

FORS-GREC scientific conference 28 February 2020

Co-organized by IEP/UNIL and FORS - Supported by MEDem and CSES

The state of democracy in a comparative perspective

Friday 28.2. 9h30-16h30 IDHEAP 001 (AULA)	
9:30	Welcome
Panel 1 : Political communication and polarization Chair: Diego Garzia (University of Lausanne)	
9:30-10:00	Joshua Tucker (New York University): <i>Can we Crowd Source Fact Checking, or Who Can Identify Fake News?</i>
10:00-10:30	Patrick van Erkel (University of Antwerp): <i>Different views, different votes, different feelings? How ideological divisions fuel affective polarization</i>
10:30-11:00	Coffee break
Panel 2 : Political trust, satisfaction and system performance Chair: Maria Oskarson (University of Gothenburg)	
11:00-11:30	Jill Sheppard (Australian National University): <i>Sources of political distrust in Australia</i>
11:30-12:00	Tim Hellwig (Indiana University): <i>Executive Approval Dynamics in Presidential and Parliamentary Democratic Regimes</i>
12:00-12:30	Carlos Shenga (Joaquim Chissiano University and Centre for Research on Governance and Development, Mozambique): <i>The State of Democracy in Africa</i>
12:30-13:30	Lunch
Panel 3 : Political attitudes and partisanship Chair: Anke Tresch (FORS)	
13:30-14:00	Wouter van der Brug (University of Amsterdam): <i>Illiberal democratic attitudes and support for populist parties</i>
14:00-14:30	Orit Kedar (Hebrew University of Jerusalem): <i>The Changing Gender Gap(s) in Voting: An Occupational Realignment</i>
14:30-15:00	Eva Anduiza (UAB Barcelona): <i>Modern Sexism and Far Right Vote: The Case of Vox</i>
15:00-15:30	Coffee break
Panel 4 : Changing democracies Chair: Lionel Marquis (University of Lausanne)	
15:30-16:00	Diego Garzia (University of Lausanne): <i>The Rise of Negative Personalization</i>
16:00-16:30	Kasper M. Hansen (University of Copenhagen): <i>The Danish Voter</i>

The state of democracy in a comparative perspective

Panel 1 : Political communication and polarization (9:30-11:00)

Joshua Tucker (New York University)

joshua.tucker@nyu.edu

Title: Can we Crowd Source Fact Checking, or Who Can Identify Fake News?

Abstract:

The increasing ease with which disinformation or "fake news" is produced has been recently touted as a threat to democracy. One proposed solution is to teach people how to be better able to recognize fake news, and Facebook recently announced plans to attempt to crowd source fact checking. With this in mind, we have undertaken a large-scale study where for over seven weeks we have sent out 5 article per day, 4 days per week, to be fact checked by 150 people each as well as 6 professional fact checkers. We will assess the tradeoff between the accuracy of the crowd (does the crowd get it right?) vs the representativeness of the crowd (does the crowd mirror the general population), which will include testing several hypotheses regarding the types of people predicted to be more likely to identify fake news. I will also describe longer term plans to use these data to use an agent-based modeling framework -- based on actual data -- to assess the system wide effects of "downgrading" the appearance of news stories identified by the crowd as likely to be false on the overall prevalence of fake news.

Patrick van Erkel (University of Antwerp)

Patrick.vanErkel@uantwerpen.be

Title: Different views, different votes, different feelings? How ideological divisions fuel affective polarization

Authors: Patrick van Erkel (UA) & Emma Turkenburg (KUL)

Abstract:

According to many political commentators we live in times of political polarization. However, evidence that citizens have become ideologically polarized is scarce. Recently, scholars have therefore argued that citizens do not polarize ideologically, but rather polarize affectively. They warn of a trend where citizens increasingly become hostile towards citizens with opposing political allegiances (Iyengar et al., 2012). This form of political polarization is related to (social) identity, as citizens who are more affectively polarized see their own 'side' (be it their own party or 'the left'/'the right') as righteous and correct and the opposite side as hostile and 'the political enemy'.

To date, most research on affective polarization focuses on in the United States, a clear two-party system, and studies on this phenomenon in (Western) European multi-party systems are still scarce. Moreover, it is still unclear how ideology is related to affective polarization. Is affective polarization purely based on social identity and simply an emotional 'us versus them' feeling based on party labels ('*my party and its supporters versus the other(s)*') - somewhat comparable to supporting and disliking sports teams and their supporters - or is there a strong ideological dimension underlying it as well, where citizens gradually define the out-group on the basis of

ideological distance? First evidence at the *aggregate* level (Reiljan, 2019) suggests that there might be a relation between ideology and affective polarization, but so far the relation between the two has not been examined at the *individual* level.

The aim of this paper is to fill these gaps. Using Belgian electoral data we investigate firstly to what extent there are patterns of affective polarization in multiparty systems. Do we see that supporters of opposite parties ‘dislike’ each other? And if so, what are the patterns; is the partisan divide for instance stronger than the regional divide? Second, we investigate to what extent affective polarization is ideologically driven and link affective polarization to the ideological distances between supporters. The benefit of examining this in a multi-party system such as Belgium is that while in a two-party system it is difficult to separate the mechanisms of social identity and ideology from one another analytically, because there are only two parties, in a multi-party system we can. Our findings demonstrate that not only in the United States, but also in Belgium there is a clear trend of affective polarization. Moreover, this trend is almost purely ideological driven, where the like or dislike between two groups of party supporters can almost perfectly be predicted by how far they are ideologically removed. Nevertheless, we do see variation in this between citizens, as ideological distance is especially an important predictor of the affection towards other political groups for those who are politically interested and involved.

Panel 2 : Political trust, satisfaction and system performance (11:00-12:30)

Jill Sheppard (Australian National University)

jill.sheppard@anu.edu.au

Title: Sources of political distrust in Australia

Authors: Intifara Chowdhury, Emily Look, Medha Majumdar, and Jill Sheppard

Abstract:

Declining political trust presents one of the most pressing problems of contemporary Australian politics. However, trust is a multidimensional phenomenon and the causes of its decline are many and varied. In this study, we analyse the Australian Election Study and World Values Survey over a period of 30 years to investigate the predictors of distrust in Australian parties, politicians, and the democratic system over time. We find that generational cleavages have emerged, and that the proliferation of education may be a root cause. In the contemporary context, we find that wealth and income inequality (particularly among those between 25 and 45) is driving distrust. The results provide vital insights to the intergenerational nature of political attitudes in Australia and the importance of (perceptions of) inequality to restoring future trust in the domestic political system.

Tim Hellwig (Indiana University)

thellwig@indiana.edu

Title: Executive Approval Dynamics in Presidential and Parliamentary Democratic Regimes

Authors: Ryan E. Carlin, Jonathan Hartlyn, Tim Hellwig, Gregory J. Love, Cecilia Martínez-Gallardo, and Matthew M. Singer

Abstract:

The key difference between presidential and parliamentary democracies is found in the direct election or “separate origin” of presidents, in contrast to prime ministers. We argue this distinction should be reflected in the patterns of citizen evaluations of executives over their terms

in office. In particular, higher voter identifiability should translate into higher initial approval levels for presidents than prime ministers: a stronger “honeymoon” effect. At the same time, presidents and prime ministers grapple with similar factors that raise their “costs of ruling” and generate secular declines in support. Yet, prime ministers should experience a less cyclical, more gradual decline in support, both because they lack the initial honeymoon boost of presidents and because the ability to call early elections provides a tool to manage their public standing. Our analysis relies on time-series inputs across 33 countries and 228 administrations from the Executive Approval Database. It strongly confirms these expectations while also finding that contextual factors such as selection to office, majority status and the formation of government coalition mediate these approval dynamics, without eliminating them.

Carlos Shenga (Joaquim Chissano University and Centre for Research on Governance and Development, Mozambique)

cshenga@gmail.com

Title: The State of Democracy in Africa

Abstract:

The study of *whether a country is democratic* has been covered by many scholars using different approaches. This study uses global standards and local knowledge gathered by V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) to analyse political regimes in Africa. It also addresses the question of *how democratic a country is* – that is, the quality of democracy to connect with regimes type, with the expectation that countries that are high in democratic quality will be high in democracy, considering other factors.

Panel 3 : Political attitudes and partisanship (13:30-15:00)

Wouter van der Brug (University of Amsterdam)

W.vanderBrug@uva.nl

Title: Illiberal democratic attitudes and support for populist parties

Authors: Wouter van der Brug, Sara Hobolt, Sebastian Popa and Hermann Schmitt

Abstract:

Until recently, it was widely assumed that citizens and mainstream politicians in Western societies were committed to liberal democratic values, including respect for the core values of free elections, rule of law, human rights, and civil liberties. However, recently, Europe has seen the surge of populist parties and politicians who challenge these core principles of liberal democracy. These populist politicians can be seen as ‘illiberal democrats’, who are committed to the popular pillar of democracy (i.e. electoral verdicts based on majority rule), but dismissive of core values of the constitutional pillar of liberal democracy, in particular the (judicial) protection of minority rights, but who sometimes even challenge the freedom of the press. The essence of illiberal democracy is that it considers majority rule more important than the protection of minority rights.

Research on public support for liberal democratic values is scarce and most survey questions do not tap into the inherent tension between majority rule on the one hand and protection of minority rights on the other. We have developed a short battery of survey items that explicitly tap into this tension. These questions were included in the most recent European Elections Study 2019. We show that, when confronted with the tension between majority rule and protection of individual rights, support for liberal democratic values is much smaller than previous research suggested.

Illiberal attitudes are consistently related to support for radical right populist parties, when they are in power. In other cases, the relationship turns out to be weaker.

Orit Kedar (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

orit.kedar@mail.huji.ac.il

Title: The Changing Gender Gap(s) in Voting: An Occupational Realignment

Abstract:

While in most Western democracies women support left-leaning and progressive parties at a higher rate than men, five decades ago the opposite was the case. To explain the realignment along gender lines on the left, we analyze it jointly with the rise of the radical right – two phenomena usually studied separately. Unlike most studies of the gender gap, we focus on men's vote. We contend that occupational vulnerability to trade and immigration pulled manual and non-unionized workers to support the radical right. Combined with gender segregation of the labor market whereby more men than women hold manual jobs, this vulnerability, we argue, leads men holding manual jobs to abandon the left and support the radical right at disproportionately high rates. Drawing on Eurobarometer and ESS data from a cross-section of eighteen countries over a forty-year period, we first conduct aggregate analysis and find general trends consistent with our argument. Utilizing individual-level analysis and drawing on labor data of manual vs. communication skill dexterity required in different sectors, we find support for our argument of occupational vulnerability and vote for the radical right. Lastly, we show that where the radical right is a viable alternative to voters and the mainstream left seeks centrist solutions, greater male domination of the manual labor market is associated with greater male abandonment of the left. Overall, we find that occupational realignment in a gender-segregated labor market is at the heart of the change in the gender gap in voting.

Eva Anduiza (UAB Barcelona)

Eva.Anduiza@uab.cat

Title: Modern Sexism and Far Right Vote: The Case of Vox

Abstract:

Gender is an important predictor of vote choice for the far right, with a number of studies highlighting the fact that men are significantly more likely to vote for far-right parties than women. In this paper we explore the role of modern sexism as an explanation for far-right vote choice and for the far-right gender gap. We contend that modern sexism is an adequate attitudinal predictor as it mirrors, at the attitudinal level, discourses prevalent among far-right leaders: denial of women's discrimination and rejection protests and policies against such discrimination. We show that for the case of Vox in Spain modern sexism is among the most important predictors of vote choice, only matched in relevance by ideological self-placement. Data also show evidence of a significant backlash effect at the individual level, and that the gender gap disappears once controlling for modern sexism.

Panel 4 : Changing democracies (15:30-16:30)

Diego Garzia (University of Lausanne)

Diego.garzia@unil.ch

Title: The Rise of Negative Personalization
Authors: Diego Garzia and Frederico Ferreira da Silva

Abstract:

Comparative analyses have unfolded long-term trends towards growing distrust of political actors in advanced post-industrial democracies. Early literature repeatedly referred to the operation of potential negativity biases in voters' choice – voters cast a ballot “against” candidates rather than “for” candidates. However, this claim has only very rarely been put to empirical test. Evidence in support for an increasing impact of negative personality evaluations on voters' choice is rather thin, and virtually unavailable for multi-party democracies outside the US. Against this background, this paper aims at providing a comparative, longitudinal assessment of the impact of negativity on vote choice. The paper is framed within the broad literature on the “personalization of politics” and moves from the intuition that an increasingly confrontational style of campaigning and political communication in a context of strong political personalization, could all be leading to the development of a distinctive form of “negative personalization” in voters' behavior. The research questions that the paper will tackle can be formulated as follows: *Are voter choices increasing driven by negative attitudes towards candidates and party leaders? And what is the role of partisan dealignment and media change in driving this development?* To answer these questions, we rely on a novel dataset pooling 110 national election surveys from 14 Western European parliamentary democracies collected in the period 1961-2018.

Kasper M. Hansen (University of Copenhagen)

kmh@ifs.ku.dk

Title: The Danish Voter: Democratic Ideals and Challenges

Authors: Rune Stubager (Aarhus University), **Kasper M. Hansen** (University of Copenhagen), Michael S. Lewis-Beck (University of Iowa), and Richard Nadeau (University of Montreal). Book to be published at University of Michigan Press in 2020. Final manuscript in press.

Abstract:

Through 50 years of Danish National Election Studies, we analyze the challenges the two macrosocial challenges of prosperity and diversity impact on vote choice. Prosperity challenge is how to generate and distribute resources whereas the diversity challenge is how to accommodate growing numbers of culturally and religiously different minorities in society. Throughout the book the analyses identify an incremental and adaptive change from an era where voters based their vote on a sociostructural anchor in the form of class and an ideological, left-right anchor to an era where voters base their choices on a sociostructural anchor in the form of education and gender as well as two attitudinal anchors, the economic and cultural dimensions. The continuous post-election studies of the Danish National Election Study of every election since 1971 to 2019 proves to be a very fruitful tool to identify and understand these changes in contemporary society.