

Call for Papers for a Special Issue on  
**Majority versus proportionality?**

**Trajectories of electoral reform in the Mediterranean since the 1990s**

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This special issue aims to analyse electoral system reforms in the Mediterranean region under the aspect of improving governability or increasing proportionality of representation. How is this dilemma addressed in the Mediterranean region? Reform efforts are often legitimized by pointing at a lack of efficiency in creating a workable and stable government (governability) or of a fair transformation of votes into seats (proportionality), or by both aspects to varying degrees. Reform debates are often structured along this dichotomy, which also affects the outcome of the reform process. Complementary to Renwick (2010) and Gallagher/Mitchell (2008) for instance, we focus on the input (or demand) side of electoral reform as well as the outcome of reforms, in terms of both functionality and legitimacy. We are interested in drivers, scope, direction, vested interests and the politics of electoral reform. The Mediterranean focus reflects the higher degree of reform activities in this area, as illustrated by the case for Italy with four reforms (so far) since 1993. Against this backdrop, the Iberian Peninsula stands out by its lack of electoral reforms so far – why?

The special issue aims to empirically and conceptually contribute to analyse how the dilemmatic relationship between improving proportionality and enhancing governability is balanced in individual cases of electoral reforms. Surprisingly, the number of such cases is much higher in Southern Europe and the Levant, compared to Northern Europe, for instance. We are also interested in reforms in the southern littoral countries of the Mediterranean Sea. We are interested in proposals that focus on the trajectories of electoral reforms and their impact on either proportionality or governability as the (anticipated) outcome of reform.

Beside case studies, we are interested in cross-country studies as well as theoretical studies with reference to the Mediterranean region. The debate about the advantages and disadvantages of majoritarian and consensus democracy, as initially outlined by Arend Lijphart, can provide an interesting theoretical framework for proposals. It is much easier to agree on the aim of improving democracy (Norris 2011) than on the proper means; different understandings of democracy such as majoritarian or consensus orientation soon lead to dissent. Thus, electoral reforms show a great variety of scope and measures, ranging from introduction, change or abol-

ishment of elements such as legal thresholds in PR systems to (much more rarely) a complete system change.

The regional focus provides a rich variety of electoral reforms as well as regime types, and shows large institutional variation. It is a theoretically and empirically so far under-researched area (Pace 2006). Connecting the fringes of Europe, Asia, and Africa, it is a centre of geopolitical conflicts and discourses. In public perception, such images overlap the regional efforts to emphasise the links between the northern and southern Mediterranean countries, as for example in the EU's neighbourhood policy with the Union for the Mediterranean since 2008.

From a comparative perspective, it is interesting to analyse and compare the different strategies and legitimacy claims as well as the changes and compromises made in these processes. Are the effects of electoral reforms much more limited than promised by the reformers? Why are some proposed reforms successfully completed while others were stalled? To sum up, we are especially interested in papers with a focus on:

- Cross country comparisons of electoral reforms that focus on similarities and differences in the framework of a Most Similar or a Most Different Case Design.
- Case studies and process tracing approaches that focus on trajectories of (non)reform.
- Theoretical contributions that take into account the structure and consequences of majoritarian and proportional regulations and their 'reformability' in the specific regional context.
- Empirical, quantitative contributions on the causes and/or effects of electoral systems reforms.

Proposals can be focusing both on theoretical and on empirical questions, applying qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Please submit your manuscript proposal of max. 200 words by November 30<sup>th</sup> 2020 to Thomas Krumm ([krumm@staff.uni-marburg.de](mailto:krumm@staff.uni-marburg.de)) and Marta Regalia ([marta.regalia@unimi.it](mailto:marta.regalia@unimi.it)). All accepted proposals will undergo the regular peer review process once the full manuscript is submitted.