

Public Support for EU Involvement of National Political Representatives

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Abstract

One of the major concerns in current public debates about issues related to the European Union (EU) (e.g. the refugee crisis, CETA/TTIP) is whether and how national politicians manage to hold the EU accountable. This can be done at the EU level where national political representatives are directly involved in EU decision-making. In addition, recent research suggests that national political parties and their MPs engage in a wide range of EU oversight activities to monitor EU policy-making. Several scholars emphasize that comprehensive EU involvement of national representatives contributes to making the EU more democratic. However, the question arises whether EU involvement of national representatives actually matters to citizens. Do they want their national political representatives to get involved in EU politics? To answer this question, we investigate citizens' preferences for EU involvement of national representatives in two studies using observational and experimental data. In the first study, we examine public support for EU involvement of national political representatives at the European level based on cross-sectional Eurobarometer data. In the second study, we focus on EU involvement of MPs at the national level and make use of choice-based conjoint analysis survey experiments in the UK and Germany. Our results contribute to a greater understanding of the chain of accountability and delegation in democratic multi-level systems and give new answers to the question what citizens expect from their national representatives in EU affairs.

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