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978-0-521-53520-5 - The Nationalization of Politics: The Formation of National Electorates and Party Systems in Western Europe

Daniele Caramani

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The Nationalization of Politics

In this comparative and long-term in-depth analysis, Daniele Caramani studies the macrohistorical process of the nationalization of politics. Using a wealth of newly collected and unexplored data on single constituencies in 17 West European countries, he reconstructs the territorial structures of electoral participation and support for political parties, as well as their evolution since the mid-nineteenth century from highly territorialized politics of early competitive elections toward nationwide alignments. Caramani provides a multipronged empirical analysis through time, across countries, and among party families. The inclusion of all of the most important social and political cleavages – class, state–church, rural–urban, ethnolinguistic, and religious – allows him to assess the nationalizing impact of the left–right dimension that emerged from the National and Industrial Revolutions and the resistance of preindustrial cultural and center–periphery factors to national integration. State formation, institutional, and sociopolitical mobilization models are combined with actor-centered explanatory factors to account for key evolutionary steps and differences among national types of territorial configurations of the vote.

Daniele Caramani is a research professor at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (University of Mannheim). He holds a Ph.D. from the European University Institute, Florence, and has taught at the universities of Geneva, Florence, and Berne. In 2000–2 he was Vincent Wright Fellow in Comparative Politics at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. He is the author of the book and CD-ROM *Elections in Western Europe since 1815* (2000).

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Our concern is not only with a process in time but also with a process in space.

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The Nationalization of Politics

THE FORMATION OF
NATIONAL ELECTORATES
AND PARTY SYSTEMS IN
WESTERN EUROPE

DANIELE CARAMANI

University of Mannheim



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Abbreviations and Symbols

Abbreviations

CRII	Cumulative regional inequality index (Rose and Urwin)
CV	Variability coefficient
d'H	D'Hondt formula
HB	Hagenbach-Bischoff formula
IPR	Index adjusted for party size and number of regions
LEE	Lee index
LR-Hare	Largest remainders (Hare or simple quota) formula
MAD	Mean absolute deviation
MSD	Mean squared deviation
N.a.	Not available
PR	Proportional representation
STV	Single transferable vote
Unc.	Uncontested constituency/unopposed seat

Symbols

–	Not applicable
...	Data not available (missing)

Country Abbreviations and Numbering

When required by reasons of space limitations, countries have been abbreviated as follows in tables and figures: Austria (AU), Belgium (BE), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (GE), Greece (GR), Iceland (IC),

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Ireland (IR), Italy (IT), the Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), Portugal (PT), Spain (SP), Sweden (SW), Switzerland (SZ), United Kingdom (UK). For Britain (when Ireland 1832–1918 or Northern Ireland 1922–present are not included) GB has been used.

The numbering of countries runs from 1 to 18 as for *EWE-1815* (this abbreviation is used throughout this volume for the handbook supplemented with a CD-ROM *Elections in Western Europe since 1815: Electoral Results by Constituencies*; see Caramani 2000), with Luxembourg no. 11 excluded from the analysis.

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Preface and Acknowledgments

The goal of this book is to describe and explain the formation over a century and a half of nationwide electoral alignments, party systems, and cleavage constellations in Western Europe. The progressive transformation of politics from local into national is often referred to as the “nationalization of politics” – or “electoral politics” – that is, the formation of national parties and party systems that parallels (but is not simply a reflection of) the creation of a national community through the expansion of state administration, the building and integration of national identities, and the process of social and geographical mobilization triggered by the Industrial Revolution. This macrophenomenon of “democratic integration” is analyzed over time and across countries and is broken down for all cleavages – state–church, center–periphery, rural–urban, and the class cleavage – as well as for the major party families that emerged from them.

When I began working on this project, it soon became clear that the necessary data would not be easily available. The comparative and historical analysis of the territorial structures of electorates, party systems, and voting behavior in Europe requires electoral data at the constituency level, and very soon in the course of the analysis, it also became clear that a long-term historical perspective would be necessary to analyze earlier periods of modern elections – that is, the periods of *formation of national party systems and electoral competition*. I therefore started a systematic collection of election results at the University of Geneva and, later, at the European University Institute, which I thought possible to complete in “a couple of years.” Things obviously turned out differently, and the original project bifurcated in two different directions. The collection of data paralleled by a thorough documentation eventually developed into an independent project,

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which was completed in 1999 at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES) and transformed into a book supplemented with a CD-ROM (*Elections in Western Europe since 1815: Electoral Results by Constituencies* [London and New York: Macmillan, 2000]). That work aimed to present and thoroughly document the wealth of historical and institutional material collected on elections, parties, and representation systems in Europe, with a CD-ROM making electoral results by constituencies available to the wider scientific community in several machine-readable formats for the first time.

The present volume – based on those unexplored electoral data – addresses more directly analytical macrohistorical and comparative questions. Long delayed by the burden of data collection, however, the original theoretical framework looked unsatisfactory to me (a first essay on the nationalization of electoral politics had appeared in the *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* in 1994 and was then translated into a shorter article in *West European Politics* in 1996). I have therefore modified and simplified it. In this book, furthermore, most technicalities have been omitted (some of which have been relegated to the appendixes) and are limited to the indispensable data description. For more details on data and sources, readers can refer to *Elections in Western Europe since 1815* (henceforth I shall use the abbreviated form *EWE-1815* since I often refer to that work myself).

This book has been written in several steps, from the early work at the European University Institute to the completion of data collection at the MZES from 1996 to 1998 and again from 2000 to 2002 at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (EUI). I am deeply grateful to these institutions and their former directors, Peter Flora and Yves Mény, for their generosity and substantive support. I have also greatly profited from a Jemolo Fellowship at Nuffield College, the University of Oxford, in the summer of 2001. I wish to express grateful thanks to Stefano Bartolini for his constant advice and support since the early days of the project. This book owes much to his approach to empirical comparative and historical research. My regret is that too many of his suggestions remain unrealized. Among the many other persons who over the years read earlier versions of the work, I am particularly indebted to Hanspeter Kriesi, Peter Mair, and Charles Tilly for their valuable comments. The suggestions of Margaret Levi and the anonymous reviewers of Cambridge University Press also proved extremely helpful. I wish to thank them for their attentive reading of the manuscript. For all shortcomings and errors in the final product, I obviously remain the only one to blame.

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