

# ECPR Joint Sessions 2005, Granada

## Workshop proposal

### The Selection and Deselection of Ministers

#### Co-Directors:

Keith Dowding, London School of Economics, UK

Patrick Dumont, Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

#### Outline of the topic and relation to existing research

Whilst there has been a lot of academic work examining the formation and break-up of governments (most recently Müller and Strøm (eds) 2003 on coalition governments, but comparative work on government duration includes countries with single-party majority executives), and there has been work examining legislative careers (see for instance Best and Cotta 2000), few have focussed on the intersection of these two areas. Indeed, in a recent 'state of the art' piece on parties and government, De Winter (2002) states that amongst all aspects of government formation – party composition, portfolio allocation, policy definition, and personnel selection – the latter has received the least attention from scholars. Likewise, systematic and longitudinal analysis of the reasons, meanings and consequences of ministerial resignations have only recently been undertaken (see Dowding and Kang 1998; Dumont, De Winter and Dandoy 2001; Dewan and Dowding 2003, forthcoming, Huber and Martinez-Gallardo 2003a, 2003b, Kam and Indridason 2003, Kerby 2003).

Cabinets are formed of individual ministers, whose stock may rise and fall, not only with that of their party, but through their actions and with the successes and failures of their policies. This workshop will focus on the career paths of ministers and will examine the forces that lead to the selection of ministers and determine their careers to their resignation and beyond. The workshop will encourage participants to collect and present data on the characteristics of ministers and how they correlate to their careers. Who compose the 'selectorate' of ministerial personnel? Answers may depend on the single-party majority / coalition government / minority type; the Prime minister, party leaders or a combination thereof; or elements within the party may be important; and Heads of State may have veto powers. What are the criteria and strategic incentives for Prime Ministers or party leaders to choose certain types of people as ministers (experts versus generalists, the symbolic selection of younger ministers, the appointment of party leaders and/or faction leaders in order to maximise government durability, etc.)? How do these criteria and incentives vary between types of portfolios? What are the formal and informal constraints nominators face when confronted to the choice of personnel (gender and territorial representation, intra-party norms such as the representation of different party factions or 'democratic' norms that imply the nomination of vote winners, the availability of *ministrables* in new or small parties, etc.)? What are then the reasons and strategic incentives for a Prime Minister or party leaders to promote, demote or sack ministers in the lifetime of a government? Are ministers forced to resign because of their perceived performance, because of personal disagreements with fellow ministers or the

Prime Minister? If policy disagreement is the key, is it disagreement with cabinet colleagues or the Prime Minister, or other parties in the government; or is it with their own party (the minister may be thought to be 'captured' by the government if s/he becomes more loyal to the government than to the party).

The workshop will examine the politics, the tactics and the psychology of selection, promotion, demotion and resignations from governments. It will hope to gain insights into the background reasons or context in which specific cabinet formation and reshuffles take place.

The importance and sensitiveness of the selection and deselection of ministers may be highlighted by the framework of principal-agent theory: ministers may be seen as 'double-agents' (Andeweg 2000), in the sense that they act on behalf of more than one 'principal'. Both their party and the government as a whole (or the Prime minister) delegate power to individual ministers and the latter are accountable to these principals in return. One can easily see that in coalition governments (or in single-party governments if party factions can be seen as 'principals') ministers may be torn between two loyalties that may not always be compatible. In order to avoid agency loss, nominators will put effort in the screening and selection phase of their agents, but as this selectorate may be composed of different principals (for instance party leaders submit a list of ministers and the Prime minister has veto power) this selection phase can already be problematic. Principals however have other *ex ante* control mechanisms at their disposal, like the drafting of a comprehensive and detailed coalition agreement that constrains ministerial autonomy and binds majority parties (contract design). Monitoring and reporting devices are also used *ex post* by party leaders and Prime ministers in order to be able to react to potential agency loss, and that is on such grounds that decisions of reshuffles, dismissals, or non-renewal of ministers can be taken..

The objectives of the workshop include:

- To encourage the collection and analysis of data on ministerial selection, promotions, demotions and resignations cross-nationally.
- To analyse the data in order to examine patterns of ministerial careers in the twentieth century.
- To encourage the development of models of *political capital*. Akin to economic or social capital concepts (Coleman 1990), we may think of ministers' political capital as relying on their political resources such as their constituency majority, support within their parliamentary party, ministerial and other political experience. And capital might be spent as they call in favours, are involved in scandals or policy failures and so on.

Research on these topics should allow for scientific progress in the following sub-disciplines of political science:

- representation (do ministers' backgrounds mirror MPs' or the society at large?) and elite studies;

- government formation, decision-making, maintenance and termination (scrutinizing for instance, the assumption of individual ministers' policy dictatorship in their jurisdiction at the heart of Laver and Shepsle's portfolio allocation approach or cabinet conflict resolution mechanisms);
- party organisations (the role of factions, decision-making in the selection and deselection of ministers);
- political psychology and communication (what effects do sacking ministers have on the popularity for the government, a party or the Prime Minister?).

## **Types of Papers**

Both directors have collected data on aspects of ministerial careers in the UK and Belgium. Other potential participants have collected data on France, Spain, Canada, Australia, Germany, Ireland and other countries. Whilst we will be looking for data-rich papers (and hope that the workshop will encourage more data collection in other countries to allow for a large compatible dataset for quantitative comparative analysis, see below) we will also welcome qualitative or descriptive papers, especially from countries where quantitative data is not available.

The last ECPR workshop devoted to political careers dates back to 2001. This workshop referred mainly to the career paths of *legislators* in an increasing *multi-level* political environment. Although the question of the availability of alternatives to national executive positions (for instance in sub-national governments in federal systems) and the attractiveness of these new opportunities (for instance European positions) may be addressed in this workshop our concentration will be on the personnel characteristics of *national executives* (hence, a comparative analysis of personnel characteristics at different executive levels would qualify, as would a cross-institutional comparison provided that the national government is included in such an analysis).

## **Funding**

At this moment no complementary funding is available.

## **Potential Participants**

On the basis of our participation in several projects, either on coalition governments (e.g. Müller & Strøm, 2003), applying the principal-agent approach on parliamentary democracies (Strøm, Müller and Bergman 2003; Braun and Gilardi 2004) or more specifically in a 2003 APSA panel devoted to ministerial resignations, we are confident that interested colleagues exist and can be expected to apply in sufficient number. The people mentioned below either showed interest for the subject during informal conversations with the co-directors or have contributed to the few major works in the field:

Rudy B. Andeweg, Leiden, NL  
Jean Blondel, Sienna, IT  
Mauricio Cotta, Sienna, IT  
Erik Damgaard, Aarhus, DK  
Régis Dandoy, Louvain, BEL  
Torun Dewan, LSE, UK  
Kris Deschouwer, VUBrusseL, BEL  
Keith Dowding, LSE, UK  
Patrick Dumont, Louvain, BEL  
James Druckman, Minesota, USA  
Stefaan Fiers, KULeuven, BEL  
John D. Huber, Columbia, USA  
Simon Hug, St Gall, SWITZ

Indridi Indridasson, Reykjavik, ICE  
Carlos Jalali, Lisbon, POR  
Andre Kaiser, Cologne, GER  
Hans Keman, Amsterdam, NL  
Christopher Kam, South Carolina,  
USA  
Matthew Kerby, Ottawa, CAN  
Michael Laver, TCD, IRE  
Ian McAllister, ANU, AUS  
Jordi Matas, Barcelona, SP  
Mikko Mattila, Helsinki, FIN  
Juan Montabes, Granada, SP  
Wolfgang Müller, Mannheim, GER

Hanne-Marthe Narud, Oslo, NOR  
Birgitta Niklasson, Gothenburg,  
SWE  
Josep Reniu, Barcelona, SP  
Thomas Saalfeld, Kent, UK  
Kaare Strøm, San Diego, USA  
Arthur Spirling, Rochester, USA  
Jean-Louis Thiébault, IEP Lille, FR  
Luca Verzichelli, Sienna, IT  
Paul Warwick, Simon Fraser  
University, CAN

## Expected Outputs

The workshop is tightly themed and we believe the prospects of an edited volume or special issue of a journal is greater than for many workshop proposals.

Perhaps more important, however, is the creation of a network or international research group on the selection and deselection of ministers. A research group of like-minded scholars collecting original data in a manner allowing easy cross-national comparison is an important aim. At least one session of the workshop will be set aside for discussion of forming such a group. As well as creating new datasets from primary sources, a great deal of pertinent information exists in existing datasets. The idea of adapting, extending, updating and integrating parts of existing comparative datasets will also be pursued within the workshop. In particular, the dataset generated by Blondel and Thiébault (1991) on the previous political background of ministers could be linked to the Coalition Governance dataset (Müller, Strøm and Bergman) which will be made public by the end of 2004 or to the Woldendorp, Keman and Budge (2000) dataset on Party Government. The dataset created by Best and Cotta on legislative careers may be used as a guide for this purpose. Moreover, comparative data on the ranking of a wide range of ministerial portfolios were collected by Warwick and Druckman in 2003, and Huber (2003) collected cases of ministerial resignations on the basis of Keesing's historical archives. Appropriate integration of these datasets will demand an important co-ordination task but expertise in national political systems coming from contributors would allow for the reliability of the newly generated dataset.

## Biographical Notes of the Co-directors

Keith Dowding is Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics. He has published *Rational Choice and Political Power*, *The Civil Service*, *Power*, and co-edited *Preferences, Institutions and Rational Choice*, *Challenges to Democracy* and *The Ethics of Stakeholding*: as well as publishing articles in the fields of political philosophy, social choice, urban politics, public administration and British politics. He is co-editor of the *Journal of Theoretical Politics*. His recent research includes the examination of ministerial resignations (see 'The Corrective Effect of Ministerial Resignations on Government Popularity' (with Torun Dewan), *American Journal of Political Science* forthcoming 2004).

Patrick Dumont is researcher (founding father and secretary) at the Comparative Politics Centre of the Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve. He was part of the Coalition Governance Project headed by Müller, Strøm and Bergman (three out of four edited books already published by OUP) but has also written on Parties, Party Systems and Parliaments in edited books and journals. Forthcoming is an article in the *European Journal of Political Research* (with Hanna Bäck) on comparative Green parties' access to national governments. Recent research relevant to the workshop project includes the analysis of cabinet and ministerial resignations in Belgium (see Dumont, De Winter and Dandoy 2001) and a theoretical piece on principal-agent theory (see Dumont and Varone 2004, forthcoming).

## References

- Andeweg, Rudy B. (1997), 'Collegiality and Collectivity: Cabinets, Cabinet Committees, and Cabinet Ministers', in Patrick Weller, Herman Bakvis and R.A.W. Rhodes (eds.), *The Hollow Crown: Countervailing Trends in Core Executives*, London: Macmillan
- Andeweg, Rudy B. (2000) 'Ministers as double agents? The delegation process between cabinet and ministers', *European Journal of Political Research*, 3: 377-395
- Best, Heinrich and Cotta, Maurizio (eds) (2000) *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848-2000. Legislative Recruitment and Careers in Eleven Countries*. Oxford: Oxford university Press.
- Blondel, Jean and Cotta, Maurizio (1996) *Party and Government. An Inquiry into the Relationship between Governments and Supporting Parties in Liberal Democracies*, London: Macmillan
- Blondel, J. and Manning, N. (2002) 'Do Ministers Do What They Say ? Ministerial Unreliability, Collegial and Hierarchical Governments', *Political Studies*, vol.50 : 455-476.
- Blondel, Jean, and Thiébault, Jean-Louis (1991) *The Profession of Government Minister in Western Europe*, London: Macmillan.
- Coleman, James (1990) *Foundations of Social Theory* Harvard University Press.
- Dewan, Torun and Keith Dowding (2003) 'Ministerial Resignations in the UK 1945-1997' paper presented at APSA03, Philadelphia.
- Dewan, Torun and Keith Dowding (2004) 'The Corrective Effect of Ministerial Resignations on Government Popularity', *American Journal of Political Science* forthcoming.
- De Winter, Lieven (1991) 'Parliamentary and Party Pathways to the Cabinet' in Blondel, Jean, and Thiébault, Jean-Louis (1991) *The Profession of Government Minister in Western Europe*, London: Macmillan:44-69.
- De Winter, Lieven (1995). 'The Role of Parliament in Government Formation and Resignation' in Herbert Döring (ed.) *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe*. New York: St Martin's Press, 115-151.
- De Winter, Lieven (2002). 'Parties and Government Formation, Portfolio Allocation and Policy Formulation' in Kurt Richard Luther and Ferdinand Müller-Rommel (eds) *Political parties in the New Europe*. Oxford: Oxford university Press.
- Dogan, Mattei (1989) (ed.), *Pathways to Power*, Boulder: Westview.
- Dowding, Keith and Won-Taek Kang (1998) 'Ministerial Resignation 1945-97' *Public Administration* 76:411-430.
- Dunleavy, Patrick and Bastow, S. (2001). 'Modelling Coalitions that Cannot Coalesce: A Critique of the Laver-Shepsle Approach'. *West European Politics*, 24, 1:1-26.
- Dumont, Patrick, De Winter, Lieven and Dandoy, Régis. (2001). 'Démissions gouvernementales et performances électorales des majorités sortantes (1946-1999)'. *Courrier hebdomadaire du CRISP*. n. 1722 : 51p.
- Dumont, Patrick and Varone, Frédéric (2004) 'Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies: Has Smallness a Big Effect?' in D. Braun and F. Gilardi (eds) *Delegation in Contemporary Democracies*, London: Routledge (forthcoming).
- Huber, John D. and Cecilia Martinez-Gallardo (2003) 'Cabinet Turnover in Parliamentary Democracies' paper presented at APSA03, Philadelphia.
- Huber, John D. and Cecilia Martinez-Gallardo (2004) 'Cabinet Instability and the Accumulation of Experience: The French Fourth and Fifth Republics in Comparative Perspective' *British Journal of Political Science* 34: 27-48.

- Kam, Christopher and Indridi Indidason (2003) 'The Timing of Cabinet Reshuffles in Four Westminster Systems: An Event History Approach' paper presented at APSA03, Philadelphia.
- Kerby, Matthew (2003) 'Canadian Cabinet Minister Turnover: 1957-2000' paper presented at APSA03, Philadelphia.
- Kiewiet, D. R. and McCubbins, M.D. (1991). *The Logic of Delegation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Laver, Michael and Shepsle, Kenneth (eds.) (1994), *Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentary Government*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Laver, Michael and Shepsle, Kenneth (1996), *Making and Breaking Governments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Laver, Michael and Shepsle, Kenneth (2000), 'Ministrables and Government Formation: Munchkins, Players and Big Beasts in the Jungle', in *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 12:113-124.
- Mershon, Carole (2001) 'Contending models of portfolio allocation and office payoffs to party factions: Italy, 1963-1979', *American Journal of Political Science* April 2001.
- Müller, Wolfgang and Strøm, Kaare (2003) (eds.), *Coalition Government in Western Europe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Pennings, Paul (2000) 'The Consequences of Ministerial Recruitment for the Functioning of Cabinets in Western Europe' *Acta Politica*, 35:86-103.
- Saalfeld, Thomas (2000) 'Members of parliament and governments in Western Europe. Agency relations and problems of oversight' *European Journal of Political Research* 3:353-376.
- Strøm K., Müller, W.C., and Bergman, T. (eds) (2004) *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Warwick, Paul (1999) 'Ministerial Autonomy or Ministerial Accommodation? Contested Bases of Government Survival in Parliamentary Democracies.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 29:369-394.
- Warwick, Paul and Druckman, James (2001) 'Portfolio Salience and the Propotionality of Payoffs in Coalition Governments.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 31:627-649.
- Weller, Paul (1997) 'Political Parties and the Core Executive' in Weller, Paul, Bakvis, Herman and Rhodes, Rod, (1997) (eds.), *The Hollow Crown: countervailing trends in core executives*, London: Macmillan.
- Woldendorp, Jaap, Keman, Hans and Budge, Ian (2000) *Party Government in 48 Democracies. Composition - Duration - Personnel*, Dordrecht: Kluwer.

