

THE REMUNERATION OF POLITICAL WORK : Summary of the symposium of 19th
September 2019

The symposium on the remuneration of political work organised on 19th September 2019 at the French Senate enabled researchers working on the different axes of the ANR ELUAR project to present their research and discuss with senators, contributors and participants interested in reflecting on questions relating to the remuneration of political mandates.

You will find below the summaries of the contributions which punctuated the day, which was organised around the themes of the remuneration of political work in Europe, the history of the remuneration of political work in France as well as “making a living from politics today”.

First round table (10am-12pm) - **Remuneration of political work in Europe.**

Chair: Jean-Marie Bockel (Senator from the Haut-Rhin department), discussant: Romain Rambaud (University of Grenoble-Alpes – CRJ)

-Eric Kerrouche (Senator from the Landes département) – Some thoughts on the professionalization of mandates.

In collective representations, the elected representative is an amateur, a volunteer, who occasionally feels the need to get involved in politics. This view reflects a certain idea of political activity, in which the political is denigrated and where only “non-political” qualities, such as expertise or being well-meaning, count. The notion and the process of the professionalization of mandates will be examined here by comparing French and German parliamentary representatives’ profiles and the material conditions in which they exercise their mandates; but also by reflecting on European trends at local level, with a final focus on France.

-Pierre-Michel Vauthelin (director of the Comparative law unit at the Senate) – The legal regime regulating municipal representatives’ remuneration.

On the basis of a series of studies on the subject prepared by the Comparative law division at the Senate in 1998, 2004 and 2018 (examining legal sources in their original language and information gathered from foreign parliamentary services), this paper will present a panorama of municipal representatives’ remuneration in Europe. The sample includes 11 states: Germany, England, Austria, Denmark, Scotland, Spain, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands,

Portugal and Sweden, which will be compared according to the competent authority for defining local representatives' remuneration.

- Patrizia Magaro (University of Genoa) – The remuneration of parliamentary representatives in Italy.

This contribution will present the specificities of political organisation and the remuneration of elected officials in Italy with a particular focus on parliamentary representatives. While basic parliamentary compensations (monthly professional salary) and daily allowances are not astonishing when compared to the European average, the refunding of expenses must be added to these, making Italian parliamentary representatives the best paid in Europe.

- Karim Lasseb (University of Lausanne) – The remuneration of political work in Switzerland. Between subsidiary functions and full-time mandates.

The remuneration of Swiss political mandates has become a more and more significant issue in small municipalities where it is difficult to recruit volunteer local elected officials. In the larger municipalities however, this question has been subject to debates and controversies for the last 20 years, which have gone hand in hand with popular referendums to limit elected officials' pay. Although elected representatives' material conditions of existence are an important democratic issue for the access to posts, Swiss researchers have not shown a great interest in these questions. This paper therefore proposes to take a quick look at the main characteristics of the Swiss political system which condition the payment of mandates and notably its federalism, its instruments of direct democracy and its militia system. Then we will present the different ways of remunerating elected posts, while underlining the difficulty of studying and comparing pay, particularly at local levels.

***Second round table* (1.30pm – 3.30pm) - The history of the remuneration of political work in France**

Chair: Marie-Françoise Perol-Dumont (senator from the Haute-Vienne department),
discussant: Eric Kerrouche, senator from the Landes

- Frédéric Monier (University of Avignon - Centre Norbert Elias) – A democratic norm? Debates on elected officials' compensation from the French Revolution to the Great War.

France was one of the first European countries to create, in September 1789, an allowance for members of parliament at the National Constituent Assembly, thereby opening the way for the professionalization of politics. However, this innovation was not a given: parliamentary compensations were challenged on several occasions in the first half of the 19th century. After 1852, they remained a subject of debate and the idea of remuneration did not spread to local mandates until just before the Great War. This history invites us to look into the reasons for these refusals, as well as the answers contributed by the advocates of this new democratic norm.

- Rémy Le Saout (University of Nantes - CENS) – Measures regarding elected officials’ compensation between the wars.

This paper seeks to examine the reform or measures which contributed to the funding of electoral mandates between the two world wars. The presentation concerns parliamentarians, municipal elected officials and departmental councillors. While this contribution will present the dispositions adopted, it will also look at those that were prevented, particularly at municipal level. Equally, it will describe concisely the main issues and tensions which contributed, at the beginning of the 1940s, to producing the following normative situation: parliamentarians who had a self-regulating mechanism for their compensation, municipal executives who had the option of claiming back mandate-related expenses and of receiving an allowance related to the function and, lastly, departmental councillors who, before the “Conseils généraux” were abolished, were able to claim back expenses related to their mandate.

- Sébastien Ségas (University of Rennes 2 - Arènes) – An apparent calm? Scandal provoking and corporatist mediation of questions related to the remuneration of political work between 1944 and 1990.

From the point of view of political labour remuneration, the period between the mid-1940s and 1990s, like the previous period, studied by Rémy Le Saout, was marked by great legislative stability. For nationally elected representatives, the main innovations and developments concern less the remuneration of parliamentarians themselves than that of their staff (first mainly secretaries and then, from the 1970s onwards, more highly qualified assistants). The normative framework for the remuneration of locally elected officials, on the other hand, only changed significantly at the very beginning of the period. The ordinance of 26 July 1944 en-

shrined the principle, already established under Vichy, of official compensation for mayors and their deputies, the maximum amounts of which, from the law of 24 July 1952 onwards, were fixed by reference to the indices of the civil service salary scale. However, no law was passed to modify this legal framework until the early 1990s.

This does not mean that the issue of political labour remuneration was absent from the parliamentary and, more broadly, political agenda throughout this period. On the contrary, the question reappeared regularly, through two main motors: processes of scandal provoking (Lascoumes, 2016) during which infringements of the disinterested norms elected officials are supposed to embody (and which they themselves regularly invoke) were denounced; and much more discrete processes of corporatist mediation during which associations of locally elected officials (such as AMF, and the *Association des Présidents de Conseils Généraux de France*) and their parliamentary supporters, mostly in the Senate, attempted, in constant dialogue with the government (notably the Interior Ministry), to develop the material conditions in which locally elected mandates were exercised, all the while highlighting their attachment to the principle of voluntarism in locally elected functions and their rejection of becoming “civil servants”.

In the short time given to me (15 minutes), I will draw a quick general panorama of the period and then develop a particular example: that of the debate in 1979-1980 around the remuneration of departmental councillors. This shows how the logics of provoking scandal and of corporatist mediation articulate with each other: indeed, a series of press articles in 1979 criticising the levels of pay in certain *départements* pushed the *Association des Présidents de Conseils Généraux de France* to ask for stricter regulating and codification of allowances for departmental councillors. The analysis of DGCL archives show how the *Association's* proposals, relayed by the Senate, were negotiated and constructed with the Interior ministry around certain guiding principles (affirmation of the principle of volunteerism, lack of reference to any “status” for departmental councillors, respect for the “freedom” of local authorities). The defiance of the Interior Ministry shown towards the emergence of a new actor (*Association des Conseillers Généraux de France*), with a much more offensive position, sheds lights on the proximity and the relationship of exchange between the ministry and the *Association des Présidents de Conseils Généraux de France*, an ancestor of *ADF*.

- Patrick Lehingue, Sébastien Vignon (University of Amiens - CURAPP) – The codification of a status of local elected official and the crisis of representation: a comparison of two contexts (1992; 2019)

Our paper aims to put back to back two processes of codification: one at the beginning of the 1990s that led to the law of 03/02/1992 on the “conditions for exercising local mandates”; and another today, involving the discussions around the “Engagement and proximity” bill which seeks to complete, strengthen and update the legislative core of 1992. Modestly, our “mirroring” of these two processes will consist of us listing the analogies between the two processes of codification, giving details about certain similarities in order to bring out the differences twenty years after the first law.

***Third round table* (4-5.30pm) - Making a living from politics today**

Chair: Henri Cabanel (senator from the Hérault department), discussant: Rémy Le Saout
(University of Nantes, CENS)

- Didier Demazière (Science Po Paris - CSO) – What does making a living from politics mean? Three insights.

This paper will be centred on elected representative officials for whom making a living from politics means living from compensations for mandates. Three successive questions will be tackled: where does this expression come from and to what extent is it a sign of a democratic conquest? How can we consider what is an acceptable level of pay for make a living from politics and how far is this the result of arbitrations taking place within diverse personal situations? How can we articulate this state in time with individuals’ careers and to what extent does a longitudinal approach bring out the issues of uncertainty that characterise elected positions?

- Louise Dalibert (University of Nantes - DCS) – The impact of financial bonuses on choices of career and withdrawals from political life.

This contribution will analyse the impact of financial bonuses and their evolution on the exits from parliamentary mandates and political life. Although the financial dimension is not the sole factor explaining political actors’ decisions to withdraw, we suggest that it plays nonetheless a non-negligible role. In this way, we wish to show that parliamentary mandates have ten-

ded to become less attractive over time, notably because of recent changes in financial remuneration (reform of the IRFM, ban on the accumulation of mandates and the end of the economies of scale, pension reform, and suppression of parliamentary scrutiny). Moreover, the increase over the last few years in the number of people leaving political life (be it voluntarily or not), has led to a relatively new phenomenon (at least in its scale): lucrative reconversions of ex-elected officials from politics to the private sector. The prospect of leaving political life to occupy a new and better paid role is no longer an exception and is becoming a more and more common phenomenon.

- Stéphane Cadiou, Lucie Vacher (University of Saint-Etienne – Laboratoire Triangle) – Politics under surveillance.

This paper proposes to reverse the perspectives by looking at those who denounce or make public infringements of probity. While the remuneration of political activities has been the subject of an accumulation of measures and rules, can we really say that they facilitate oversight of the uses of money in politics? Nothing is less certain. It is with this in mind that research has been carried out as part of the ELUAR research project on monitoring operations and on the actors involved in this work aimed at moralising political life. Two observations serve here as a starting point. On the one hand, « moralisation » has become a cause for very different actors, individuals and collectives, at different levels (from local to international level, like *Transparency International*) who tend to assert a real expertise. On the other hand, constraints to making infringements of probity public are particularly high, and require significant resources (of a financial, judicial and media nature, notably). We will attempt here to summarise concisely these scientific orientations by presenting two research projects. The first consisted of closely following two local affairs of impropriety in order to see how whistle-blowers go about their activity and how they handle the law. The second involved following the work of an association *Anticor*, which exposes infringements of probity as regards uses of public money to try and influence the rules in place.

-Rémi Lefebvre (University of Lille 2 - CERAPS) – Devoting oneself to politics without entirely making a living from it. Deputy-mayors and their remuneration.

This paper focuses on a so-called “semi-professional” category of elected officials who devote an important part of their time (20 hours per week) to their mandate without making a full-time living from it (they maintain their main activity and are not financially dependent on mandates or are only partially so – we do not study here the case of retired elected officials).

The study is based on a corpus of 32 interviews with deputy-mayors of large or medium-sized cities (Oliver Borraz has analysed the growing technicity of deputies' jobs). We mean here to analyse elective commitments as a career in the interactionist sense of the term. How do the elected officials' diverse spheres of life (professional, political, familial, and marital) articulate with each other? How do these interactions determine or not forms of availability, resources, and the feeling of sacrifice? Which professions allow this type of accumulation of activity due to their flexibility (teachers, consultants, local civil servants, elected officials' assistants) or make it particularly complex and are a source of tension?

To what extent are subjective perceptions of personal sacrifices dependent on actors' social characteristics, social trajectory, level of studies, and aspirations (their intermediary position can be experienced as a transitional state towards full political professionalization)?