

Section 3 – Politica Comparata

Chairs: Gianfranco Baldini, Elisabetta de Giorgi

Panel 3.16 Interest groups and policy-makers in comparative perspective: Old questions and new approaches

Interest groups are crucial actors in democratic regimes and they play a key function in terms of legitimacy and representation. Yet, several general trends have influenced the action and the role these actors perform as intermediaries between the institutional sphere and civil society. First, relations between political parties and interest groups seem to have weakened during the last decades. Second, interest groups have experienced a process of professionalization, which has altered their resources and the way they pursue their goals. At the same time, they have tried to adapt to a new environment, especially conditioned by the increasing importance of digital technologies, which can be simultaneously both an asset and a threat. Third, the recent economic crisis had also important effects for the organizational features of interest groups, as well as their mobilization strategies and the politics of alliance. This panel aims to elucidate the importance of interest groups within representative democracies by examining their relation with other relevant actors of the policy making. Papers can rely on different types of data, and we welcome both case studies and comparative works. In particular, the panel seeks to provide a fresh and innovative analysis on the role played by interest groups, not only limited to the Italian case but also to other relevant countries. The panel will be a forum for discussing how interest groups have addressed recent challenges, such as Europeanization, the economic crisis, the growing instability of party systems and new patterns of mobilization.

Chairs: Marco Lisi