

Local Elections in Austria

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Why Local Elections?

"Bottom-up" perspective on elections and electoral behavior

Advantages: high number of cases and lower media bias

Comparative design by different electoral laws in the *Länder* of Austria

Main Focus:

Voter turnout / Participation (dependent variable)

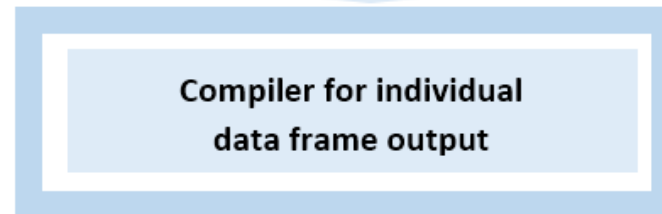
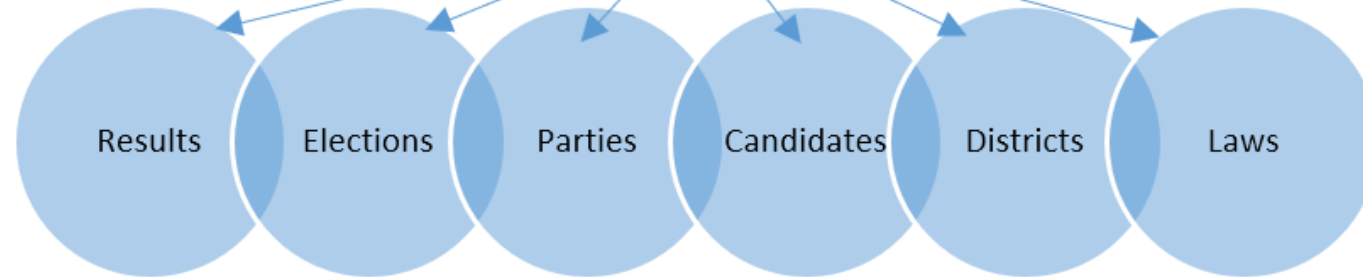
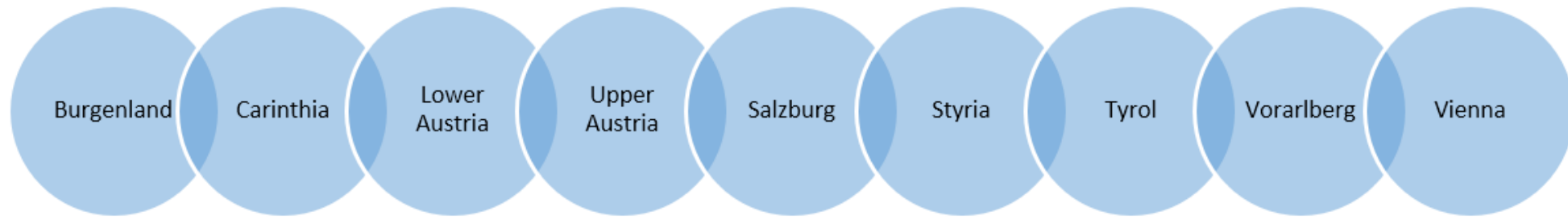
Quantitative approach by building a database for local elections since 1998

Determinants: political competition (number of parties or candidates), incumbency (office holders), special features (Apparantement / List coupling or *Mehrheitswahl*)

Why the Local Elections Database?

- Sharing the data with the academic community (AUSSDA) and general public (Website)
- Maintenance of data - TWF-Project to enrich the data collected for the PhD and future updates

Table	Description
Results	Electoral data like vote shares, mandates won, etc.
Elections	Election dates, types, registered voters, etc.
Parties	Parties and lists, affiliation to nationwide parties, etc.
Candidates	Candidates for mayoral elections, affiliation, etc.
Districts	Electoral districts and municipal data like population, settlement area, etc.
Laws	Coding of institutional setting like early voting days, appartement, etc.



Strong participation across federal diversity

- Long tradition of local autonomy
- Numerous small-sized municipalities
- Diverse electoral codes
- Direct elections of mayors (DEM) in six *Länder*
- Unique features: Secondary residence holders may also vote (BGL, NÖ), nonofficial ballot papers (NÖ), *Mehrheitswahl* for small municipalities (VBG), Apparatment / List coupling (Tirol)

	Burgenland	Carinthia	Lower Austria	Upper Austria	Salzburg	Styria	Tyrol	Vorarlberg	Vienna
Municipalities	171	132	573	438	119	287 ¹⁾	279	96	1
Election cycle (years)	5	6	5	6	5	5	6	5	5
Simultaneous regional elections		in 2009		Yes	until 2009				Yes
Direct mayoral elections	since 1996	since 1991		since 1997	since 1994		since 1994	since 2000	
Mayoral run-off elections	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	No	
'No-Option' in case of only one mayoral candidate	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes			Yes	
Recall of mayor	Council supermajority & referendum	Council supermajority & referendum	Council supermajority	Council supermajority & referendum	Council supermajority & referendum	Council supermajority	Dissolution of council	Council majority & referendum	Council majority
Council seats	9 - 25	11 - 35	13 - 45	9 - 37	9 - 25	9 - 31	9 - 21	9 - 36	100
Min population per seat	250	1,000	500	400	800	1,000	200	750	
Max Population per seat	3,000	20,000	30,000	7,300	5,000	10,000	10,000	15,000	
Preferential votes	3	3	many	3	1	1	2	5	2
Cumulation of preferential votes	2 votes per candidate							2 votes per candidate	
Apparantement (List-coupling)							Yes		
Voting at age 16 since	2000	2000	2007	2007	2004	2004	2007	2007	2002
Early voting day(s)	Yes	Yes				Yes			
Compulsory voting until		1998				1998	2004	2004	
Special features	BGL)		LA)				T)	V)	
Party dominance ²⁾	SPÖ		ÖVP	ÖVP			ÖVP	ÖVP	SPÖ

Land	Female mayors	Female deputy mayors	Female councilors
Lower Austria (n=573)	12.0 %	17.9 %	24.3 %
Vorarlberg (n=96)	9.4 %	21.9 %	20.4 %
Styria (n=287)	8.0 %	14.8 %	21.5 %
Upper Austria (n=438)	8.0 %	21.3 %	24.4 %
Burgenland (n=171)	7.0 %	17.9 %	24.1 %
Salzburg (n=119)	6.7 %	21.0 %	23.9 %
Carinthia (n=132)	6.1 %	28.0 %	18.4 %
Tyrol (n=279)	5.7 %	10.2 %	21.0 %
Vienna (n=1)	0.0 %	50.0 %	37.0 %
	8.6 %	18.1 %	23.1 %

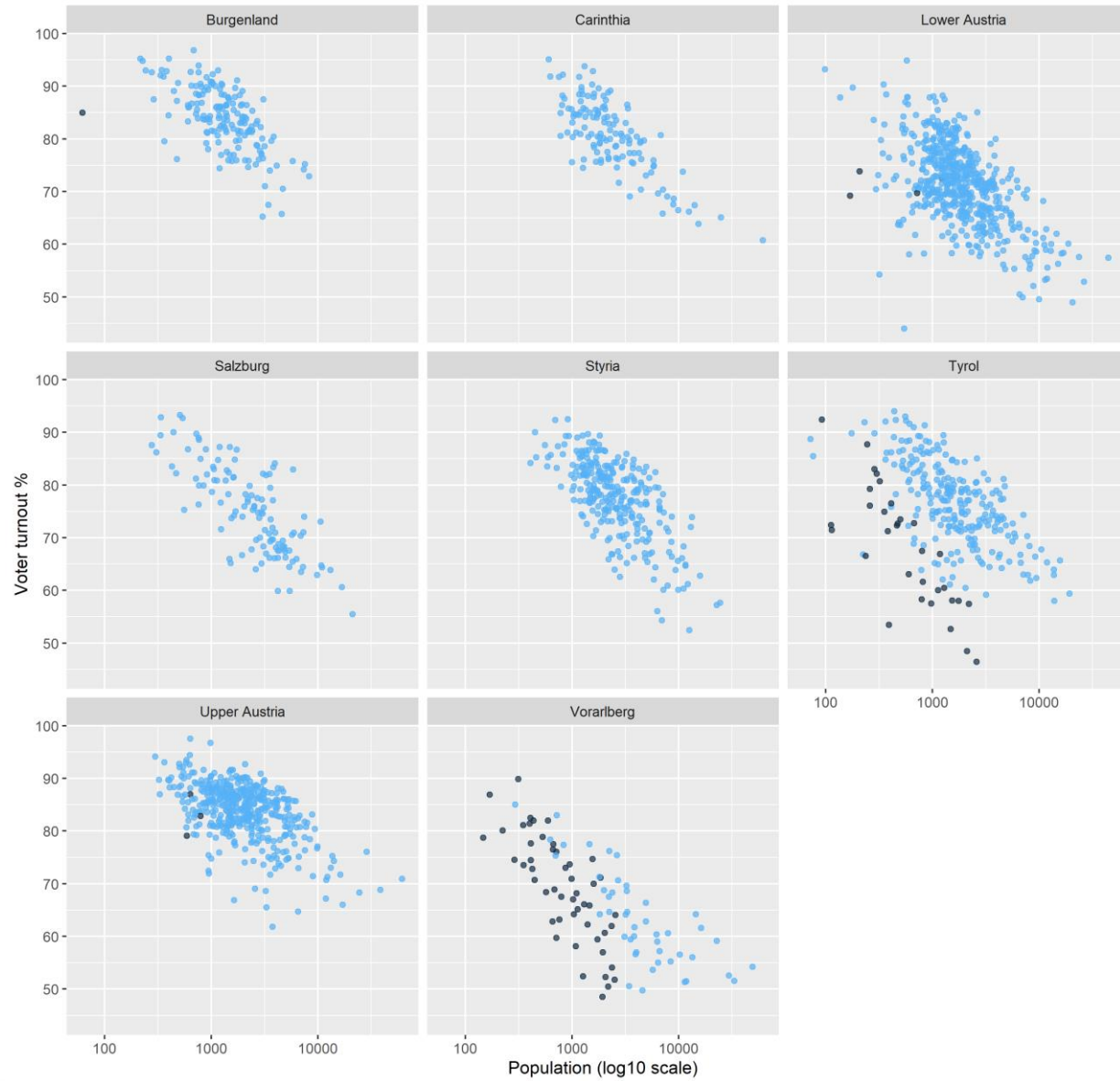
Voter turnout in Austria



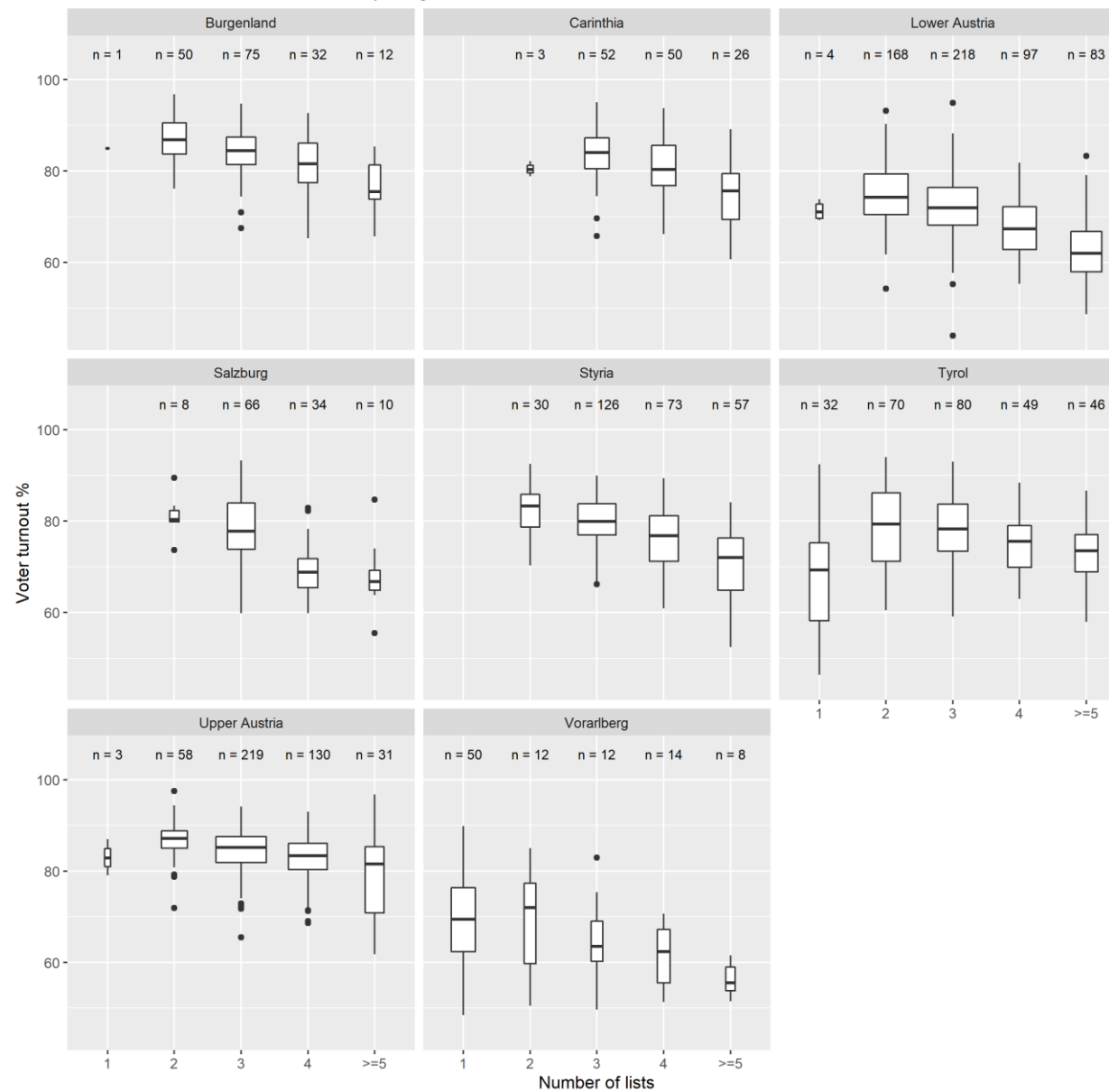
Election type: — European election — General election — Local election — Regional election

Simultaneous regional elections in Upper Austria, Vienna, Salzburg (until 2009) and Carinthia (only 2009)

Voter turnout and municipality size
(black dots representing uncontested elections)



Voter turnout and number of competing lists



Land	Number of municipalities	% Absolute majorities	% Recurring majorities	% Mayor incumbents re-running	% Mayor incumbents re-elected
Burgenland	171	83.6 %	70.2 %	72.2 %	65.7 %
Carinthia	132	50.8 %	9.1 %	74.0 %	62.6 %
Lower Austria	573	87.1 %	78.2 %	no DEM	
Upper Austria	438	63.0 %	48.6 %	no DEM	
Salzburg	119	75.6 %	47.1 %	68.6 %	66.1 %
Styria	287	81.2 %	28.6 %	no DEM	
Tyrol	279	62.7 %	24.7 %	70.7 %	65.2 %
Vorarlberg	96	69.8 %	49.0 %	46.9 %	39.6 %
	2,095	74.0 %	50.0 %	68.3 %	61.8 %

Local Elections in Tirol

- Apparentement / List coupling in a peculiar application:
 - Intra-Party – defensive, preserve majorities
 - Inter-Party – offensive, break majorities
- Mostly generic list names without party affiliation
- Uncontested elections – only one list / candidate
- Party dominance of ÖVP

	lists	candidates	turnout contested	turnout uncontested	invalid votes MA contested	invalid votes MA uncontested	majorities	mayor without majority
1998	1.082	578	86,8 %	85,1 %	5,8 %	19,3 %	156	119
2004	973	549	75,1 %	64,7 %	4,2 %	15,8 %	159	117
2010	963	570	73,3 %	66,1 %	3,6 %	14,7 %	178	97
2016	874	543	71,4 %	60,1 %	3,2 %	14,5 %	181	92
2022	856	562	66,4 %	55,1 %	3,4 %	13,6 %	175	67

	ÖVP	SPÖ	FPÖ	GRÜN	MFG
1998	14,4 %	10,0 %	9,9 %	1,6 %	
2004	13,9 %	8,9 %	4,5 %	3,3 %	
2010	10,8 %	7,9 %	6,0 %	3,0 %	
2016	8,0 %	6,1 %	7,2 %	4,7 %	
2022	3,6 %	4,2 %	4,8 %	4,0 %	5,8 %



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