

International Workshop  
**Citizens, Parties and Leaders in European Uncertainty  
Claims for the National Sovereignty**

**10th-11th November 2017**

Location: Room 2218 - Bâtiment Géopolis (Dorigny)  
**University of Lausanne**

Organisers:

Oscar Mazzoleni, Andrea Pilotti (OVPR, UNIL)  
Luca Verzichelli, Linda Basile (CIRCaP, UNISI)

These are difficult times for supranational institutions. The refugee, financial and security crises are putting Western political systems under strain. In light of such critical junctures, citizens, as well as parties and political leaders, are increasingly seduced by those movements and policy agendas promoting the defence of national borders as the best remedy to tackle challenges and overcome the fear. Presented under different labels – nationalism, regionalism, populism, protectionism, Euroscepticism – the claims “national sovereignty” seems to increasingly influence public opinion, as well as parties’ and leaders’ responses to the multiple challenges Western Europe is currently facing. Whilst the victory of Trump in the U.S. is playing a role in boosting protectionist policies, parties and leaders promoting a Eurosceptic agenda are arising in Europe. Facing this backdrop, the following questions arise:

- Whether and to what extent parties and political leaders are responding the European current challenges/critical junctures by claiming for restoration or defence of national sovereignty (for instance as border closure, strict immigration policy, economic protectionism)?
- Whether and to what extent citizens’ claims for more national sovereignty are addressed by parties and leaders? Are the latter likely to dismiss, oppose or accommodate them?

In order to grasp this twofold issue, this workshop tries to critically cope with the following sub-fields of the research in political science:

- 1) Literature on economic and cultural policy which increasingly is focusing on the right-wing populist parties in Europe (e.g. Zalsove 2008; Ennsner-Jedenastik 2016).

- 2) The research around emerging political cleavage between “openness” and “national way” devoted some scholars working on voting behaviour in European political system (e.g. Kriesi et al. 2008).
- 3) The literature on how and to what extent European mainstream parties under competitive pressure by populist parties are adapting their agenda onto the claims for national sovereignty, for instance in terms of restrictive border migrant flow (e.g. Bale et al. 2008).
- 4) The growing literature addressing Euroscepticism of parties and citizens (e.g. Brexit);
- 5) The research on regionalist mobilisation and minority nationalism in Europe in an era of increasing state-based nationalism (e.g. Tronconi 2015).
- 6) The empirical efforts applying the general idea of a decline of party politics, in the direction of a strong political personalization (Blondel/Thiebault, Karvonen), a strong centralization of chief executive power (Poguntke/Webb) and a stronger role of leadership (Bennet, Garzia).
- 7) The crisis of representative democracy (Tormey 2015).

The ambition of the workshop is to develop a dialogue between the mentioned sub-fields in order to verify the heuristic interest to adopt a concept of “claims for national sovereignty”, which currently remains relatively vague and its prevalent use rather impressionistic. In particular, it will aim at shed a light on the existence of a new political cleavage (Hooghe and Marks, 2017), orthogonal to the classic socio-economic one, based on the sovereignist reaction to the challenges from outside the state borders. Reflecting the possibility to develop a set of analytical dimensions and indicators able to grasp this phenomenon in public opinion, party agenda and leaders’ strategies, three related domains will be considered: economy, identity and political institutions:

- 1) around socio-economic issues related to regulation of labour market and capital flows and access to welfare state, etc.;
- 2) as politics of identity, focusing immigrations and/or cultural/religious ‘purity’ of the national community against foreign influence;
- 3) in institutional terms, stressing the independence vs. antagonism toward any supranational institutional empowerment (EU).

The workshop aims at developing a consistent theoretical framework and operational definitions of key concepts, such as those of national sovereignty, national closeness and openness. It will seek to provide conceptual bases for the advancement of scientific literature.

*The Workshop of Lausanne represents a first meeting of a collaborative project. A second International Workshop is scheduled at the University of Siena on 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> February 2018 for discussing a second version of each piece fitting with a common publication (e.g. special issue in an international journal and/or a collective book). The two meetings are part of the Bilateral Agreement (Swiss-European Mobility Program) between the University of Lausanne and University of Siena.*

## Provisional Programme

**Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> November**

13.45-14.00 Welcome

14.00-14.30 **Introduction**, Linda Basile (University of Siena), Oscar Mazzoleni (University of Lausanne) & Luca Verzichelli (University of Siena)

Panel chair: Luca Verzichelli

14.30-15.00 Emanuele Massetti (University of Surrey), ***Competing Visions of National Sovereignty: Scottish Independentism Before and After Brexit***

Discussant: Linda Basile

15.00-15.30 Sean Mueller, Anja Heidelberger & Julian Bernauer (University of Bern), ***Swiss Sovereignty between Democracy and Europe. The nationalist use of referenda in foreign policy***

Discussant: Oscar Mazzoleni

15.30-15.50 Coffee Break

15.50-16.20 Reinhard Heinisch & Fabian Habersack (University of Salzburg), ***The Reconstruction of National Sovereignty in Austrian Electoral Politics***

Discussant: Annika Werner

16.20-16.50 Oscar Mazzoleni (University of Lausanne) & Gilles Ivaldi (CNRS, Nice), ***The Radical Right's Politics of Economic Nationalism: A comparison between the French Front National and the Swiss People's party***

Discussant: Reinhard Heinisch

**Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> November**

Panel Chair: Andrea Pilotti

9.30-10.00 Luca Verzichelli & Linda Basile (University of Siena), ***Transnational solidarity vis-à-vis national sovereignty: citizens and elites on alternative visions to facing contemporary crises***

Discussant: Oscar Barberà

10.00-10.30 Diego Garzia, Frederico Ferreira da Silva & Andrea De Angelis (University of Lucerne and European University Institute), ***Populist parties and leader effects between Television and the Internet***

Discussant: Gianfranco Baldini

10.30-10.50 Coffee Break.

10.50-11.10 Gianfranco Baldini (Bologna) & Edoardo Bressanelli (King's College London), ***(Mis-)managing the integration cleavage: how the EU is drifting British parties apart***

Discussant: Luca Verzichelli

11.10-11.30 ***Scope and content of the second Workshop in Siena***, Linda Basile, Oscar Mazzoleni & Luca Verzichelli.

11.30-12.15 General discussion

## Abstracts

### **Competing Visions of National Sovereignty: Scottish Independentism Before and After Brexit**

*Emanuele Massetti*

University of Surrey

The Scottish National Party (SNP) has pursued the objective of Scotland's independence from the UK since at least 1942. However, the substantive content of the word 'independence' has been largely left undefined. In addition, since the UK has partially compromised its sovereignty with its accession in the then European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973, the SNP has had to redefine its independence ambitions in relation to both the UK and the EEC/EU. The choice of 'Independence in Europe', adopted in 1989, appeared to have set the SNP on a clear course of substantive detachment from the (rest of) UK, in a view to become full member-state of the EU. However, the independence project put forward by the SNP in the run up to the independence referendum of September 2014 fell very short of a truly sovereigntist stance not only vis-à-vis Brussels but, primarily, vis-à-vis London. In addition, the 2016 Brexit referendum has, on the one hand, reopened the question of Scottish independence but, on the other hand, obliged the SNP to develop a different independence project. Based on extensive interviews with top members of SNP, this paper aims to explain the 'mild independence' proposed in 2014 and to investigate how the party is dealing with the strategic dilemmas, in terms of future independence projects, opened up by Brexit.

## **Swiss Sovereignty between Democracy and Europe. The nationalist use of referenda in foreign policy**

*Sean Mueller, Anja Heidelberger, Julian Bernauer*

University of Bern

Political discourses and struggles around national sovereignty seem to have become ubiquitous. This is without a doubt related to the contemporaneous processes of Europeanisation and globalisation as well as to the fiscal and economic crisis and widespread political alienation. However, the Swiss case seems to fall out of this equation in two ways. On the one hand, its economy does very well, the Swiss franc is strong (even too strong), and the population can hardly complain to have been ignored by the elite given the frequency of direct-democratic votes on questions dealing with Europe, immigration or even taxation and economic policy. On the other hand, the question of “sovereignty” has long been solved in that it has been shared between the national, regional and local levels in the form of a decentralised federal system. And yet Switzerland has not joined the EU and possesses one of the strongest national-conservative party whose key discursive frame relates precisely to national sovereignty. To better understand the Swiss case, this paper thus analyses all the popular votes on Europe, immigration and issues related to globalisation and Europeanisation since 1992. It will draw on the vote recommendations of all four government parties, cantonal deviations and the ensuing cantonal results to understand the extent to which there has been an increasing, declining or stable pattern of the salience of the national sovereignty question as well as actions and reactions by the various political parties.

## **The Reconstruction of National Sovereignty in Austrian Electoral Politics**

*Reinhard Heinisch & Fabian Habersack*

University of Salzburg

The research program of the University of Salzburg team is aimed at analyzing the “renationalization” of issue domains in Austrian politics following the European financial crisis, the refugee crisis, and the Brexit vote. Specifically, the objective will be to identify the policy areas that are most often claimed to be a priority for reasserting national autonomy and sovereignty. This includes both the discursive (claims justifying the need for greater autonomy) and practical dimension (policy proposals and degree of implementation – e.g., suspension of Schengen rules). Appealing to sovereignty can take several forms by constructing national autonomy vis-à-vis Brussels and the EU, vis-à-vis globalization in the form of international trade and investment agreements, and vis-à-vis perceived cultural threats such as immigration and Islam.

In a first step and preliminary research paper, the current national Austrian election campaign of 2017 will be examined as to the extent and the content of appeals to national sovereignty

by collecting manifesto data, speeches, and televised debates involving the rightwing populist Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the Christian-democratic Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), a party that had until recently been a staunch advocate of European integration but which has become increasingly critical of international influences on Austria. In a further step, the findings will be compared to the 2013 national election campaign. One goal is to ascertain to what such calls for national sovereignty are rooted in general ideological preferences (e.g., nativism/nationalism/Euroscepticism/Islamophobia), specific economic and political interests/advantages (e.g., restricting labor mobility, reducing obligatory access by foreigners to national welfare systems/labor markets), and/or in notions of some past state of the community as being superior to the present (past neutrality in foreign relations, returning to previous symbols of sovereignty such as own currency, own borders/being master in own domain). In further steps, the effects both among the voting public and media will be analyzed.

***The Radical Right's Politics of Economic Nationalism: A comparison between the French Front National and the Swiss People's party***

*Gilles Ivaldi & Oscar Mazzoleni*

CNRS Nice & University of Lausanne

This contribution sets out to explore the socio-economic positions of Western European radical right-wing parties, with a specific focus on how those parties' social and economic policies relate to their nationalist agenda. The current literature on the political economy of the radical right highlights diverging ideological formulas. While some radical right parties show a neo-liberal pro-market orientation, others have endorsed protectionist and redistributive policies, moving further to the left of the economic axis. There is little research however into factors that shape radical right economic policy preferences and the reasons behind radical right parties' commonalities and diversities in socio-economic stances. To address these issues, this paper looks comparatively at the current French Front National (FN) and Swiss People's Party (SVP). The FN and SVP represent two prominent cases of institutionalized radical right parties which are often seen as assuming divergent positions in their respective party systems, and to be located at the opposite ends of the economic axis. Looking at the socio-economic positions of those two parties, this paper argues that the political economy of the RR is primarily characterised by 'economic nationalism', which is a multifaceted phenomenon that places the defence of the interests of the nation and of economic 'sovereignty at its core in reaction to processes of economic globalization and European integration.

## **Transnational solidarity vis-à-vis national sovereignty: citizens and elites on alternative visions to facing contemporary crises**

*Linda Basile & Luca Verzichelli*

University of Siena

In the aftermath of World War II, European States have experienced an unprecedented process of integration: first, as featuring elements of a supranational organization, which has sought over time to develop from a merely economic to a full-fledged political union; second, as part of a broader process of globalization, which has eased the circulation of people, goods, and money across the world. Nonetheless, these processes of upward integration have also revealed countries' vulnerabilities and hidden fears. The free circulation of people has raised concerns about the borders' porosity and the increased migrants' flows; the global exchange of goods and services has implied the introduction in the free market of cheapest products from developing countries with lower labor standards; the increasingly interconnected world is often perceived as a threat to local identities, cultural and traditions; the loss of national sovereignty to the EU has undermined the sense of effectiveness and legitimacy of nation states. Within this framework, the financial and migration crisis, which broke out in the late 2000s, have further fostered such contradictions. In front of the new challenges, European citizens and elites are increasingly looking at each other with suspicion, and they seem even more inclined to play the nationalist game, by building fences and walls - not only figurative ones. Based upon such premises, this study argues that a new political divide is likely to emerge in Western countries, one that puts 'open' against 'closed' people. This cleavage is going to replace the traditional left versus right divisions among citizens. On the one side, there are those who think that the openness to foreign people and the free trade competition in enlarged markets, as well as being part of the EU and assimilating national identities with other cultures is a positive element of richness - and they are the "drawbridge down" or "open" people. On the other side, there are those who are afraid of the others - be they immigrants or foreign cultures, who perceive free trade as a source of unfair competition with more advantaged developing countries, which will destroy richer economies - and they are the "drawbridge up" or "closed" people. Notwithstanding the increasing scholarly attention on such phenomena of closure and increased sovereignty, it seems to be problematic to properly capture this dimension. Indeed, it has to do with different components: anti-globalization, identity, anti-Europeanism, anti-immigration.

Accordingly, using the data of the EUENGAGE mass and elite surveys, this article pursues three purposes: first, to describe the different components of this 'open' vs. 'closed' divide, whilst seeking to see whether they hold together; second, to see which are the main features (ideological, socio-demographic, beliefs, trust) of each of the two groups; third, to assess the extent of the deficit of responsiveness among elite, which make them slower in walking ahead their voters and force them to lag behind them".

## **Populist parties and leader effects between Television and the Internet**

Diego Garzia, Frederico Ferreira da Silva & Andrea De Angelis

*University of Lucerne and European University Institute*

A growing number of academic studies have concentrated on the increasingly tighter relationship between personality and the functioning of representative democracy, with a particular interest on the process of “personalization of politics”. The changing structure of mass communications in the second half of the twentieth century has emphasized the role of political leaders, at the expense of parties. Incidentally, parties are more dependent on visual and personality-based medium such as TV when communicating with voters. The tight link between the rise of television and the personalization of politics has been customarily put forward in the existing scholarship. Yet, the link between patterns of televised political information and changes in voting behaviour has received only limited attention in the empirical literature so far. In particular, few studies have investigated the impact of TV exposure on the populist voting behaviour in Western Europe. Theories of populism – both as an ideology and as a political communication style – stress that the charismatic leaders are central to these parties success. Existing literature also fails to uncover the consequences of the dramatic changes occurred in the media landscape in recent years. The advent of the Internet has profoundly altered the way information is produced and digested by voters. Similarly, there is little systematic and comparative knowledge on the relationship between Internet usage and the drivers of electoral choice for populist parties. In this presentation, we ask the question of how important are populist charismatic leaders for voters, depending on their degree of exposure to T and their usage of Internet. Our analysis looks at leader effects across different audiences and constituencies in Western European parliamentary democracies.

## **(Mis-)managing the integration cleavage: how the EU is drifting British parties apart**

*Gianfranco Baldini & Edoardo Bressanelli*

University of Bologna & King's College London

While there is a growing literature on the politicisation of the integration issue in the EU member states, the party literature has focused mainly on its effect on party competition, and the impact of Eurosceptic parties on mainstream ones. Relatively scant attention has been placed on the consequences of politicisation *inside* political parties. Focusing on a case of extreme politicisation of the EU issue, this paper assesses intra-party dissent on integration in the Conservative and Labour Party in Britain. Analysing three elections campaigns – for the 2015 and 2017 General Elections and the 2016 EU referendum – and voting behaviour on EU-related matters in the House of Commons, this paper provides an assessment of the magnitude of the integration divide within parties and the strategies adopted by the party leaderships to manage dissent as Britain chooses to leave the EU. In a context of polarisation of public opinion and the highest salience of the EU issue, integration proves to be a toxic issue for the British parties and the British party system.