



### **Team news, award nominations, and consolidation**

Welcome to our 2013 end-of-year report!

2013 has been yet another busy and gratifying year for our ECREP team. A few weeks ago, in a series of editorials in major European newspapers, the President of the European Research Council, Prof. Helga Nowotny cited our project as one of two examples of why Governments should continue funding research in the social sciences. As we are writing this report, we are also waiting to hear the outcome of a major award we have been shortlisted for. Indeed, jointly with Opinium Research which has conducted our electoral psychology surveys fieldwork, we learnt in July that we had been nominated for the Market Research Society award for best international research project, and in October that we are amongst the finalists among whom a winner will be announced at the end of the year.

Individually, our team has been extremely active. After receiving a honourable mention for her work from the political psychology section of the American Political Science Association in



2012, Sarah Harrison has received a promotion to a Research Fellowship in 2013.

In June 2013, our team has also been joined by Dr Sophie Lecheler following our successful application for a Marie Curie grant to recruit her from the University of Amsterdam, where she has also been appointed as an Assistant Professor. At the same time, our project Research Assistant Eri Bertsou is making great progress towards her PhD on the psychology of political distrust for which she has obtained an Onassis Foundation scholarship.

The expertise of project leader Michael Bruter has also been further recognised this year. To mention a few examples, he was asked to serve as an expert witness to the Irish Supreme Court in a case pertaining to the electoral implications of a government booklet on the outcome of a November 2012 Irish Referendum on Children Rights, or when he has been asked to give a keynote speech in front of a European Parliament audience on the implications of lowering the voting age to 16 in the European Union. Michael has also been asked to join the panel of European Research Council experts for consolidation grants in social and political sciences.

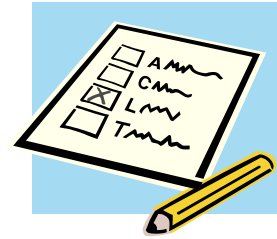
## Fieldwork and methodology

2012 was an exceptionally rich year in terms of elections case studies with our very ambitious fieldwork coverage of the French and US Presidential elections. In 2013, we included four new case studies in our portfolio: Israel in January, Malta in March, Germany in September, and finally the Republic of Georgia in October. We also conducted further waves of fieldwork in Australia for the September elections and in the USA.

Our further work has also enabled to continue our experimental work on survey modes by continuing to use a mixture of internet based and face to face surveys in some of the countries that we study.

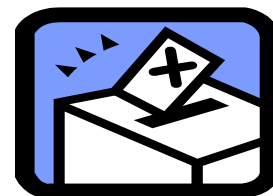
We have also continued with our ambitious programme of experiments. We are particularly proud of a very unique experiment that we conducted in Germany whereby we collaborated with film crews to capture the shadow of voters when they are in the polling booth. That experiment, which we conducted with very rigorous ethical procedures has enabled us to gain a unique understanding of the emotions betrayed by voters whilst they are in the polling booth without ever threatening their anonymity or the secrecy of their vote. It has also allowed us to compare the time spent by voters thinking about their vote in the polling booth before casting it. In a shocking result, we found that on average voters randomly assigned to use a typical voting machine thought for about 20 seconds before casting their vote, those given a UK type ballot for 30 seconds, and those given French ballots a full minute.

We have successfully continued our use of innovative election diaries in Israel, Malta, and Australia as well as our new



collaboration with election observers who answered our questionnaires about voters and the 'life' of the polling station where they spent election day in Malta (we had already achieved a similar collaboration with French election observers in 2012).

Finally, while we continued our extensive programme of in-depth interviews as well as short spot-interviews, we also added a new qualitative aspect of our fieldwork by conducting family focus groups on electoral memory and emotions in Israel and the USA. This body of research is enabling us to gain an unprecedented insight on dynamics within families and how they are changed and mobilised by electoral events.



## Dissemination and publications

Throughout the year, our dissemination has steadily continued, encompassing publications as well as presentations. Our dissemination work has been aimed at both an academic audience and non-academic practitioners.

In terms of academic publications, we one of Michael Bruter's new book on *Political Science Research Methods in Action* was published in the summer (with Martin Lodge) which uses a lot of the work from

ECREP's current projects and includes several chapters by Michael and one by Sarah Harrison. We also have an article about to be published in *American Behavioral Scientist* (with Nick Anstead, Shaku Banaji, and Bart Cammaerts) on youth participation. We also have several articles under review in *Comparative Political Studies*, *the European Journal of Political Research*, *Party Politics* and *Experimental Political Science*. Both Sarah Harrison and Michael Bruter have contributed multiple chapters in edited volumes this year, such as Jack Hayward's and book on *Political Disunion in the European Union* (Routledge) and in Thomas Risse's book on European identity (Cambridge). Finally, our seminal book on electoral psychology is progressing and we have several further articles in the pipeline.

In terms of non-academic publications, we have written a book-sized report on youth participation for the European Commission (with Nick Anstead, Shaku Banaji, and Bart Cammaerts), and we are currently working on an academic version which we are planning to publish as a co-authored research manuscript.

In terms of presentations, we have presented our work at the House of Lords, the European Parliament, the European Youth Forum, the EU-Canada biennial meeting on youth participation, and multiple international conferences of Electoral Commissioners. We have also presented papers at multiple major political science conferences, and in invited seminars in leading universities and centres such as ASCor (University of Amsterdam), the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship (McGill University and Université de Montreal), etc.



## Impact

The impact of our work on non-academic practitioners has significantly accelerated this year. Our ECREP team is now officially advising three governments and/or electoral commissions. We are working with the Central Electoral Commission of Georgia to help them understand the electoral psychology of voters in transition democracies, with the Romanian Electoral Authority to share our knowledge in electoral ergonomics and help them design voting procedures suitable for disabled and illiterate voters, and with the Government of Mauritius to assess the likely electoral and psychological impact of three alternative electoral systems under consideration to replace current electoral rules. We have also conducted a full scale report on youth participation, cynicism and apathy for the Electoral Commission in collaboration with some LSE communication colleagues.

Michael Bruter has served as an expert for a case to the Irish High Court and Supreme Court assessing the effect of a government booklet on citizens' vote in a November 2012 referendum. He has also

been asked to sit on the International Elections Awards committee that recognises best practice in the field of election management.

Our project has continued to be of interest to the media. There were multiple news stories on the project after Michael Bruter represented political science at the 2012 'Falling Walls' conference, which was chaired by the executive publisher of *Science* and attended by over 7,000 participants. Michael was also feature interviewee on DLD research magazine, on French science magazine *La Recherche*, German science magazine PM Online, and on new French internet science television channel *Thinkovery* etc.

Finally, our team remains keen to share our recent methodological advances with both academic audiences and stakeholders. In addition to the publication of Michael Bruter's co-authored book on *Political Science Research Methods in Action*, we have been involved in a doctoral and post-doctoral Young Scholars School on the methods of empirical study of European identity at the University of Jena, a Doctoral Workshop on practical challenges in interview fieldwork at University College London, and a training of members of the Georgian Central Electoral Commission and Georgian Center of Electoral Systems, Reforms, and Training on basics of surveys and interviews to enable them to better understand the perceptions and needs of their voters.

### **Public events and seminar series**

ECREP is continuing to focus on original high profile events and seminars. After our prestigious event at the UK Houses of

Parliament in 2012, this year, we hosted an exciting series of *Three Conversations with George Lakoff* with the world-famous linguist. The conversations pertained to reason and emotion; power and voice; and political metaphors and citizens' role in democracy. We also held a workshop on *Analysing text and images in political science research* with Natalia Chaban, Sarah Harrison, and Michael Bruter.

We now have a lot of events planned for 2014. Please look at the next section and follow our twitter account for details.

### **Action plan, collaboration and new projects**

As our project progresses and our ties with leading colleagues with similar interests become ever more productive, we are planning a number of individual and collaborative extensions to our current work.

Since the inclusion of Dr Sophie Lecheler in our team, we have now launched a new series of experiments on the impact of emotional political communication on voting behaviour.

Our team is currently working with our partners from ASCoR at the University of Amsterdam on further experiments in the same field.

We are also preparing a series of planned physiological experiments on the polling booth experience with our partners from the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship at McGill University.

A third project we are preparing would involve a collaboration with colleagues such as Alan Gerber (Yale), Peter John (UCL), Jean-Luc Dormagen (Montpellier), Céline Braconnier (Université Paris Cergy Pontoise), and Vincent Pons (MIT) for a

significant collaborative field experiment on the electoral and psychological implications of registration procedures and their effects on voters' perceptions and behaviour.

In addition to those collaborative projects, our team also has a number of internal projects which we are currently developing with a view of securing further external funding with the hope to advance a number of key conceptual, analytical, and empirical puzzles still facing the field of electoral psychology.

### **Forthcoming events:**

After a rich series of events in 2012-13, we are starting to plan for an exciting 2013-14 year!

After the success of our recent methodology-centric workshop on "analysing text and images in political science", a new similar event will be held in January with members of our team on 'experimental research in electoral psychology' with a mixture of ECREP and external guest speakers. This will come in addition to several seminars with leading guest speakers in the field.

Late 2014 will also see the organisation of our first major international conference in electoral psychology at the LSE where we hope to welcome many of the leading scholars in the field.

Finally, we plan on multiplying collaborative events with the Department of Government at the LSE of which our entire team is proudly part, and some collaborative events with our colleagues from ASCoR at the University of Amsterdam, the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship at McGill University, and our other network of partners.

### **Contact details:**

If you are interested in our events and publications, please follow us on twitter: **@ECREP\_Ise**

We always love to hear about your questions, comments, or suggestions, so just feel free to contact our team by emailing:

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