to analyse systematically party communication during the period between two parliamentary elections.

The strongest part of the book is the well-illustrated, rigorous research design, in which Simona Bevern justifies her case selection and explains the data collection and measurement. In this, she succeeds in ensuring that the evidence obtained in the study enable answering the research question as unambiguously as possible. Yet

the weakest part of the book is the absence of a literature review as it is unclear which hypotheses the study derived from the examination of previous research. We actually are not informed of preceding studies examined in relation to her study's variables. Overall, it is a good book for understanding what and why political parties continue to communicate after elections but, as stated above, one needs to have a good knowledge of qualitative methods to grasp fully the materials presented and discussed in the book.