

Parliamentary votes and MPs' private initiatives in Eduskunta

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Electronic data in Eduskunta

- When PCs appeared in the early 1990s that's more or less the beginning of electronic document archiving in Eduskunta
- Earlier data in paper format or perhaps microfilms. That said, some old docs have been scanned lately
- Electronic voting machines in the plenary hall first appeared already in the 1950s, however, systematic vote archiving started in 1975
- Problems: old data might be hard to get and recently data formats have started to change creating download & compiling issues

The Data: votes and initiatives

- Votes (FSD #2117):
 - 1975-78 available for coding
 - 1979– are available
 - Total of 33313 votes
 - Compiling & collecting took years → format changes in the way
 - & Aleks Jakulin
- Initiatives (FSD #3168):
 - Availability: 1991-2014
 - Total of 29922 initiatives
 - 2015-19 the format changed
 - Collecting & compiling took years
 - & Tomi Kause

Research applying these data

- According to FSD reports the data have also been used by other researchers
- What have I published? Please refer to <http://users.utu.fi/anpaja/work/work.html>
- Co-authors include a computer scientist(s), statistician, theoretical physicist, economist, MA students

Research problems / Findings

- Votes:
- Voting cohesion by Stuart Rice (1920s) → how united the political party groups are in plenary votes. They are VERY united
- Markku Laakso's method w/ vector presentation (1970s) → party group distances from the government majority. Gov. acts as a bloc, but (the rather mild) opposition does not. Big parties stay in mainstream
- Scaling methods; OC, NOMINATE, IDEAL spawned by Poole & Rosenthal (1990s) → everyone vis-a-vis- everyone else i.e. individual MPs positioning relative to each other. Finnish political landscape is unidimensional

Research problems / Findings

- Private initiatives (=private bills):
- Analysis of initiative cosponsor networks; first attempts were simple (map out the environment), but were followed by advanced network analysis with co-authors → who cooperates with who in parliament?
- Main result: it's not only the political parties, districts/areas have their own role as well