

The Multi-level Electoral System of the EU

CONNEX-Conference (RG3)

Villa La Collina, Cadenabbia, March 19-22, 2007

Draft Agenda

March 19 **Arrival during the day**

20:00 hrs **Dinner**

March 20

9:00 hrs **Welcome to the Conference and Introduction to its Agenda,
by Cees van der Eijk and Hermann Schmitt**

10:00 hrs **Variations in the calculus of the vote between different levels**

Alberto Sanz Cazorla: Split-Ticket Voting in Multi-Level Electoral Competition: European, National and Regional Concurrent Elections in Spain [discussant: Kritzinger].

Pedro Magalhaes: Patterns of vote switching from legislative to presidential elections in Portugal [discussant: Toka].

Santiago Perez-Nievas & Eduard Bonet: Shifting patterns of the ethno-regionalist vote in multi-level electoral systems [discussant: Wuest] .

13:00 hrs **Lunch**

14:00 hrs **Context effects on electoral actors**

Ignacio Lago & José Ramón Montero: Co-ordination between electoral arenas in multi-level systems [discussant: Binzer Hobolt].

Thomas Gschwend: Contamination effects in multi-level systems of governance [discussant: van der Brug].

Robert Rohrschneider: Programmatic freedom of political parties in multi-level electoral contests [discussant: Marsh] .

20:00 hrs **Dinner**

March 21

9:00 hrs EP elections in perspective

Eftichia Teperoglu & Stavros Skrinis: The interplay between local/regional and European elections: Comparing second-order elections [discussant: Mikaylov].

Olga Gyarfasowa: Public discourse on EU matters as a factor in political competition [discussant: Schmitt].

Paolo Segatti: How preceding second-order elections affect subsequent national elections in Italy: more questions than answers [discussant: Franklin].

John Garry & James Tilley: Cross-context heterogeneity and models of EP voting behaviour [discussant: van der Eijk]

13:00 hrs Lunch

14:00 hrs The next European Election Study

Wouter van der Brug et al: First Steps Towards a European Election Study 2009 [discussant: everybody].

20:00 hrs Dinner

March 22 Departure of participants

The Multi-level Electoral System of the EU

CONNEX-Conference (RG3)

Villa La Collina, Cadenabbia, March 19-22, 2007

Preliminary List of Participants

| | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 1. | Becker, Edda | Mannheim | ebecker@mzes.uni-mannheim.de |
| 2. | Bonet, Eduard | Barcelona | eduard.bonet@upf.edu |
| 3. | Brug, Wouter van der | Amsterdam | w.vanderbrug@uva.nl |
| 4. | Eijk, Cees van der | Nottingham | cees.vandereijk@nottingham.ac.uk |
| 5. | Franklin, Mark | Florence | mark.franklin@eui.eu |
| 6. | Garry, John | Belfast | j.garry@qub.ac.uk |
| 7. | Gschwend, Thomas | Mannheim | thomas.gschwend@mzes.uni-mannheim.de |
| 8. | Gyarfasova, Olga | Bratislava | olga@ivo.sk |
| 9. | Hobolt, Sara Binzer | Oxford | sara.hobolt@politics-and-international-relations.oxford.ac.uk |
| 10. | Kritzinger, Sylvia | Vienna | sylvia.kritzinger@his.ac.at |
| 11. | Lago, Ignacio | Barcelona | ignacio.lago@upf.edu |
| 12. | Magalhaes, Pedro | Lisbon | pedro.magalhaes@ics.ul.pt |
| 13. | Marsh, Michael | Dublin | mmarsh@ |
| 14. | Mikaylov, Slava | Dublin | mikhailv@tcd.ie |
| 15. | Montero, José Ramon | Madrid | joseramon.montero@uam.es |
| 16. | Pérez-Nievas, Santiago | Madrid | santiago.pereznievas@uam.es |
| 17. | Rohrschneider, Robert | Bloomington | rrohersch@indiana.edu |
| 18. | Sanz Cazorla, Alberto | Madrid | a.sanz@uam.es |
| 19. | Segatti, Paolo | Milano | paolo.segatti@unimi.it |
| 20. | Skrinis, Stavros | Athens | skrinis@hotmail.com |
| 21. | Schmitt, Hermann | Mannheim | hschmitt@mzes.uni-mannheim.de |
| 22. | Teperoglu, Eftichia | Athens | efteperoglou@gmail.gr |
| 23. | Tilley, James | Oxford | james.tilley@politics-and-international-relations.oxford.ac.uk |
| 24. | Toka, Gabor | Budapest/ Oxford | gabor.toka@politics.ox.ac.uk |
| 25. | Wüst, Andreas | Mannheim | awuest@mzes.uni-mannheim.de |
| 26. | XXX (Assistant of MF) | Florence | |

Note: Participants printed in bold are put in the Villa, others stay in the Academia. Who is where has been decided upon seniority.

The Multi-level Electoral System of the EU

CONNEX-Conference (RG3)

Villa La Collina, Cadenabbia, March 19-22, 2007

Abstracts of papers

Wouter van der Brug, Sarah Binzer Hobolt, Silvia Kritzinger, Pedro Magalhaes and Gabor Toka with Mark N. Franklin and Hermann Schmitt: First Steps Towards a European Election Study 2009.

This paper is meant to become the nucleus of a research proposal for the next European Parliament election study. It will deal with three aspects at least: the focus of the study, including one overarching research question; the conceptual framework in which this research question will be dealt with; and the methods that will be applied to answer the question. Matters of continuity – always of importance in ongoing election studies – and of funding will also be addressed.

John Garry, Belfast & James Tilley, Oxford: Cross-context heterogeneity and models of EP voting behaviour

There are two main interpretations of voting behaviour in European Parliament elections. According to one view, it is EU related matters that drive voting behaviour, with pro-EU citizens expected to vote for pro-EU parties and Euro-sceptic citizens expected to vote for Euro-sceptic parties. In contrast, second order national election theory predicts that it is factors relating to domestic politics that determine voting at EP elections. Thus, for example, citizens who are dissatisfied with the national economy will punish the incumbent national government at EP election time while citizens who are satisfied with the national economy will reward the incumbent national government at the EP election. We suggest that these two apparently distinct - and rival - interpretations of voting behaviour operate differently in different parts of the newly enlarged EU. In the context of former communist countries the models should not be regarded as distinct but rather should be seen as complementary. Following Tucket et al., we argue that in the specific transition context of former communist states, views on EU integration are a function of views on the domestic economy. Hence in this context, EU views mediate the impact on voting of evaluations of the domestic economy. In contrast, in the western states, domestic economic evaluations and attitudes to EU integration are not strongly linked and may more usefully be regarded as distinct possible explanations of voting. We discuss the broad implications of this line of thinking for overarching models of European voting behaviour that incorporate cross-context heterogeneity.

Thomas Gschwend, Mannheim: Contamination Effects in Multi-Level Systems of Governance

Most European democracies employ a multi-level system of governance. They provide several challenges and important opportunities for representative democracy and electoral accountability. This project is still in the grant development phase and will deal with the

nature of the relationship between different levels of governance. To what extent do sub-national elections play a different role at different times within a country? I am interested in parsing out the conditions under which the national arena has an impact on state elections (and vice versa) and try to assess its consequences. The starting point of this project is to conceptualize the decision-making process of citizens and political elites as a trade-off between their preferences and the incentives that are provided by the electoral context (e.g. institutions). A system of multi-level governance does offer voters and elites various incentives to act strategically that a focus on only a single electoral arena would not permit. Do voters strategically balance one level (vertically or horizontally) against another level? Nevertheless, political elites form expectations and try to anticipate the behavior of citizens while making the first move. They have to decide whether to compete in an election, form (pre-electoral) coalitions, how to campaign and what policies they offer. How do both processes, the expectation formation and the decision-making process, operate at the individual level and what are the electoral consequences of that?

Olga Gyarfasowa, Bratislava: Public Discourse on EU membership and EU policies as a factor in political competition

In the first EP election the voting pattern of the “newcomer” countries did not follow the model of the “old” EU members – strengthening the opposition and voting for EU-sceptical or anti-EU parties. For example in Slovakia extreme parties EU-skeptical and EU-phobe parties (communists or nationalists) mobilizing anti-EU sentiments was not successful. The mobilization was above all party identification driven, not driven by party competition on policies (neither national nor EU). The results were to a great extent determined by very different levels of mobilization. The overall phenomenon was turnout even lower than in EU15. All in all the second order election thesis was applicable only partially.

In some new countries the first after-accession national election brought populist and “strange” political parties into the power (above all in Slovakia and Poland). Some of these parties are (or were) europhobe (Slovak nationalists, Mečiar’s Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, League of Polish Families, Self-Defence); eu- incompatible – are not members of EU party families, or due to certain steps they are not accepted and “punished” recently (suspension of membership for Smer party). The post-entry national election results are often interpreted as “reform and transformation fatigue” but also as a reaction of the voters to the EU accession process which was demanding and tough. As a consequence - the populism is on rise, moreover, is entering the foreign policy areas more than ever before.

Effects of these changes in domestic politics on

1. perception of the EU and the role of EU and EU policies in the public discourse
2. pattern of the main axis of party competition
3. electoral dynamics and interdependency national vs. EU election few years after the accession and approaching second EP election.

Ignacio Lago, Barcelona & José Ramón Montero, Madrid: Co-ordination between electoral arenas in multi-level systems.

This paper shows the existence of a co-ordination dilemma in multi-level countries that hold elections for different parliaments, at different territorial levels, and with different electoral rules. With evidence from Spain, our analysis identifies *interaction* or *contamination* effects between national and sub-national electoral arenas that generate, just as in most mixed-

member electoral systems, a centrifugal force that increases the number of electoral parties in national elections. The incentives that solve this coordination dilemma faced by small regional or local parties are theoretically discussed and empirically tested.

Pedro Magalhaes, Lisbon: Patterns of vote switching from legislative to presidential elections in Portugal

This paper is on the Portuguese 2006 presidential elections, examining patterns of vote switching from legislative to presidential elections, heavily influenced by Michael Marsh's take on the same subject in what regards legislative-European elections, but in this case addressing legislative-presidential elections in a semipresidential regime and benefiting from data from a 2005-2006 panel survey.

Santiago Perez-Nievas, Madrid & Eduard Bonet, Barcelona: Shifting patterns of the ethnoregionalist vote in multi-level electoral systems

We have been working on the vote ethnoregionalist parties in different European countries from a comparative perspective. Now we are exploring the shifting patterns on the impact of individual factors on ethnoregionalist vote looking both at the regional and the national level (taking into account parties in at least three countries: Belgium, Spain and the UK, and probably more).

Robert Rohrschneider, Bloomington: Programmatic freedom of political parties in multi-level electoral contests

I will prepare a short "think-piece" on whether political parties have any programmatic freedom at all to formulate seemingly divergent issue positions at the domestic and Europe-wide level. The key dilemma for parties to overcome the "second-order" effect of European elections is that parties are known to domestic audiences from prior election campaigns, usually national ones. This prior ideological commitment may restrict parties' ability to espouse programmatic positions at one level that are not clearly linked to their positions at other levels. This raises two key questions. First, to what extent does a party's programmatic commitment at one level restrain its programmatic flexibility at the other level? Second, under what conditions can parties overcome these restrictions and create programmatic flexibility?

Substantively, the paper will discuss the factors that presumably define elites' restraints and flexibility in adopting positions on the two levels. Are there conditions under which parties can take seemingly inconsistent positions at two levels (by, for example, resorting to different kinds of framing)? Or are parties bound to have ideologically consistent positions given that domestic audiences usually know the programmatic heritage of political actors?

Methodologically, the paper will discuss how one might use experiments embedded in public opinion surveys to address the vexing causal questions raised by mass-elite interactions.

Alberto Sanz Cazorla, Madrid: Split-Ticket Voting in Multi-Level Electoral Competition: European, National and Regional Concurrent Elections in Spain.

This research intends to shed new light on the causes of split-ticket voting in concurrent multi-level European, national and regional elections held under PR electoral rules. Up to now, differences in electoral outcomes shown in Spanish concurrent regional elections have been understood as a product of higher levels of *tactical* voting associated to *second order* elections. Evidence against this interpretation is presented, and alternative explanations from the international literature are then tested. Preliminary evidence shows that Spanish ticket-splitters *weight* their European, regional and local electoral choices in a different manner: while they are salient for basing their local vote in personal interests (egotropic vote), they outstand in the regional *arena* by using regional interests as criteria for issuing their vote. Finally, in European elections –in the absence of real executive power– ticket-splitters tend to issue their votes based on their ideological preferences, more often than the rest of the electorate.

Eftichia Teperoglu & Stavros Skrinis, Athens: The interplay between local/regional and European elections: Comparing second-order elections

Given that the meeting is aiming at "striking a balance of previous research and defining the research agenda for the future" we will on the one hand do a brief literature review on what has been written on the relationship between local and European elections, and on the other, propose certain questions that could be incorporated in the EES 2009. These questions would help in exploring behaviour in elections of the two different levels of government, which are both second-order.

The Multi-level Electoral System of the EU

CONNEX-Conference (RG3)

Villa La Collina, Cadenabbia, March 19-22, 2007

Call for papers

The multi-level electoral system of the European Union: Striking a balance of previous research and defining the research agenda for the future.

Democracy, representation, accountability – all of these “good things” in politics require well-functioning elections. In order to understand the conditions under which elections are more or less likely to yield these desired effects (or other, conceivably unintended consequences) we have learned a lot from comparative studies (cross-system as well as over-time) and their focus on the importance of context for the aspirations, motivations and behaviour of the different actors that are involved in the electoral process: voters, parties, politicians, and media.

Adequate understanding of electoral processes requires extensive research designs (cf. the CSES as an example in cross-national perspective). This is all the more true when we turn to multi-level electoral systems. These are characterized by the fact that the motivations and behaviours of ‘electoral actors’ at different levels (e.g., national, sub-national, European) are not independent, but related to one another. One of the most studied multi-level electoral systems is, of course, the European Union.

The group of scholars associated with the European Election Studies have studied multi-level elections for almost three decades, and they have generated an impressive number of publications (see <http://www.europeanelectionstudies.net/Publications.htm>; please use the submission form on this page to include publications that should not be missing in this list). Keeping in mind that the next European elections are in 2009, the question is how this tradition of multi-level election studies is to be advanced in the future. Some strands of future research appear particularly fruitful in our view, and, moreover, particularly suited to be tackled with the help of the collective and variegated knowledge and experience of the group of scholars involved in the European Election Studies. These include (and are elaborated in some more detail below):

- The interdependencies between previous elections and later ones
- The interdependencies between elections for different levels of government
- The interdependencies between elections in independent, but closely related systems

This conference is meant to be an opportunity to review the state of our knowledge, and delineate the research agenda for future European Union election studies. Participants in the

conference are not primarily asked to present a paper with original research (although such contributions are also welcome) but rather short papers with

- thoughts about how to address the themes mentioned above (and elaborate below), or about other themes they feel should be on the agenda for future research
- attempts at stock-taking of particular strands of current knowledge (possibly in a structured way, as in the Coda in van der Eijk and Franklin 1996)
- illustrations of instances of the kind of interdependencies mentioned above, which may be country-specific
- thoughts about data necessary to empirically investigate these various kinds of interdependencies
- ideas about research designs and procedures that may be able to help reduce the magnitude and complexity of data collection (cf. synthetic data matching, simulation, etc.)

The conference venue is the *Villa la Collina*, the seminar centre of the Konrad Adenauer-Foundation in Cadenabbia, Lago di Como, Italy. The conference is scheduled for 19 – 22 of March, 2006. Arrival day is Monday, the 19th, in the morning. Departure day is Thursday, the 23rd, in the morning again. We reserved the whole Conference Centre during these days. Note that the *Villa la Collina* has a capacity of 25 participants per conference.

Very brief elaboration of the themes mentioned above

Interdependencies between previous elections and later ones

We all know that –at least in established democracies– elections are not single and isolated events, but that they form a kind of repetitive game. Each election sets the stage for the next one, and this has important implications that should not be ignored. How a party, a politician, a voter or a journalist perceives a particular election is to some extent influenced by how they experienced (a) previous one(s). As in all repetitive events, repetitive exposure to elections leads to various kinds of spill-over from one to the next. This may involve changes in preferred positions (e.g., parties that lose elections may change their position so as to be better positioned in the competition for votes the next time around), or the improvement of skills (e.g., about campaign organization). Sometimes this accumulation of experiences may result in attempts to change the parameters within which elections take place: attempts to change the rules of the game –the electoral system– or to change the field of competitors by mergers, splits or new offerings. Such kinds of ‘learning’ are not limited to parties and politicians, but are also present –although in different forms– amongst voters, amongst journalists, etc. The primes that we use around ‘learning’ signify that we also refer to processes that are sometimes named differently, such as habituation, socialisation, and so on.

It would, of course, be incorrect that the impact of previous elections on later ones is entirely ignored in electoral research. Traditions that deal with such matters involve, amongst others, the ‘surge and decline’ literature and some of the literature about non-voting. In spite of this, most research about elections does not incorporate in theory and research design the notion that a particular election is just one in a series, and that preceding ones are of great importance for understanding what is currently occurring. This can be expressed in a lot of ways, such as ‘history matters’, ‘path dependency’, etc. What we need is to take stock, as systematically as possible, of what we can learn from previous research in this respect, and to

systematically speculate about all those aspects of the electoral process for which we cannot rely on previous studies.

Interdependencies between elections for different levels of government

It cannot be said that there is no attention to the way different elections impact upon one another and, indeed, the awareness to do so is particularly developed amongst people investigating second-order national elections, such as elections to the European Parliament. Nevertheless, much of this research is about the way in which national politics constrains European elections, and only rarely is the question raised how European elections affect national ones, but we have not seen very much follow-up. Similar questions can, of course, be raised with respect to other kinds of elections, leading to the more general question in what ways various elections –for national parliaments, for a presidency (if applicable), for local and regional assemblies, for the EP impact on one another. The second-order national election perspective has so far been invaluable to shed light on these matters, yet it is limited by the focus on the impact of 1st-order on 2nd-order elections with little attention to reverse effects, and by its silence on how different second-order elections affect each other. These emphases are quite defensible, as it seems logical that the effect of 1st-order on 2nd-order elections is likely to be stronger than the reverse, but that reverse effect is not necessarily absent.

When thinking about the ways in which elections can affect on another, one has to keep in mind that such influence does not necessarily have to follow the normal logic of causation (in which cause antecedes consequence). It is not uncommon, for example, to see actors anticipate future events (such as elections), leading the later one to influence the earlier.

Interdependencies between elections in independent, but closely related systems

Elections in different member-states of the EU do impact on one another, in a variety of ways, and such effects are likely to become stronger rather than weaker. The evolution of green parties and, more recently, of the extreme-right in European countries has provided a multitude of examples that demonstrate that parties and politicians, but also voters and journalists not only ‘learn’ from their experiences with previous elections in their own country, but also from their (second-hand) experiences with elections and election outcomes in other countries.

Questions relating to such cross-border spill-over relate particularly to the conditions under which such influences are more or less likely, in what form they occur for parties and politicians, in what form for voters (and for which kinds of voters), in what form for media and journalists.