

Governi locali e regionali in Europa fra sistemi elettorali e scelte di voto

X Convegno Internazionale della SISE (Società Italiana di Studi Elettorali), patrocinato dal Consiglio Regionale del Piemonte

Torino, 12-13 novembre 2009

Gruppo D: La specificità del voto locale

Werner Pleschberger (Vienna)¹

The mirror has not broken really.

Stability *of* divergence between national and local elections in Vienna between 1945 and 2008. Description and rare cases of higher *positive* divergence.

The election research has revealed differences between first order and second order elections (FOE and SOE) and shows for instance that voter turnout in municipal elections (SOE) is significantly lower compared to national elections (FOE). Science highlights the phenomenon of differential mobilization of voters according to election levels or rather a decoupling of voting behavior between the levels of the political system. An index of dissimilarity has been developed in order to measure and compare differences over long periods in a systematic manner and seeks to explain these differences with a set of formal factors (temporal distance between next elections at a time, popularity cycle of national governing parties etc.) The result emphasizes the strong effect of voter turnout, which is used to explain the differential rate of mobilization. By focusing on measurements and statistical explanation interests, science by trend has neglected the influence of qualitative variables, e.g. party politics or party organization.

From a political party viewpoint differential mobilization implies varying political success at FOE and SOE. A party that wins general elections must not consequently succeed at municipal elections and vice versa.

¹ Werner Pleschberger, BOKU-University of Agricultural Sciences and Life Sciences, Department for Economics and Social Sciences, A-1180 Vienna, Feistmantlstraße 4, Tel. 0043-1-47654-3656, 4400; e-mail: Werner.Pleschberger@boku.ac.at

Vienna is the largest Austrian city characterized by a hegemonic dominance of the social-democratic party since 1918 (except from the major historic caesura between 1934 and 1945).

A rough comparison of national and municipal elections in Vienna since 1945 shows that municipal parties are more successful or less successful than their parent party at the national level. Divergence prevails at first glance. Divergence is and remains stable over time, because the distance between individual success curves of a party at national and municipal level hardly changes. So far, only a few elections have been observed, where a municipal party at least significantly sheered to the upper or to the lower.

Cases, where municipal parties suddenly were comparatively successful, are of special interest (*cases of positive divergence*).

The analysis covers the following topics:

- Longitudinal description of national and Vienna election results
- Basic description of their similarity respectively divergence
- The explanatory power of voter turnout
- Two cases of positive divergence
- Influence of party politics and party organization
- Conclusions