

divided one, in language and administration; and Germany is much larger and is relatively homogeneous (compared to Belgium) but has the normal divergences of large federal entities. This is taken into account in the case of SED/Die Linke when the author mentions the 'losers of unification' as the main voters, but it is very vaguely explored overall, which precludes finding any kind of correlation between a specific setup and a particular populist occurrence. Of course, considering these factors would notably enlarge the research project itself in scope, and would probably make the results more complicated and ambiguous.

In conclusion, the research effectively answers the question it poses to itself, showing who votes for populist parties and for what reasons, subjectively speaking. It provides a well-thought and sound study of the success of populist parties related to voters' motivations, and particularly provides a blueprint to conduct similar studies on many more European countries, which could eventually, if the hypotheses keep working, create a framework for populist voting behaviour without 'proper names' in the best (neo)positivist tradition. However, the work could have benefitted from a broader demand perspective and richer political context consideration. This is outlined, nevertheless, in the final part of the book regarding additional research, where the author acknowledges this particular lack of study of the causes of populism at the aggregate level, together with the absence of a media study.

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**Renwick, Alan and Pilet, Jean-Benoit:**

## **FACES ON THE BALLOT: THE PERSONALIZATION OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS IN EUROPE.**

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Electoral systems belong to the most attractive research areas in political science. During the long period of electoral systems research, there was primary focus on inter-party dimension of electoral systems referring to distribution of power between political parties. In other words, one of the leading questions in this field of electoral studies is how the electoral rules influence the distribution of power between parties within national party systems. However, more recently, a more attention is given also to intra-party dimension which relates to the distribution of power within parties. The roots of this shift may be found in changing patterns of politics in the European democracies. It is argued that party identification has lost importance in voters' decisions and partisan loyalties have declined. Hand in hand with these changes, the electoral volatility has increased. Additionally, there is also a growing scepticism among public in relation to politics, and especially to political parties. With respect to these changes, the concept of a personalization of politics with its core assumption that while the political parties are less popular, the role of individual politicians become more important, gained higher relevance. This line of thinking is common for most studies focusing on personalization of politics, and the Renwick and Pilet's *Faces on the Ballot: The Personalization of Electoral Systems in Europe* is not an exception.

In their study, the authors are interested in electoral reforms processes, which, as expected, should be driven by changing nature of politics, and could consequently led to growing personalization of electoral institutions (p. 1–2). The book is divided into three parts, in which the authors seek to find out whether the trend towards greater personalization of electoral systems has taken place (Part 1), why this personalization has occurred (Part 2), and how these personalizing reforms affected political behaviour and outcomes (Part 3). The sample for analysis consists of thirty-one European democracies (the EU 28 plus Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland) between 1945 and 2009.

Since the authors focused on electoral reform politics in terms of personalization, it is necessary to clarify how the personalization of electoral systems is perceived, and how the authors intend to evaluate whether there are changes in degree of electoral systems' personalization. Therefore, after the first (introductory) chapter, where the study is placed into broader field of personalization research and the initial expectations are presented, Renwick and Pilet proceed to the first part (Chapter 2) at the beginning of which the personalization of electoral systems is conceptualized. According to them, the personalization of electoral system '*refers to degree to which the electoral rules allow voters to choose which individual candidates win seats within the legislature*' (p. 17). The authors are interested in two broad dimensions of electoral system personalization: a) the degree to which electoral system allows voters to express their preferences among candidates; and b) the degree to which those preferences determine who gets elected (p. 21). Bearing the first dimension in mind, number of preferences, preference differentiation, the degree of intra-party choice, possibility of distribution of multiple preferences across parties or only within par-

ties, and the distance between voters and candidates, are taken into account. The second dimension consists of absence or existence (in that case including degree) of vote pooling, and weight of preferences as attributes followed. In this conceptual framework, the first important contribution of authors' study can be found. The framework they adopted is more sophisticated compared to the similar studies focused on personalization of electoral systems. By the distinction between dimensions of personalization, and identifying several aspects within them, they provide deeper and detailed insight into electoral reform politics in terms of personalization. Additionally, following changes in more aspects of electoral systems could lead to increase in number of observations included in analysis.

Is it possible to conclude that there is a trend towards greater personalization of electoral systems in Europe? That is the question Renwick and Pilet seek to answer in third chapter. Based upon seventy-four reforms that significantly affected proportionality or at least one dimension of personalization, and after assessing the overall impact of each reform on proportionality, the authors argue that there is a clear trend towards greater personalization of electoral systems in Europe. In general, a wave of reforms that increased personalization emerged since the late 1980s, while the reforms reducing personalization remained rare. When looking for trends within the dimensions, only changes in weight attached to votes' preferences seem to be significant. Overall, twenty-one reforms increased the weight of preferences compared to four, that reduced it. The conclusion that the electoral systems are more personalized challenges some of the previous studies, whose findings go in opposite way (see e.g. Karvonen 2010). An explanation for this discrepancy may be seen in adoption of above mentioned framework (allowing inclusion of higher number of observations),

which in Renwick and Pilet's study is more 'sensible' to the changes in electoral systems.

The authors begin second part (Chapter 4) by the identification of the factors potentially affecting the likelihood of adopting more personalized electoral systems. Based upon existing literature as well as initial expectations related to the changing patterns of politics, they present independent variables which are latter subject to statistical testing. The list of potentially relevant factors includes e.g. the level of electoral volatility, citizens' attitudes towards politics, government composition and ballot structure. It may be concluded that only dissatisfaction with state of democracy has effect on increasing propensity of adopting personalized reforms. However, this effect is characterized by not very high level of significance. Furthermore, the age of democracy seems to be important mediating factor as institutions become more resistant to change. In the context of this analysis, the way in which authors measured public attitudes towards political parties deserves more attention. Indeed, the authors are right when arguing that questions related to public attitudes towards parties in mass surveys are rather recent, and alternative measures are not available for all countries and long periods. In addition, it may be also highlighted that the attitudes towards democracy and towards politics and political parties are often much correlated. For these reasons, Renwick and Pilet decided to measure attitudes towards political parties by using satisfaction with democracy as an indicator. In this regard, it is worthwhile to consider, whether using more suitable indicator – such as party membership – while reducing sample or the followed period, would be more appropriate.

The Renwick and Pilet begin qualitative analysis of electoral reforms by looking at origins of electoral systems in Europe while focusing on variety of systems in terms of their intra-party dimension (Chapter 5).

Beside the variety of electoral systems, they also seek to identify forces that influenced electoral rules in force at start of period followed in each country. Thereafter, an attention is driven to politics of electoral reforms prior to 1989 (Chapter 6). According to the authors, this period is characterized by the prominent role of political parties in electoral reforms' politics while non-partisan actors played any significant role – compared to the democratization period. The reform processes were driven by parties' and their leading members' power calculations. During this period, there were reforms that directly influenced intra-party dimension of electoral systems. However, it was the inter-party dimension that dominated discussions related to the change of electoral rules. The following two chapters focus on 'personalization era' starting in 1989 (countries that began period using flexible-list systems are analysed in seventh chapter, while countries using open/closed/mixed-systems and non-list systems in Chapter 8). The authors conclude that the patterns of reform processes have changed after 1989. Since that year, there have been numerous reforms affecting personalization, however, what is more important, the intra-party dimension became more prominent in the debates about electoral reform. In addition, the debates preceding electoral reforms were influenced also by citizens' attitudes towards politics. Thus, the changes in electoral system's personalization appear to be intended, compared to the previous period, where there was focus on inter-party dimension, and changes in personalization may be considered as 'side effect'. Overall, this part of book represents very good combination of research focused on identification of causes of phenomena under study, by using both, quantitative as well as qualitative methods.

The last part of book is devoted to impact of personalized reforms, more specifically

to question, whether these reforms affected elections and politics in more general terms. Firstly, Renwick and Pilet focus on changes in two broad dimensions of personalization, namely on use of preference voting and voters' influence in determining who is elected (Chapter 9). In the second case, an impact of reforms on gap between citizens and politics is investigated (Chapter 10). In general, it may be concluded that adoption of more personalized reforms was not directly translated into increase in voting for individual candidates. Nevertheless, many personalizing reforms influenced the second dimension of personalization. When speaking about potential impact on voters' attitudes towards politics, the authors were primarily interested in impact on level of electoral participation and satisfaction with democracy. Taking the results of quantitative analysis into account, voter turnout and citizens' attitudes towards democracy do not appear to be influenced by adoption of more personalized electoral systems. Nevertheless, these findings cannot be taken for granted. The authors are aware of fact, that studies focusing on changes in turnout and public attitudes towards democracy require rich amount of data, and that these dependent variables are influenced by variety of factors they are not able to include in their study. From this point of view, this chapter should be perceived rather as an authors' effort to

complete a puzzle of electoral systems' personalization by evaluating not only causes, but also effects of personalizing reforms. Despite that, this analysis of effects may undoubtedly be considered as an incentive for a further investigation.

At this point, it is worth emphasizing that the *Faces on the Ballot: The Personalization of Electoral Systems in Europe* represents very valuable contribution to personalization of politics research. The scholars focusing on electoral systems, the politics of their change, and personalization of electoral systems will appreciate new conceptual framework, a depth of analysis as well as an information richness. The book might be also interesting for the policy-makers, because it evaluates, whether their effort to bridge a growing gap between citizens and politics led to an expected result. Last, but not least, the Renwick and Pilets' study is suitable for everyone who is interested how the multi-method research of causes and effects in (not only) political science should look like.

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