TITLE: Patterns of regional democracies: Institution building and policy performance in European autonomous regions.

Introduction

The analysis of the behaviour and performances of political actors, institutions and regimes has made significant progress since the neo-institutionalist paradigm in comparative politics. Arend Lijphart, the most outspoken author of this school presents in his seminal work, Patterns of Democracy (1999) two ideal-types of democratic regimes, consensus vs. majoritarian democracy, which he distinguishes on the basis of institutional variation on ten dimensions. On the basis of the empirical analysis of 36 countries for the 1945-1996 period, he concludes that the institutional configuration not only affects the quality of representative democracy, but also the policy performance of political regimes.

After World War II, and more in particular in the more recent decades, several West-European countries have launched a process of transfer of policy competences from the unitary state to the regional level. Some have installed a full-fledged federal model, others asymmetric forms of federalism and regionalisation, while some have only engaged in modest forms of delegation of competences to specific regions.

This process of political emancipation of the regions has been reinforced by the process of European integration (Harvie, 1994; Jones & Keating, 1995; Keating 1998, Hooghe & Marks, 2001, DE Winter & Gomez-Reino Cachafeiro, 2002; EU White Paper, 2001) as well as globalisation (Keating & Mc Garry, 2001; Van Houten, 2003; Moreno, 2003,). First, the Committee of the Régions has used the principle of subsidiarity for justifying the allocation of more competencies to the regional level not only vis-à-vis the EU institutions but also vis-à-vis their own state (Wilke & Wallace. 1990; Lourau, 1997). Second, the EU has massively invested in regional policies, that offer the poorer regions a substantial economic support and thus has facilitated the recognition of the region as a relevant political level. In fact, EU cohesion policies require solid regional intermediaries (regional executives, administrations, interest groups and local government) at the regional level during the formulation of regional policy priorities as well as their implementation (Vanhove, 1999). Regions are obliged to organise themselves as unitary actor in order to promote their interest at EU level, through a variety of channels of access (the Commission, the Council, the Parlement, the Committee of the Regions and other forms of cooperation between regions, cities (Bagnacaso & Le Galès, 2000), lobbies, etc.) (Marks et al, 1996). This policy making strategy facilitates the emergence or reinforces regional policy networks between regional political actors, civil services, neo-corporatist actors at the regional as well as the (inter-) communal, interregional
and crossborder level (Heinelt, 1996; Perkmann, 2003; Dandoy, 2003). From a symbolic point of view, this strategy has also projected the regions and their politicians onto the European arena, presenting them as important players in the EU multilevel decision-making model. Finally, the regions are increasingly involved in the management of the EU (during the Belgian presidency, regional ministers were chairing different meetings of the Council, De Winter & Türsan, 2000) as well as regarding the constitutional future of Europe (cfr. The role of the “constitutional regions” and of the Committee of the Regions in the drafting of the Laeken Declaration, the Convention and the new Constitution).

The combined processes of devolution and Europeanisation have reinforced the specificities of the regions as systems of political representation, delegation and accountability (Massart-Pierard, 1998; Strøm, Müller & Bergman, 2003), gifted with specific electoral systems (Hough & Jeffery, 2002) parties and party systems (Alcantara & Martinez, 1998), of direct elected regional assemblies (Auel, 2002), coalition formation and maintenance (Downs, 1998), prime-ministers and cabinets, a proper civil service (Norton, 1994), decision-making processes (Loughlin, Aja & Bullmann, 2001) and policy outputs (Keating, Loughlin & Deschouwer, 2003). This is particularly the case in regions with a strong civil society and cultural identity that differs from those in the state-wide political systems (like Scotland, Catalonia, Flanders, etc.).

Hence, we can consider many existing regions as nearly full-fledged political systems, and thus analyse their institutional arrangements following an approach similar to those used for comparing states and test the main hypotheses drawn from current (neo-)institutionalist theory. Our workshop aims at applying the seminal institutional approach of Lijphart (1999) but also of other authors inspired by new-institutionalism and formal theory to ‘regional political systems’ in Europe.

**Outline of the topic and relation to existing research**

**Main streams of regional institutional research**

With the neo-institutionalist revolution, institutions are brought back into the main focus of comparative political analysis (March & Olsen, 1989; Peters, 2001), and even have developed in neo-institutionalist subdisciplines (sociological-cultural, historical structuralist, new economic-rational choice, cognitive-conceptive symbolism, actor-centred, etc.). Special attention is paid to the impact of institution variation (Lane &Ersson, 2000).

Regarding research into the creation and development of regional institutions, the oldest approach could be labeled ‘applied federalist or regional’ studies, conducted by scholars interested
in the process of devolution of powers from the centre to the periphery in the many varieties of self-government that exist (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983; Duchacek, 1987; Vandersanden, 1997). This research focuses on the relations between the regional institutions and the state-wide institutions, and interregional cooperation and competition.

Another brand of research considers autonomous regions as quasi full fledged political systems on their own that represent a fertile ground for testing (neo-)institutionalist hypotheses developed for state-wide institutions, actors and processes (Downs, 1998).

More recently, Europeanists have entered the field due to the development of EU regional policies, focusing on the manners and degrees of involvement of regional institutions (cfr. Marks and Hooghe’s Multilevel governance, 1996, Marks et al., 1996) as well as the policy effects of EU policies on regions’ socio-economic performance (Keating, 1997).

A more bottom-up approach is followed by the advocates of the multilevel application of the principle of subsidiarity (EIPA, 1991; CEPR, 1993; Hrbek, 1995; Estella de Noriega, 1997).

Economists have also examined regional institutions in order to explain different levels of regional economic performance (cfr. the concept of “business districts”, Lovering, 1999).

Students of substate nationalism have examined regional institutions as the process of the mobilisation by ethno-nationalist substate movements and parties (Newman, 1996; Lynch, 1996; De Winter and Türsan, 1998).

Finally, rational choice theorists (Levi & Hechter, 1985) have considered the development of regional autonomy as a rational economic answer to increasing competition within the state and in the global economy for protecting the regions’ economic interests (Fearon, 2003).

Lack of systematic comparison and output research

Nevertheless, an integrated multidimensional and multilevel longitudinal approach that on the one hand studies the particularities of regional institutional configurations, their democratic and policy effects, and the determinants of regional variation, and on the other hand, the interplay between national or even international (EU) systems of governance, all this over a sufficient period of time in order to tap the cause and effects in intraregional variation is still lacking. An example of the first part of the research has recently been conducted by Vatter (2001) and Freitag (2000), and Dandoy (2003)

Main research questions
Our main research question is to establish to what extent regional institutions and processes correspond to the majoritarian vs. consensus model. For reasons of multilevel comparability, we will use on the one hand the institutional dimensions used in the seminal work by Lijphart (1999), formulating alternative operationalisation for those that pose major problems of validity and reliability. Hence, we will consider, for each region, at different moments of its institutional development, the following variables:

1. Concentration of executive power in the hands of a single party government vs powersharing in an oversized coalition (cfr. typology of Woldendorp, Keman and Budge, 2000), party composition congruence or not between regional and national executive;

2. Structure and stability of the allocation of ministerial portfolios between governing parties (existence or not of *chasses gardées* for certain policy sectors, cfr. Keman and Budge, 1990), congruence or not of the occupation of policy sectors between regional and national executives in case of party composition congruence of executives;

3. Organisation and functioning of regional executives: degree of collectiveness and collegiality within the regional Council of ministers (Andeweg, 1993), mechanisms for conflict resolution, etc. (cfr. cabinet studies of Blondel et al (1993, 1996));

4. Concentration or not of power within the regional parlement: division of labour, formal rights and effective influence of the opposition and individual parlementarians (cfr. variables identified by the research group of Döring, 1995);

5. Power relations between regional parlement and executive: structural variables of Döring (1994, 1995); legislative production and control activities of MPs;

6. Concentration of legislative power in a monocameral parlement vs. legislative power sharing between two chambers having similar competences but different (mode of) composition (leading to incongruence in terms of partisan dominance) (cfr. Lijphart 1999; Urwin, 1998);

7. Bipartisan party system vs. multiparty system: (effective) number of (electoral & parliamentary) parties, congruence between national and regional party systems (cfr. presence of non-state-wide parties that do not compete on the entire state-wide territory);

8. Majoritarian electoral system vs. proportionnal representation: electoral formula, constituency size, (effective) electoral thresholds, size of assembly, other elected regional positions (president), disproportionality between constituencies, higher tier allocation of seats, degree of disproportionality (Lijphart, 1994), size of electoral support for government party/parties;

9. System of interest representation by groups that compete freely or coordinated corporatist system aiming at compromise and bargaining (Anderson, 1992): degree of density and cohesion of main interest groups representing labour, capital, farmers; existence of formal regional bodies of bi- or tripartite concertation between interest groups (Freitag, 2003);
10. Number of relevant cleavages and their degree of overlap, polarisation and distance between parties on relevant policy dimension (based on electoral and expert surveys, analyses of party manifestos);

In addition, some new variables specific to the position of regions in their multilevel institutional context will be taken into account. They include, amongst others:

11. Degree of formal constitutional autonomy of the regions vis-à-vis the state wide institutions (regionalism, autonomy, federalism)

12. Degree of policy competencies of the regions vis-à-vis the state wide institutions, including fiscal autonomy

13. Actual use of policy competencies of the regions, for instance degree of regional spending vis-à-vis the national state spending

14. Degree of regional tutelage over lower level political instances (comunes, provinces, departments (see Loughlin, Aja & Bullmann, 2001);

15. Degree of formal and actual involvement of regions in EU policy making, including the EU regional policies (Conzelmann & Knodt, 2002).

16. Degree of institutional adaptation of regions to EU integration, for instance the establishment of a committee for European Affairs in the regional assembly (NORPEC, 2004) and the representation of the region by a bureau in Brussels (Burgsmüller, 2002; Heichlinger, 1999; Marks & Haesly & Mbaye, 2002).

Finally, the majoritarian/consensus logic can be further extended to other institutional variables, at different levels, such as:

17. Degree of direct democracy instruments: referenda, popular initiatives, etc (Budge, 1997, Vatter, 2002)

18. Proportionality of the financing of political parties or non regulating financing of parties favoring the stronger parties;

19. Concentration or not of power within the parties: concentration of leadership, degree of competition and stability, organisational centralisation, candidate selection, characteristics of members (number and participatory rights) (cfr. variables used by Janda, 1980; De Winter, 1998; Rihoux, 2001);

20. Normative instruments limiting the concentration of power in male hands: quotas, alternation in candidate list, etc.;

21. Cumulation of mandates (between the regional, national European levels), pathways of political careers of the madated (cursus honorum, parachuting to the regions, loyalty to the
regional level or non-structured pathways);

22. Political independence of public administration: nepotism and politisation in the high level functions of regional polity, role and autonomy of functionaries in the elaboration and implementation of public policies, the Weberian hierarchical administrative organisation or the principles of performance of « new public management », directions of modernisation;

23. Degree of pluralism and political independence of regional media: major dailies and the perception of the media (European Elections Study de 1999).

Apart from this mapping of the extent to which regional institutions are situated on the expanded and amended majoritarian/consensus model, we will try to identify the reasons for variation between regions. Lijphart’s analysis has not integrated the explanation of institutional variation among the 36 countries studies. Nevertheless, some studies on regional institutions and their performance have underlined the impact of specific resources on regional mobilisation (Hooghe, 1992 ; Keating & Loughlin, 1997): cultural variables ¹ (Inglehart, 1997; Putnam, 1993, 2000 ; Delmartino & Schoenmaekers, 2000), historical factors (models of integration or not in state formation of the Rokkan school) and economic factors, among which public investments (Barro, 1991); copying from existing strong regions within and beyond the national state, etc.

Hence, many explanatory models can be tested. In addition, these contextual variables are indispensable, both as control variables and as sources of verification of alternative explanations (for instance, some authors have given priority to non-institutional factors in order to explain the economic performance of regions (Ohmae, 1995).

In addition, for every country comprising one or several autonomous regions we would also need to include, for most of the variables, corresponding data at the national level so as to be able to test contextuale national influences. A large majority of this national data is already provided by comparative studies on institutions and the performance of states (Lijphart, 1999; Castles, 2000; Keman & Budge, 1990; Armingeon, 2002, Strom, Müller & Bergman, 2003).

A further question would be to know whether congruence exists between the regional and state levels in terms of parties, political personnel in parliament or government, party systems and if such congruence contributes or not to a larger concentration of power and autonomy in a region (is an increasing independence or growing dependence observable).

Given the “first stage” character of our research aim in a system of growing complexity of multi level governance, with exclusive or shared competencies and a certain degree of sovereignty at

¹ For instance, a specific majoritarian or consensus/consociational regional political culture. For cultural variables we can
the European, national and regional levels we can develop additional hypotheses regarding the impact of institutional regional arrangements on interactions of regions in the multilevel European governance system. For instance, some studies suggest that the more regional interest are integrated in the national decisional system, the more interests will be better defended and heard in Brussels. This implies that the nation state still plays a large role in the emancipation of regions. Therefore, the European Union constitutes a series of political and constitutional challenges to the regions when the growing competencies of the EU touch upon political sectors that enter the domain of federated entities in federal states.

**Case selection and temporary dimension**

In order to arrive at valid causal conclusions on the association between institutional arrangements and regional performance case selection is a crucial phase in the design of the research (King, Keohane & Verba, 1994). Thus, we propose a mixed scheme whereby we shall include all the regions of the EU that have sufficient autonomy that allows them to be considered as an « autonomous » political system (see below). We shall equally include countries where certain regions have a strong autonomy and others not (UK, Spain, Italy, France), and compare strong regions with an equal number of weak regions in the country.

The literature on comparative federalism and regional autonomy is not univocal on the classifying os regions in Europe (Labasse, 1991; Croisat, 1999; Duchacek, 1987; Burgess & Gagnon, 1993). Equally, the naming of “constitutional regions” is not clear in the criteria of inclusions in this “club”. Therefore, we shall take into consideration the combination of the following criteria: constitutional relations (sharing of competencies / guaranteed autonomy / competing juridical systems / constitutive autonomy / direct elections to the assembly / federal constitutional court; participation of federated entities in the exercice of federal power (bicameralism / procedure of constitutional revision ); administrative structure (dualist vs. delegated ) ; party systems (autonomous organisation /federated, pertinence of the party system and parties that are not state-wide); width and type of financial resources (exclusive / competing, autonomy in taxation and expenditure).

In terms of the time dimension, we would opt for the long term as far as possible, in order to track the impact of changes of regional institutional arrangements. However, given the fact that many regions have acquired substantial autonomy only since the 1980s (Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, UK), for the majority of the cases included the time span will be around two decennia.

Consequently, our research shall include all German and Austrian Länder, all the Belgian
communities and regions, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, historically autonomous and other Spanish regions, Italian regions (especially those with a special statute); the French regions (especially Corsica and other historical regions like Brittany, Alsace, Savoy). We may include all small or micro regions (in terms of population) that benefit of a status stronger than others (such as the Isle of Man, Faroe, Azores, DomToms, etc.).

**Ultimate purposes**

The ultimate aim of the mapping of regional institutions and performances is to test a variety of hypotheses. The more classical concern of the impact of different regional institutional arrangements majoritarian/consensus arrangements, on government performance and the quality of democracy (cfr. Lijphart 1993). The results may indicate the possibilities and limits of institutional engineering on the improvement of the representative system and its increased legitimacy (Loughlin et al, 2001). The data collected can be used by many other subdisciplines in comparative studies, such as legislative studies (Döring, 1995), coalition research (Strom & Muller, 2000; Muller & Strom & , 2004); political recruitment (Norris, 1997); and impact of women political representation (Mateo-Diaz, 2002); cabinet studies (Blondel series); parties, party and electoral system analysis (Luther & Müller-Rommel & Luther, 2002), public policy (Freitag & Bühlmann, 2003), political culture (Putnam, 1993), local government and public administration (Hesse & Sharpe, 1991; Duff, 1993; Rhodes, 1999), neo-corporatism, regime studies, EU-studies, etc.

**Participants**

In order to collect valid, reliable, crossnational data, this workshop aims to bring together experts in a number of regions, as well as regional comparativists. Workshop participants are expected to be specialists of the regions that are included in their analyses, as well as with the main

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3 For example, the « Research Program on Public Policies in Federated States » of the University of Laval, Benchmark Research on developments in regional parliaments and the Flemish national parliament (Lieven De Winter is part of the scientific council); etc. In addition to regional data distilled from sources already employed by Lijphart, one could use the data provided by the Directorate General of Regional Policy of the Commission, the Committee of the Regions, The Assembly of European Regions (AER), Eurostat, different national and regional centres of documentation in addition to the network of researchers and research centres (regional centres on public opinion et and electoral studies, the “Benchmark research” on regional parliaments by the Flemish Parliament, Best & Cotta (2000) on political elites; REGLEG (Regions with
theories of regional institutional design and policy output.

In terms of potential participants, there are certainly the leading comparativists in empirical regional studies, like Keating, Loughlin, Le Galès, etc., as well as many case specialists with comparative interests that have already shown an interest in the project, like Juan Montabes (Grenada), Argelangeut (Barcelona), Llera (Bilbao), Marga-Gomez (Santiago di Compostella), Lynch (Stirling), Trystan (Aberrystwith), Mitchell, (Belfast), Pasquier (Rennes), Olivesi (Ceuto), Dupoirier (IEP Paris), Piattoni (Trento), Pallaver (Bolzano), Kaiser (Köln), Schmid (Tübingen), Swenden (Leuven), Deschouwer (Brussels), De Rynck (Europa College Bruges, DG Regional Policy), Dandoy & Massart-Piérard (Louvain), Müller (Vienna), Wodz (Katowice), Simon (Budapest) Vatter & Freitag (Bern), Mathias (Birmingham), Arend Lijphart (San Diego).

**Type of paper**

Comparative papers across regions will be the privileged type of paper, given the strongly comparative focus of our research interest. Comparative papers may focus on the comparison of institutional arrangements, on policy outcomes, and preferably, on the interaction between both. Case studies could be accepted, if they cover a case that either has evolved strongly over time, or that can be considered as ideal-typical or as strong outlier. Comparative studies of regions within one country are also welcome to the extent that they pertain to a country where certain regions have strong autonomy and others not (GB, Espagne, Italie, France). One could compare such strong regions with certain weak regions in the same country.

**Publication prospects**

At this moment there are no contracts or concrete plans. But given the importance of applying Lijphart (1999) seminal work to another type of political systems for political science, there will be no shortage of interest from journals and publishers in this research topic.

**Biographical note**

Adrian Vatter (born 1965) is PD Dr. rer. pol. He studied the Nationalökonomie und Politikwissenschaft in Bern. His doctorat (Kantonalen Demokratien in Vergleich) applied the Legislative power), CALRE (European Regional Legislative Parliaments) and OECD data.
Lijphart majoritarian/consensus model to the Swiss cantons. He took a one year postdoctoral formation at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1994. He founded his own Büros für Politikforschung & -beratung in Bern. Since 1996 his is Studienleiter at the Institut für Politikwissenschaft der Universität Bern and Lehrbeauftragter at the Universities of Bern and Basel. His main research focus is on Swiss politics, direct democracy, federalism, consensus democracy (Konkordanz) as well as implementation and evaluation studies (see list of publications).

Lieven De Winter (born 1954) studied Political Science at the Catholic University of Louvain and obtained his doctorat from the European University Institute. He is professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain and the Katholieke Universiteit Brussel. He was visiting professor at the Università di Trento, the Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Lille and the Universitat Autonoma di Barcelona. He has been part of numerous main comparative research project regarding regional, national and European elections, political party families, coalition formation, party and cabinet government, parliament and parliamentarians, political recruitment, political corruption, territorial identities, etc. (see list of publications). He is the director of the Centre de Politique Comparée (UCL) and co-director of the PIOP (Point d’Appui Interuniversitaire d’Opinion Publique). Amongst his relevant publications are L. DE WINTER, H. TÜRSAN, (eds.) Regionalist parties in Western Europe, London : Routledge, 1998; De Winter, L., Gomez-Reino, M. "European Integration and Ethnoregionalist Parties", Party Politics, 2002, VIII, 4, 483-503. He is preparing with Peter Lynch and Marga Gomez-Reino a new case study book on autonomist parties (to be published by the Institut di Ciencies Politiques I Socials) and purely comparative book on autonomist parties.
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