

Section 10 – Studi regionali e politiche locali

Panel 3. Party Competition in Local and Regional Elections: Analysing Policy Positions at Subnational Levels with Manifesto Data.

Chairs: Laura Cabeza, Matthias Scantamburlo

Among the alternative methods to measure party policy positions, the content analysis of manifestos represents one of the most direct and objective sources of data. The most used empirical reference in the study of party positions using this method is the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP), which offers data of more than 900 parties in 56 countries across all 5 continents since 1945. Yet, if one aims to analyse party competition in multilevel settings, the CMP has two major pitfalls. Like all large comparative projects in political science, it only covers national elections. Moreover, its classification scheme is too crude to measure party positions on the territorial dimension.

In light of the general trend towards decentralization, these limitations are particularly important. Hundreds of thousands of elections are held at local and regional levels worldwide. The proliferation of elections at subnational levels has consequences on the way that political parties organize, campaign and compete.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in analysing the dynamics and specificities of multilevel politics. Much scholarly effort has been devoted to fill the gap of the scarcity of manifesto data on subnational elections. Consequently, new datasets have been created at both local and regional levels: for example, the Local Manifesto Project (LMP) and the Regional Manifestos Project (RMP).

The aim of this panel is to bring together scholars who use manifesto data to estimate the policy positions of political parties in local and/or regional elections.

Papers may be submitted on topics related to all aspects of subnational party competition, and political parties of any kind.

The panel welcomes papers on issues including (but not limited to):

- 1) The position of parties on the left-right or the centre-periphery dimensions, or any other cleavage or policy issue at local or regional levels
- 2) The so-called 'program-to-policy linkage' in sub-national elections (congruence between manifestos and government policies)
- 3) The congruence between the content of local/regional manifestos and voters' preferences, or, more generally, the impact of programmatic stances on voting behaviour
- 4) The relation between local/regional manifestos and media coverage or election campaign

Papers may engage with methodological issues or may provide response to more substantive research questions. Single-case studies or cross-case comparisons are equally encouraged.

The panel also welcomes papers analysing manifesto data validity and reliability compared to alternative methods of estimating party positions (expert surveys or opinion polls).