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Intergovernmental Arrangements in Spanish and Swiss Federalism: the Impact of Power-Concentrating and Power-Sharing Executives on Intergovernmental Institutionalization

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ABSTRACT This article argues that the mode of decision making within federal sub-units affects the organizational patterns of intergovernmental relations (IGR) through which regional actors engage in cross-jurisdictional co-operation. In a nutshell, majoritarian executive-legislative relations tend to weaken the institutionalization of intergovernmental arrangements (IGAs), while power-sharing executive-legislative relations tend to facilitate it.

This is, first, because one-party majority cabinets tend to increase ideological differences between the sub-units. Secondly, complete government alternations—which are less likely given coalition or oversized governments—strongly alter actors’ interest constellations over time, thereby increasing the costs of maintaining stable intergovernmental structures. Thirdly, the heavy impact of a potential electoral loss induces politicians to shift the blame to the other governments, thereby undermining the potential for cross-boundary co-operation. Finally, autonomy losses caused by intergovernmental co-operation are higher for parties which govern alone when compared to coalition governments.

Based on a typology of power-limiting democracies, which distinguishes federal systems along their respective executive-legislative relations, Spain and Switzerland are selected as cases. The analysis indicates that the much more power-concentrating executive-legislative relations within the Spanish regions and the power-sharing executive-legislative relations within the Swiss cantons help to explain why Spanish regional actors resort to ad hoc co-ordination within a weakly institutionalized environment instead of establishing strong IGAs as the Swiss regional actors.

KEY WORDS: Intergovernmental relations, Swiss federalism, Spanish federalism, executive–legislative relations, subnational governments

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Swiss and Spanish Intergovernmental Relations: Self-Explanatory Phenomena or Systematic Puzzle?

Research Interest and Major Line of Argument

The comparison of Swiss federalism with the Spanish State of Autonomies is not very common. They seem to differ so strikingly in their historical development, their political structures and practices that to point at another difference—namely their intergovernmental arrangements (IGAs)—seems to be at least at the first glance not overly insightful: Switzerland is usually treated as a consensus democracy with coalescing elites (Lijphart, 1969; 1999; Daalder, 1971; Lehmbruch, 1996). The Spanish political system, in contrast, is characterized by antagonistic relations between regional and central actors (Moreno, 1999; Nunez, 2000). Confronted with such contrasting pictures, one needs to find a shared category based on which a comparison becomes systematically insightful: most importantly, both polities are characterized by strong power-limiting structures. This is due to the two countries’ considerable social heterogeneity—rooted in the co-existence of societal groups which define themselves, among other factors, on the basis of different languages. Also Switzerland and Spain are two democracies in which strong regional identities and national affiliation co-exist. Accordingly, besides the principle of democracy, federalism—albeit never mentioned in the Spanish constitution (Agranoff and Ramos Gallarín, 1997)—is considered as a constitutive feature on which the polities are built and out of which they derive their legitimacy (Linder, 1994; Beramendi, 2000; Neidhart, 2001; Moreno, 2002).

Starting out from this fundamental commonality, the goal of this article is to contribute to the understanding of the organizational forms chosen to channel intergovernmental processes in Switzerland and Spain—the institutionalization of intergovernmental arrangements. As the next section will show, the ‘usual suspects’ in federal research cannot satisfactorily account for the contrasting pictures of Swiss and Spanish intergovernmental relations (IGR). To address this puzzle, a theoretical framework will be presented to systematically account for the degree of the institutionalization of IGAs. Most fundamentally it argues that the competitive pressures generated within the constitutive governments affect regional elites’ choices in favour of or against cross-boundary co-operation. Afterwards, the derived hypotheses will be applied comparing the organizational make-up of Swiss and Spanish IGAs.

Recent research indicates that political actors in federal systems have adapted to global and regional integration and strengthened co-ordination effort, yet, in many cases, without any major institutional transformations (Lazar et al., 2003: 1). Based on this general insight, it is argued that in order to understand the subnational actors’ willingness to set up strongly institutionalized IGAs as a reaction to growing co-ordination pressures it is necessary to understand the overall logic of a composite polity. This ‘overall logic’ is influenced considerably by the ‘internal logic’ of the single constitutive arenas which thereby shape the patterns of IGR.

Assessing the Puzzle

Referring to Spanish and Swiss actors’ past experiences, the countries represent the ‘most likely cases’ for weak and strong IGR respectively. Nevertheless, from a
systematic point of view they constitute a puzzle. Leaving aside culturally inherited patterns for a moment, the following core aspects are usually referred to in federal research in order to account for the density and institutionalization of IGR: the types of competence distribution in the constitution (e.g. Watts, 1999; Simeon, 2001); the role of the second chamber (Braun, 2000; 2003a); the distribution of fiscal powers (e.g. Braun, 2003b); and, finally, the pressure of Europeanization (e.g. Hooghe, 1996; Börzel, 2001; 2002). Table 1 compares the two systems according to these features and sums up their expected effects on intergovernmental institutionalization. Although these factors doubtlessly help to understand IGR in the respective systems better, they do not deliver a satisfying account.

Share of concurrent legislation

It is a common argument in federal research that the more powers that are assigned to closed ‘watertight compartments’, the weaker the incentives for cross-boundary interaction. Vice versa, the more the constitution provides for wide areas of concurrent powers, the stronger they are (Simeon, 2001: 148). Watt’s overview of the competence distribution in federal systems gives a first indication of the range of concurrent competencies: In Spain only 4.8% of the policy areas (2 of 42) belong to this type of competencies (Watts, 1999: 126–30), while 17.4% of competencies (8 of 46 areas) are concurrent in the Swiss case. From a comparative point of view both are relatively minor: In Germany—the prototype of co-operative federalism—62% (26 of 42) fall under the label of concurrent legislation (see, for a broader assessment of federal systems, Thorlakson, 2003). At the same time, country experts point out that concurrency in the Spanish case is much more pronounced than these figures indicate. In fact, referring to the importance of competencies, core jurisdictions, such as education and health, are concurrent (Aja, 1999: 107–110). Taking this into consideration, the degree of constitutional concurrency is qualified as medium in both systems. All in all, the reference to the mode of competence distribution does not deliver a convincing explanation for the organizational differences between Swiss and Spanish IGAs.

Table 1. Incentive profile favouring strong IGAs in Switzerland and Spain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
<th>Spain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Share of concurrent legislation in constitution</td>
<td>Medium ⇒ positive incentive</td>
<td>Medium ⇒ positive incentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Strength of second chamber as instrument for territorial representation</td>
<td>Strong ⇒ weak incentive</td>
<td>Weak ⇒ positive incentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Fiscal dependency of substates on federal government</td>
<td>Weak ⇒ weak incentive</td>
<td>Strong ⇒ positive incentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Pressure of Europeanization</td>
<td>Medium ⇒ positive incentive</td>
<td>Strong ⇒ positive incentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall incentive profile</td>
<td>⇒ Weak incentives favoring the development of strong IGAs</td>
<td>⇒ Strong incentives favoring the development of strong IGAs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strength of second chamber

Second chambers are the most crucial institution of ‘intrastate federalism’—federal bargaining within national institutions (Simeon, 1972)—and should affect the demand for ‘interstate bargaining’ directly. A strong federal second chamber does not imply that alternative channels for horizontal co-ordination become superfluous since the chamber is involved in national decision making only. Horizontal co-ordination, after all, is mostly crucial in areas in which the sub-states have legislative competencies on their own and in which federal institutions, in principle, are not involved. However, with regard to the vertical level, a second chamber provides an important channel for communication and the absence of a territorial chamber should increase the demand for multilateral IGAs on the vertical and the horizontal dimension.

The Spanish Senate hardly provides an adequate channel to feed territorial demands into the system (Morata, 1991: 8–9). It is clearly inferior to the first chamber in terms of competencies, representational make-up and legitimacy. Since 1978 the Senate has been purely instrumental by giving the parties of government and the opposition a second chance to agree on legislative projects. On top of that, the readings in the Senate have been superficial which contributed to its poor political reputation (Moreno, 2000: 137). As one major structural factor, the asymmetrical competence distribution weakens the position of the chamber considerably (Lijphart, 1999: 212). Even the capacity to delay legislation and to receive concessions for speeding up the decision-making process is restricted (Tsebelis and Money, 1997: 68). Accordingly, the sectoral conferences have taken over the functions belonging only theoretically to the Senate, namely the one of territorial representation. This makes politicians even more reluctant to use the Senate for dialogue (Roller, 2002; 2004: 95) which clearly points to a link between interstate and intrastate federalism.

The Swiss second chamber, in contrast, is constructed after the American model and therefore much stronger. Each canton (with exception of the half cantons) is represented equally by two senators and those are elected directly, hence legitimated democratically. Most importantly, each law needs the agreement of both houses. The Swiss Senate is symmetrical and incongruent and with that one of the strongest second chambers in Western democracies (Tsebelis and Money, 1997: 68; Lijphart, 1999: 207). In fact, one might question whether the Senate really represents ‘cantonal interests’ since it is elected directly by the cantonal electorates and does not represent regional governments (Armingeon, 2000: 122; Braun, 2003a; Vatter, 2004). Nevertheless, from a comparative perspective, the Swiss Senate strengthens the position of the ‘constitutive parts’ in the federation to a much higher degree than its Spanish pendant. Assuming that strong interstate federalism—bargaining between central and sub-state governments—can compensate partially for a weak second chamber, the demand for institutionalized IGAs should be stronger in Spain than in Switzerland.

Fiscal dependency of sub-states

A similar situation is given when comparing the fiscal powers of the Swiss with those of the Spanish regional democracies. Again, the incentives to establish IGAs are more pronounced in Spain than in Switzerland, this time because cantonal taxing power is much stronger. Although the federal government’s fiscal superiority is typical for federal systems, the more fiscal power sub-states are granted the more independently
they can exercise their own competencies and implement their own policies without central participation.\textsuperscript{5} The limited taxing power of the Autonomous Communities (ACs) and their dependency on grants provides a strong stimulus to co-operate with the centre. Accordingly, the two Spanish territories Navarra and Basque Country, which have more extensive taxing rights than the other ACs, participate far less in convenios, AC–federal agreements than do the other territories (Grau I Creus, 2000: 67). The interest of the remaining ACs should be quite intensive to form—with the help of organizationally strong IGAs—a front against the centre in order to gain more weight in bargaining processes over financial support.\textsuperscript{6}

**Pressure of Europeanization**

Europeanization is the final aspect which one might refer to as an incentive for intensifying and institutionalizing inter-regional exchanges. Europeanization has been identified as a major ‘external’ force that motivates political actors to establish stronger channels for cross-boundary interaction (Hooghe, 1996). Facing these developments, the strengthening of intergovernmental channels in federal systems, a general trend towards co-operative federalism, has been hypothesized (Börzel, 2000; 2002). Again, the incentives favouring IGAs is stronger in Spain. Although Switzerland has adopted a lot of EU regulations voluntarily, co-ordination pressure should affect a member state more immediately.

**Assessment**

Overall, the given factors support institutionalized Spanish IGAs to a stronger degree than they support institutionalized Swiss IGAs, which does not match the usual picture of IGR in the two systems. The comparison reveals that despite the range of ‘usual suspects’, which certainly contribute to the understanding of the cases, there is the need to consider additional factors in order to account for Swiss–Spanish differences in intergovernmental institutionalization more adequately. Such an attempt is made in the following by referring to the internal life of single government units constituting a federal polity as one important variable driving IGR.

**Theoretical Perspective, Basic Concepts and the Merits of a Rationalist Account**

Recent research on IGR has shown that despite their dispositions against co-operative interaction, which culturalist approaches on IGR often refer to, Spanish regional actors adapt to incentive structures if those are strong enough: in Europeanized policy areas the ACs have initially chosen a competitive strategy. They circumvented the centre and tried to exert influence directly at the European level. As soon as they realized that they seriously risked losing competencies through their uncompromising behaviour, they switched to a more co-operative strategy towards the centre. This resulted in a strengthening of the arrangements for regional–federal co-ordination in Europeanized policy fields. In other areas of domestic policy no change occurred (Börzel, 2000; 2002).

Starting from these insights, it is useful to look at incentive structures which affect the actors’ choices in domestic politics and to assess IGR from a rationalist angle. More concretely, this article looks at the internal gains of intergovernmental competition or, alternatively, co-operation generated by the political dynamics within regional
politicians’ home arenas. By doing so, one arrives at a micro-foundation which specifies the motives driving the agents since the reference to the ‘actorness’ of non-central governments (Hocking, 1999) remains insufficient as long as the dynamics and pressures impacting on these actors are not systematized. Regional institutions, once created, take a life of their own and become the central structuring forces of territorial politics. Their very creation leads the patterns of central–regional and inter-regional relationships (Lecours, 2004: 86).

However, the claim that they do so by becoming “new arenas for power struggles”, as Lecours (2004: 86) argues, demands qualification. The respective character of the dynamics generated within regional democracies differs considerably across federal countries and these differences contribute to the understanding of the patterns of territorial interaction and their respective organizational embeddings. The following will show that—taking a cross-national point of view—the patterns of IGR neither need to take the form of struggles for autonomy nor be competitive in character (Chapman, 1993: 75–76; Bolleyer, 2006a). Accordingly, this approach is based on the premise that institutions constrain and regularize behaviour and are set up only if they facilitate actors to pursue their respective goals (Scharpf, 1997). They open windows of opportunity or sanction behaviour (Héritier, 1996). In short, strong IGAs should be established and maintained only if regional actors gain from it ‘at home’ where they can be most immediately sanctioned.

Power-limiting Democracies, Party Competition and the Institutionalization of IGAs

In order to get a systematic account of IGR in federal systems, it is crucial to understand the interactions between different types of power-limiting mechanisms. These mechanisms separate and link sub-state governments in a composite polity and structure these sub-units internally. A power-limiting democracy is characterized by institutional mechanisms and/or actor configurations, which prevent one single coherent simple majority from making collectively binding decisions without the participation of other actors. Logically, the subtypes of power-limiting democracy are characterized by different forms of power limitation. The most crucial distinction is the one between power sharing and power dispersion (Kaiser, 1997; Lijphart, 1999). Power sharing denotes joint decision making, while power dispersion refers to the distribution of competencies to distinct centres that cannot formally intervene in each others’ jurisdictions. In contrast to Lijphart (1999), who developed his type of consensus democracy inductively, this starts with the analytical separation of the concepts of polycentric democracy from that of bargaining democracy as two types of power-limiting democracy that are characterized by different forms of power limitation.

If a system is characterized by power dispersion, meaning that power is dispersed to different decision-making arenas which are internally dominated by majoritarian processes, this polity is called a polycentric democracy. Among federal systems, cases are Spain and Canada. If a system dominantly possesses power-sharing mechanisms and does not allow single simple majorities (within the different units) to bring about decisions alone, it is called a bargaining democracy. Among federal systems, cases are Switzerland and the United States.
The distinction provides a useful heuristic device to exemplify the rationale to select Spain and Switzerland as two power-limiting polities following different logics. Moreover, it helps to systematize how the interplay of federal structures with other power-limiting or power-concentrating mechanisms leads to either power-sharing or power-dispersing dynamics within the organizational patterns of IGR.

More concretely, it leads to the hypothesis that majoritarian decision making in the sub-states of a federal polity weaken the degree to which IGAs are institutionalized. Internal power-sharing structures, in contrast, set the opposite incentives. This reasoning draws on Lehmbruch’s work on German federalism. In Germany, the tight coupling of arenas in which majoritarian processes interact with an interlocking system of horizontal and vertical co-operation causes considerable tensions. Partisan competition has an immediate impact on the politicians’ capacity to strike bargains in the federal arena (Lehmbruch, 1978). On this basis, one can turn the argument around and develop the following line of reasoning: if federal systems do not already provide strong constitutional predispositions to develop dense IGR, as in the German case (which is the case for Spain and Switzerland as argued earlier), majoritarian processes within single arenas should set incentives against the establishment of a fully-fledged system of strongly institutionalized IGR, while power sharing should facilitate it. Hence, one can formulate the following hypotheses:

**H1a:** Given predominantly majoritarian decision-making dynamics in the sub-states and in the centre, the degree of institutionalization of IGAs will be weak.

**H1b:** Given predominantly power sharing in the sub-states and in the centre, the degree of institutionalization of IGAs will be strong.

These hypotheses capture macro-level dynamics, yet how are these ‘systemic’ tensions between intra-governmental majoritarianism and strong intergovernmental arrangements rooted in the behaviour of the actors? Which causal mechanisms drive their behavioural choices at the micro-level and how can these mechanisms be captured empirically?

*(In)Stability of the interest configuration*

The first mechanism refers to the (in)stability of the interest configuration among the constitutive arenas. Given mostly one-party majority cabinets in the constitutive states, government turn over frequently alters the interest configurations among them. This raises the costs for actors to maintain strong IGAs. *Ad hoc* co-ordination, in contrast, allows politicians to adapt to these changing configurations. They participate in a profitable agreement when interest convergence is given with a certain group of partners and, if not, they resort to unilateralism. A strongly institutionalized arrangement would delimit this flexibility. As soon as coalitions come into play, alternation is much weaker as a potential force of change because complete turn over becomes less likely. Given mostly oversized coalitions, the interest configuration should be quite stable over time. Under these circumstances, *ad hoc* co-ordination has hardly any advantages and this should reflect in the IGAs established in the system. In order to measure the internally generated ‘competitive pressure’, the average rate of complete...
alternations is used as an indicator (Strøm, 1990). Since it is crucial to capture the pressure of elections, only those governments that have been formed after an election are considered. Hence, the alternation rate will be assessed in relation to the absolute number of elections.

Ideological congruence

A second aspect that characterizes the interest configuration among sub-state governments is its ideological congruence between different governments (Downs, 1998; Thorlakson, forthcoming). If party systems are similar across the sub-states, congruence is most likely when oversized governments are formed. Then, the same parties tend to participate in coalitions within different sub-states, hence, sub-state coalitions are likely to overlap in composition. Given mainly one-party sub-state governments, the share of overlapping governments should decrease. The simple assumption is that the conflict potential between governments should be lower, given parties of similar ideological profile in office. A first estimate of the conflict potential is the percentages of non-overlapping governments at a given point in time. As non-overlapping governments, the percentage of one-party governments and of coalitions composed of different sets of parties is counted. The lower this percentage is, the lower the conflict potential on the horizontal level tends to be. Based on this percentage, the number of ideologically distinct governments on the horizontal level and their relative weight need to be specified. To do so the Laasko–Taagepera-Index (Laakso and Taagepera 1979) is used. The higher the figure indicating the number of distinct configurations (5.0 instead of 2.0), the more complex the agreement becomes. The more even the distribution of the government configurations’ representation in the sub-states at a given point (indicated by 2.0 or 3.0 ... instead of 2.4 or 3.6), the more conflict potential exists because the ideological profiles are represented with about equal strength. Taken together, an average of 5 in one country as compared to 3,5 in another country indicates that in the first country 5 equally represented configurations have to find agreement compared to 4 non-equally distributed in the second. In the latter configuration the conflict potential is therefore lower.

Blame shifting

Given a high likelihood of alternation (again measured by the alternation rate) the immediate threat of electoral loss motivates regional politicians to shift blame to the other governments. The competitive pressure is strongest in two-party systems, which constitute a ‘zero-sum-game’. Therein, mutual distrust is fostered because each actor knows of the other’s pressure to focus on the short-term goal of electoral victory at the cost of the long-term goal of fruitful intergovernmental exchanges. In such a two-level game (Putnam, 1988) the intergovernmental game is clearly subordinated (Cameron and Simeon, 2002). The threat of government alternation and the resulting tendency to shift blame is comparatively weaker if coalitions need to be formed. Then, vote losses do not necessarily mean that a party cannot achieve coalition participation.

Autonomy loss

Finally, when engaging in intergovernmental interaction, autonomy losses are bigger for parties that govern alone than for parties that govern in a coalition.
If power-sharing is a part of daily decision making in one’s home arena, the relative autonomy losses are comparatively minor. The relative autonomy loss of a sub-state can be measured by the average number of one-party cabinets with and without a majority in the constitutive governments. Moreover, the average number of governments is added to give a more detailed picture of the complexity of coalitions formed.

How to Measure Institutionalization

Intergovernmental interaction can be realized in ad hoc co-ordination of policy making or in co-decision. Ad hoc co-ordination captures mutual adjustment of policies on an *ad hoc* basis, while co-decision denotes regular collective decision making (Elazar, 1991: 76; Scharpf, 1997; Cameron, 2001: 125). Each form of interaction tends to go hand in hand with a different organizational embedding of the respective interaction patterns. These embeddings need to be empirically specified: voluntary mutual adjustment, hence ‘*ad hoc* co-ordination’, does not necessitate the regularity of meetings, a bureaucratically supported and internally differentiated body, a formal decision-making rule, the legally binding status of agreements (Arnold and Plant, 1994; Cameron, 2001; Opeskin, 2001: 130; Simmons, 2004). On the contrary, these are empirical features of a highly institutionalized embedding which should facilitate co-decision. *Ad hoc* co-ordination tends to lack these features and allows for maximal flexibility and the autonomy of the participating parties. It does so at the price of decreased reliability which strong institutionalization usually generates.

The institutionalization of IGAs becomes visible, on the one hand, in a process of internal organizational development. This development is directed towards a more complex functional distribution of tasks to different offices or sub-units. On the other hand, it shows in a process of external differentiation—in IGA’s boundedness: arrangements develop boundaries towards other bodies in terms of own functions as well as material resources (Judge, 2003: 500–501). Table 2 lists the operational criteria used to measure institutionalization in descending order; the more of the features are empirically present, the more institutionalized the IGA under examination.

The operational criteria are chosen based on the following reasoning. Even if the density of exchange is quite high at times, or regular meetings are set up between the prime ministers and the ministers responsible for particular sectors, institutionalization is considered to be weak if it is organized directly by the governmental departments without any separate intergovernmental body. Medium institutionalization demands the boundedness of an arrangement which is visible through the assignment of specific competencies, resources and personnel to an external body. The investment in the latter indicates that intergovernmental transactions do not only express a momentary interest convergence of a group of individual actors. A core feature of strong institutionalization is a formal decision-making rule which deviates from unanimity because the capacity to bind the sub-states to common positions or plans to which they did not agree demonstrates that the IGA is thought to represent more than the sum of its parts. Another feature is internal differentiation into offices or organs that have their own formally assigned tasks. Moreover, with increasing formalization and differentiation, the capacity of the body increases to produce proposals of high
specificity. And the higher their specificity, the more useful a legal foundation to increase the likelihood of their transfer into sub-state legislation (Simeon, 2001, 148; Simmons, 2004).\(^\text{16}\)

**How Subnational Dynamics Shape Spanish and Swiss IGR**

In this final section, the internal dynamics in the 17 Spanish ACs and the 26 Swiss cantons, the institutionalization of IGAs in the two countries will be examined. First, the dynamics within the sub-states will be characterized and their impact on IGR specified. Secondly, the characteristics of horizontal-multilateral and vertical-multilateral IGAs will be assessed.

**Internal Dynamics in Spanish and Swiss Regional Democracies**

Table 3 sums up the major results of the application of the respective indicators introduced in the previous section.\(^\text{17}\) Clearly, the internal dynamics in the Swiss cantons favour the setting-up of strong IGAs much more than they do in Spain.

On average, 84.8% of the governments formed in the Spanish regional democracies are one-party governments. Since regional parliaments are unicameral, in the majority of cases single parties are able to monopolize power in the sub-national arenas. Consequently, when interacting with the outside, the individual AC executives have more autonomy to lose than cantonal executives since the latter already share power extensively in the inside. Since 1983 only 3% of the Swiss executives have been one-party governments. While in Switzerland minority governments are rare due to the dominant consociational executive model (Vatter, 2002), they occur quite frequently in the Spanish regions. There, 34 of the 83 one-party governments have been minority governments.\(^\text{18}\) Quite obviously, coalitions are formed only if the parliamentary party system is considerably fragmented and executive power sharing cannot be avoided. This is the case in ACs such as the Basque Country, the Canary Islands or Aragon. The more dominant model, however, is characterized by virtually exclusive support for the state-wide parties, the PP and the PSOE. The parliamentary party systems in these regions show a bipolar structure, in which the two major parties

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**Table 2. Indicators for the degree of institutionalization of IGAs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Institutionalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density of contacts</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularity of meetings</td>
<td>Institutionalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous organization</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Own secretariat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Clearly defined functions</td>
<td>Institutionalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Formal basis (e.g. formal statutes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority rule</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal functional differentiation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Specification of offices</td>
<td>Institutionalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Specification of sub-units/bodies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity of agreements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal status of agreements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3. Measures of sub-national dynamics in Spain and Switzerland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One-party governments (%)</th>
<th>Average number of government parties</th>
<th>Complete alternations (%)</th>
<th>Partial alternations (%)</th>
<th>Non-overlapping governments (%)</th>
<th>Average effective number of non-overlapping governments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>12.8&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>The percentages range from no alternations at all to 40% of full alternations in relation to the number of AC elections.

<sup>b</sup>The percentages range from 0% to 57% of partial alternations.

*Source:* Author’s own calculations, based on Méndez Lago (2004), Lopez Nieto (2003) and data provided by the Swiss Office for Statistics.
concentrate more than 80% of the seats (Lago Penas, 2004: 27; see also Pallarés and Keating, 2003). The average number of government parties (1.2 in Spain compared with 3.34 in Switzerland) confirms this picture.

The rate of complete alternations in Spain (12.8%) seems rather moderate. However, the picture changes if one chooses a cross-country perspective: Canada has the reputation of being a highly competitive system with strong majoritarian features at the state as well as at the sub-national level. Its average rate of complete alternations within the last twenty years has been 29% (Bolleyer, 2006a). Hence, the 13% in Spain is not as low as it seems in particular compared to Switzerland where no complete alternations occurred at the cantonal level (Vatter, 2002: 69). In contrast, the number of partial alternations in Switzerland is 29%, twice as high as in Spain (11%). However, again one needs to be careful when interpreting the figures. The Swiss party system is considerably more fragmented at the sub-national level (on average 4–5 effective parties) than the Spanish one (on average 2–3 effective parties) (Ladner, 2001: 127; Vatter, 2003; Lago Penas, 2004: 32). Logically, partial alternations are much more likely when the respective executive constellations are more complex. In fact, the impact on partial alternations on the overall interest configuration are limited, as Vatter’s (2002: 69) analysis of changes in the partisan compositions of cantonal executives (1945–1995) shows: most partial alternations are minor since they change less than half of the executives’ composition. Partial alternations in Spain tend to introduce more substantial change simply because most executive coalitions are composed of fewer parties with higher relative weight. Taking the complete and the partial alternation rate together, the stability of the horizontal interest configuration is clearly higher in Switzerland than in Spain. In sum, IGAs are easier to set up and maintain facing Swiss rather than Spanish intra-governmental and intra-horizontal dynamics.

Finally, Table 3 refers to the average ideological congruence of the overall sub-state configuration which confirms the given picture. In Spain, on average 81.2% of the governments did not overlap in partisan composition, while the Swiss average is 3.5%. Hence, the interaction between cantons should be less prone to conflict than the interaction between Spanish ACs. One could argue that this conclusion is problematic because each canton has its own party system due to the high decentralization of national parties. However, the cantonal party systems differ mainly in the weight of the single parties, not in the composition of the party systems (Grande, 2001; Ladner, 2001). Therefore, similar partisan composition across cantons should exert a moderating effect. Since the cantonal percentage of non-overlapping governments is very low (3.5%), the effective number of non-overlapping governments need not be assessed.

In Spain the effective number of parties gives crucial information as to how much conflict is inherent in the distribution of ideologically distinct, non-overlapping governments. As pointed out, the figure in front indicates the number of main configurations while the figure after gives information on the comparative weight of the residual government types which occur less frequently. The average is 2.7, indicating that the horizontal configuration is formed by two government types—namely PP and PSOE one-party governments—which take over sub-state executives the most frequently. Moreover, there is one bundle of configurations often formed by non
### Table 4. The complexity of the configurations of regional executives in Spain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1983</th>
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<th>2001</th>
<th>Average</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-overlapping configurations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of governments</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>81.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective number of non-overlapping configurations</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

state-wide parties. In sum, the conflict potential is considerable since evidently there is no dominant configuration which could ‘unify’ the horizontal level. Moreover, many of the ‘overlapping’ configurations (which do not enter the calculation of this measure) often include either PP or PSOE as dominant coalition partner which reinforces the picture of two main blocs accompanied by a heterogeneous third group as the overall constellation of conflict.

Looking at Table 4, which sums up the Spanish development over time, it turns out that the percentage of governments which do not overlap in their partisan composition has decreased over time, indicating a growth of ideological congruence between sub-state governments. Overall, the effective number of non-overlapping governments, however, shows a less clear development. The interest configuration has developed towards three main weights which rather increases the intra-horizontal conflict potential.\(^{22}\)

The growing presence of regional parties participating in regional executives has been a major factor (see Pallarés et al., 1997) which—despite the lower number of overlapping government configurations—has increased the conflict potential on the horizontal level. Simultaneously, intra-horizontal conflict is nourished by the vertical linkages between the regional and national branches of the PP and PSOE, through which national divides impact directly on regional interaction (Grau I Creus, 2000) reinforcing competitive horizontal dynamics.

In sum, the comparison illustrates that referring to the nature and the stability of the horizontal interest profile, blame-shifting incentives and autonomy losses generated by the dynamics prevalent in Spanish regional democracies disfavour the setting up of strongly institutionalized IGAs. The intra-regional incentives in Switzerland, in contrast, facilitate the institutionalization of IGAs. Coming back to the analytical distinction between power sharing and power dispersion introduced above—the following section will show that the strong power concentration in Spanish regional executives stabilizes the power-dispersing disposition of the given federal framework through weakening IGAs. Intra-cantonal executive power sharing, in contrast, undermines it by supporting intergovernmental institutionalization.

**Multilateral IGAs in Spain and Switzerland**

Examining IGAs, two aspects define the scope of these bodies: first, the number of participating governments and, secondly, whether IGAs are horizontal (hence excluding the federal government) or vertical (Simeon, 1972; McRoberts, 1985). Accordingly, the analysis looks at horizontal-multilateral and vertical-multilateral IGAs which embrace at least half of the sub-states. Another crucial distinction is the one between IGAs which co-ordinate the sub-states at a general level and those which do so in particular policy fields, whether they are generalist or sectoral IGAs. Whether they co-exist in federal systems and how they relate is of crucial importance for intergovernmental dynamics.

In contrast to Switzerland, in Spain there are no horizontal-multilateral IGAs responsible for general exchanges between the 17 territorial governments. Even more importantly, there are generally no exclusively horizontal-multilateral mechanisms. The existing sectoral conferences, which are vertical-multilateral (hence
involve the federal government), do not—in structural terms—even qualify as ‘organization’ because they lack any kind of boundedness. Accordingly, their degree of institutionalization is weak.

The absence of any exclusively horizontal, hence horizontal-multilateral arrangement already indicates that the formation of a common front against the centre is no feasible goal. To invest resources into such a channel, which could facilitate horizontal co-ordination, seems to be no reasonable strategy for the following reasons: first, the interest configuration constituted by the regional governments is not overly stable due to regular alternations in some ACs; second, the horizontal composition is ideologically heterogeneous. Third, Morata’s (1991: 9) observation that in Spanish IGR short-term political calculations dominate is clearly nourished by the internal electoral pressure which favours blame-shifting (Moreno, 2002: 404). Under these conditions highly formalized IGAs would be necessary to maintain such bodies. This is clearly unacceptable to the regional governments due to the autonomy restrictions involved in establishing, for instance, an internal decision-making rule that deviates from unanimity to ensure an organization’s effectiveness. Hence, fourth, ACs perceive co-operation as intrusion in their individual spheres of authority (Máiz et al., 2002: 404). Note that the competition between the Spanish ACs as well as between the ACs and the centre cannot be regarded as a prior product of the process of decentralization. In fact, a strong unity among the ACs supported by an intergovernmental body could strengthen their position in general. Also considering the fact that Galicia, Catalonia and Andalusia have much stronger autonomy aspirations than the remaining ACs, there is no reason why those ACs with similar tastes should not unify to their own advantage, especially since this divide is a constant to which actors could adapt rather easily, as is the case with regional divides which in other federations led to the set up of regional IGAs.

The core vertical-multilateral arrangements are the sectoral conferences. Twenty-four of them have been established so far. Immediately after they had been created by the federal government in 1981, the law which constituted them was challenged by the ACs in front of the Constitutional Court (Grau I Creus, 2000: 60). Hence, the Spanish regional democracies opposed these conferences right from the beginning and perceived these multilateral fora as instruments of control (Máiz et al., 2002: 404). Not very surprisingly, the sectoral competences barely facilitate even the exchange of information (Morata, 1991: 9). As is the case in most federal systems, there are differences among sectoral bodies depending on the respective policy area. For instance, some analysts regard the Intergovernmental Council on Health Matters as an instrument to consider different points of view (Agranoff, 1993). This, however, is an exception. Although the number of sectoral conferences has increased over the years, their effectiveness—with the exception of Europeanized policy areas—is evaluated very critically (Morata, 1991; Börzel, 2000; 2002; Grau I Creus, 2000). They are neither embeddings which support co-decision nor do they really facilitate ad hoc co-ordination between the ACs.

The underdeveloped organizational structure of the sectoral conferences is one major core of these weaknesses: Their meetings are irregular and do not always respond to an already fixed agenda (Moreno, 2002: 405). They lack their own organizational resources, such as a secretary, personnel or finance. Instead, they are directly
set up by the respective ministries and the ministry in charge defines the agenda of the day (Máiz et al., 2002: 403). In short, neither ‘organizational boundedness’ nor ‘internal differentiation’ is given.

As pointed out already, the higher the degree of institutionalization, the more likely it is that an organization is capable of affecting the behaviour of the involved actors independently of their isolated interests. This is hardly the case in Spain. Most of the time the conferences serve as a forum in which the central government informs the ACs about its programmes and activities, while the ACs can only protest without any substantial impact. There have been situations in which differences could be narrowed within conference meetings. However, the decision whether to make an appeal against central plans is always taken ‘at home’ in the regional arenas (Grau I Creus, 2000: 62). Accordingly, vertical interaction occurs on an ad hoc basis and most federal–AC contracts are bilateral. Decision-making processes that involve the federal government and the ACs are practically non-existent (Grau I Creus, 2000: 69, 73). Accordingly, scholars point at an endemic deficit of multilateral institutions in Spanish IGR, finding reflection in an excess of bilateral interaction and bilateral agreements between federal government and individual ACs (Morata, 1991; Máiz et al., 2002: 394, 404–409).

In a nutshell, these behavioural choices are nourished by the prevalent intra-governmental dynamics in the single government units. They generate a rather heterogeneous interest profile at the horizontal level which tends to change rather frequently, support blame shifting and accelerate individual autonomy losses (the average number of coalition partners is 1.2)—all factors unfavourable for setting up and maintaining strong IGAs.

Corresponding to the very different intra-governmental dynamics at work, Swiss IGAs also look very different from Spanish ones. Horizontal interlocking exists in a variety of forms and is replicated at the level of the 3000 communities. According to recent estimates, around 500 inter-cantonal conferences exist (Freiburghaus and Zehnder, 2003; Vatter, 2004). Country experts even argue that horizontal co-ordination is more relevant in Switzerland than in any other federal polity (Freiburghaus and Zehnder, 2003: 1) which is certainly convincing when compared to Spain. The crucial horizontal-multilateral IGAs in Swiss federalism are, first, the Conference of Cantonal Executives (KdK)—a body that channels generalist inter-cantonal exchanges. Secondly, there are the Conferences of Cantonal Directors, responsible for the exchanges in particular policy fields (DKs). There is no vertical-multilateral IGA like the Spanish sectoral conferences. However, it will show that not only the degree of institutionalization of Swiss IGAs, but also their inter-organizational linkages, are comparatively stronger than they are in Spain—even without the centre being a full member of these horizontal bodies.

In contrast to the Spanish sectoral conferences, most of the 16 DKs are independent bodies that are highly institutionalized and have already existed for decades, with the oldest and strongest—the Conference of Education Directors—set-up in 1897 (Bochsler et al., 2004: 99–100). Overall, they are bodies responsible for joint decision making and inter-cantonal harmonization. These conferences usually have a permanent secretariat that represents the respective conference in committees and working groups at the
inter-cantonal and national level during the year. Besides the plenum which embraces representatives from all cantons responsible for the respective policy field, each conference has an executive which runs the respective bodies.\textsuperscript{27} The executive and plenum meet regularly, usually several times a year. The decision-making rule varies across DKs, from majority rule to unanimity. Usually, a delegate of the respective federal ministry is either present in the executive or the plenary sessions. Although he or she has no formal voting rights, the DKs thereby incorporate a channel for federal–cantonal communication. The results of intergovernmental conferences can be guidelines, benchmarks, recommendations and concordats, which are formal inter-cantonal contracts mostly addressing concrete policy problems.\textsuperscript{28} Although most cantonal co-operation is non-binding and cantonal non-compliance cannot be effectively sanctioned, most of these provisions become cantonal law (Armingeon, 2000: 115).\textsuperscript{29} In sum, co-decision prevails in sectoral interaction and clearly transcends information exchange.

Despite the organizational strength of the DKs, the cantons considered the general representation of cantonal interests in the federation as insufficient. In 1993, this critical attitude found its expression in the foundation of the horizontal-multilateral KdK. Its primary initial function was to ensure the consideration of cantonal interests in the bargaining processes with the European Union. In the last 13 years, however, it has become the core IGA that channels inter-cantonal and inter-organizational transactions on a general basis.\textsuperscript{30} Its organizational structure is very similar to the DKs. It is also highly institutionalized. The KdK plenum meets four times a year. In these sessions political decisions are made which mostly boil down to ‘common positions’ on issues or plans of the central government that concern cantonal authority. Decisions are taken by majority rule (18 of 26 cantons). The plenary session is accompanied by four meetings of a smaller executive committee.\textsuperscript{31} It makes strategic decisions and prepares the plenary sessions. Most importantly, the decision-making rule and the composition of the executive both show that the participating cantons neither insist on equal representation nor equal veto positions. Furthermore, in December 2001 the KdK and the DKs agreed upon a general framework which clarifies their respective responsibilities and attempts to facilitate co-operation between the IGAs and the federal government.\textsuperscript{32} Among other tasks, the KdK was assigned the job of conflict resolution in cases where different DKs disagree on which of the sectoral conferences is responsible for a particular issue (Jahresbericht CH Stiftung, 2001: 9–11). Regular KdK–federal contacts take place through the ‘federalism-dialogue’ (\textit{Föderalismus-Dialog}), a committee composed of Bundesrat delegates and a delegation of 4–5 KdK representatives which deals with specific policy areas and issues common papers.

The absence of competition within the Swiss regional democracies allows the regional elites to adapt to demands for cross-boundary co-operation rather easily. They are widely protected from electoral punishment due to the predominant oversized coalitions. Hence, the incentives for blame-shifting strategies are weak. By accusing the national or other cantonal governments one easily accuses one’s national or regional pendant. The ideological conflict at the horizontal level tends to be minor and the interest configuration to be stable, visible in the low alternation rate and the high number of overlapping governments. And, finally, autonomy losses are very limited, facing cantonal coalitions composed of 3.34 parties on average.
Conclusion and Further Outlook

Spain and Switzerland are power-limiting polities and are—regarding their federal constitution—characterized by the dispersion of power to different government units. However, the incentives that result from Spanish intra-regional dynamics weaken IGR and thereby reinforce this power-dispersing disposition of the polity’s constitution. In striking contrast, intra-cantonal power sharing and the resulting adaptation to demands for cross-boundary interaction undermine the power-dispersing potential of the Swiss polity.

The major goal of this article was to demonstrate that it is insightful to consider the internal structures and dynamics of the constitutive arenas of a federal polity to account for the institutionalization of intergovernmental bodies. How the single parts work internally affects the working of the system as a whole because regional institutions take on a life of their own and become one major structuring force of territorial politics. They demand comparative assessment because particular institutional contexts shape the behaviour of regional elites (Lecours, 2004: 86). To do so more adequately than possible within the context of this article, future research needs to assess the link between intra-governmental processes and intergovernmental institutionalization through detailed process analysis. In particular, interviews with the different groups of actors pursuing different interests in the intergovernmental game can lead to a more detailed picture of the mechanisms driving actors’ organizational choices (Bolleyer, 2006a; 2006b).

On a theoretical level, the classification of federal systems as different types of ‘power-limiting democracies’ constitutes a fruitful linkage between research on federalism and the classical typology of majoritarian vs. consensus democracy (Lijphart, 1999). The familiarity of the concept of federalism and the one of consociationalism has been discussed previously (Lijphart, 1985). Yet, the conceptual connection of the two types of power-limiting structures and its potential for hypotheses-formulation has neither been fully assessed nor systematically applied in comparative research. By doing so, hypotheses could be derived about the organizational embeddings and, with it, the patterns of IGR likely to be established in particular power-limiting frameworks. Hence, the presented approach supplements a structuralist macro-concept located on the polity level through an actor-centered microfoundation, an effort which has gained much prominence in the wake of neo-institutionalism, pointing at the need to take macro-structures seriously while specifying more properly their underlying dynamics. Following this path, the proposed rationalist approach on IGR makes the traditional distinction between majoritarian and consensus democracy fruitful for explanatory endeavours, hence, overcomes the mainly descriptive character of the two types, while maintaining their value as ordering schemes.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

1 The Spanish case is often classified as fully federalized and therefore treated as a ‘decentralized’ polity (Braun, 2000). However, it can be treated as functionally equivalent to a federal system for the following reasons. First, the Statutes of Autonomy are legally protected against future change and have a similar standing to the constitution in establishing the distribution of powers among Autonomous Communities (ACs) and the centre. The constitution of 1978 lays out (Arts 148 and 149) their powers and those of the state. Second, the creation of the ACs did not depend on the national parliament but on a representative territorial assembly and ‘full autonomy’ (at first only granted to few ACs but later acquired also by the others) needed to be ratified by referenda. Both conveyed the Statutes of Autonomy considerable legitimacy which makes it highly resilient towards change (Morata, 1991: 5; Watts, 1999; Lecours, 2004). Accordingly, the withdrawal of competencies which the ACs received are no credible threat in regional–central bargaining. Conversely, constitutional bargaining centres around the devolution of further competencies.

2 This article is drawn from a broader comparative project on intergovernmental relations and dynamics in federal systems based at the European University Institute. Other aspects of this project have been analysed in Bolleyer (2006a; 2006b).

3 Note that this comparison refers exclusively to the way competencies are constitutionally assigned. It does not refer to the way actors deal with competencies de facto. In fact, scholars point out that in Switzerland one finds considerable discrepancies between ‘formal’ and ‘real constitution’ (Vatter, 2004). However, as argued later, both need to be treated separately when analysing intergovernmental bodies.

4 It has been pointed out that the German Bundesrat, which is composed of delegates by the Länder governments, really represents sub-state interests, while directly elected second chambers, in contrast, represent the interest of the sub-state peoples which may not be equated (Armingeon, 2000).

5 In 1995 the revenue share of the cantons was 46.72%, while it was only 16.05% in Spain (Braun, 2000: 52). The own-source taxes of the Spanish ACs are extremely small and most AC revenues come from a series of conditional and unconditional grants (Agranoff and Ramos Gallarín 1997: 21). In 1995, the proportion of grants of the Spanish ACs’ total expenditure was 95.5%. In Switzerland it was only 42.1% (Braun, 2000: 52). Between 1983 and 1997, central government expenditure in Spain dropped from 87% to 59% of the total, while regional spending rose from 3% to 27%. Moreover, the percentage of total personal income tax received by the Spanish territories rose to 30% for the period 1997–2001 (Moreno, 2002: 403–404). Despite this strengthening of the ACs, the fiscal powers of the Swiss cantons are still superior. They levy their own personal and corporate income tax, inheritance tax and wealth tax (Adamovich and Hosp, 2003: 9–10).

6 The fact that Galicia, Andalusia and Catalonia, in contrast to the other ACs, tend to link the demand for more federal funds to the demand for more fiscal competencies complicates co-operation among them. Still, these differences do not preclude co-operation between ACs with similar interest profiles.

7 A complete turn over replaces all government parties, a partial one only some of them.

8 Although executive and legislative elections are separate in Switzerland, the legislative composition will not be considered separately since divided government configurations are rather unusual (Vatter, 2002).

9 Congruence is assumed if parties in different governments belong to the same party family, even if the party system is decentralized.

10 The relative size of parties which participate in different sub-state coalitions also makes a difference. However, even if only a small coalition partners ‘links’ one sub-state with the other, a moderating effect can be expected.

11 The number $n = 1/\sum s_{ij}$ in which $s_{ij}$ is the proportion of sub-states governed by the $i$th government configuration.

12 The percentage of overlapping governments and the effective number of non-overlapping governments need to be considered together. For instance, one could find that an average 95% one-party cabinets would indicate a high potential for conflict. However, if all governments are formed by the same
party, the effective number of non-overlapping governments would be 1 and show that in fact the opposite is the case, that the horizontal level is ideologically very homogeneous. Moreover, the more the overlap, the less relevant is the relative weight of the non-overlapping governments. If the overlapping governments are over 80%, the effective number of non-overlapping governments is not very telling and will not be analysed.

13 Also a one-party minority cabinet is likely to dominate the legislative process. In particular, when it is located in the centre and has a bilateral opposition to ensure legislative majority support should be fairly unproblematic (Green-Pedersen, 2001; Tsebelis, 2002). As a rule of thumb, one-party minority governments are assumed to generate similar effects like one-party majority governments. The dynamics of minority coalitions should resemble majority coalition cabinets.

14 In principle, these dynamics also refer to administrative actors. Yet, due to the relative independence of bureaucrats from democratic competition in general, the mode according to which technocrats co-operate should be less affected by the internal organization of the arenas. In this first assessment, the focus rests on political and partisan actors.

15 The elements are assumed to cluster, without one element being a necessary condition for the other.

16 If more than half of the criteria are fulfilled, an IGA is classified as strongly institutionalized.

17 The data used cover the governments formed in Spanish and Swiss regional democracies since the Spanish transformation at the beginning of the 1980s until 2000. The Swiss data cover the period from 1983 to 1998.

18 For an extensive study on minority governments formed at the national level between 1977 and 1996 (referring to the rationale the parties’ choices in favour of coalition formation or parliamentary pacts; see Reniu Vilamalla, 2002).

19 Ranging from 0% in Alberta to 50% in Québec.

20 Only once four executive mandates changed after one election. The same is true regarding changes of three mandates.

21 For a broader assessment and a more detailed measure of programmatic government incongruence considering the weight and ideological position of each party in government, see Bolleyer and Bytzek (2006).

22 Looking only at the configuration of non-overlapping executives, it is not taken into account how often the parties forming these governments also participate in the overlapping cases. In a more detailed analysis this should be also analysed. However, as a proxy for the basic power distribution the presented measure seems to be sufficient.

23 A similar situation is given with regard to the Canadian First Ministers Conferences which are always called by the federal government. In contrast, the horizontal-multilateral Council of the Federation is clearly a provincial IGA.

24 Note that the asymmetrical treatment of the different ACs due to their different historical statuses made the formation of a common AC position difficult. However, despite the initial asymmetry, the Spanish system tends towards homogeneity (Morata, 1991: 5).

25 Two other important factors which disunite the horizontal level are rooted in vertical interaction. The central patronage towards particular regions prevents unity among the ACs and fosters inter-regional competition. Related to that, the prevalent intra-party dynamics within the state-wide parties generates conflict and causes shifting alliances in the vertical dimension (Grau I Creus, 2000: 62). However, these dynamics cannot be examined in depth due to the limited scope of the paper.

26 For a detailed analysis of intergovernmental agreements across sectors, see Máiz et al. (2002: 404–409).

27 Partially they are further subdivided in commissions consisting of policy experts out of the cantonal administrations dealing with more specific policy problems.

28 For a detailed analysis of the patterns of cantonal involvement in concordats, see Bochsler (2006) and Bochsler et al. (2004).

29 With regard to inter-cantonal treaties, the procedures differ greatly from canton to canton as to how involved the legislature and/or the cantonal peoples are when it comes to ratifications. As an illustration, fifteen of the cantons either allow for a facultative referendum or apply the normal legislative procedure. Executive and administrative agreements can also be struck without demanding ratification by the legislatures in the first place (Freiburghaus and Zehnder, 2003: 6–7).
30 For instance, the KdK has established a number of committees and working groups on issues of particular cantonal interest, such as on redistributive policy (Jahresbericht CH Stiftung, 2000: 21).

31 It is composed of nine members selected through a regional distributive scheme.


References


