

Party competition in Eastern and Western Europe

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Description

Fifteen years have passed since democratic multi-party elections replaced communist rule in the Central and Eastern European countries. But comparative research on party competition still tends to focus on either Eastern or on Western cases. Is this division warranted? Is party competition fundamentally different in Central and Eastern European as opposed to Western European democracies? Or can we agree with Rovny and Edwards (2012: 56) that “while the structure of political conflict in Eastern versus Western Europe could not be more different, the logic with which parties compete in their respective systems is the same”?

This seminar will assess the potential and the limits of comparing party competition across European democracies with regard to topics such as: stability and change of party systems; the structure of the political space and the meaning of “left” and “right”; party strategies in competition; and the role of clientelism and populism. Participants will then select cases from Western and Eastern Europe for a comparative case study dealing with one of the topics introduced throughout the seminar. They will present (and comment on) each others’ case studies during a block session at the end of the semester.

Goals

Participants will know the main concepts from the literature on party systems and party competition. They will understand the differences and similarities in patterns of party competition in Western and Eastern European democracies. They understand the logic of case selection for theory-centred comparative research and are able to critically assess case selection in published research. Students will be able to themselves select and compare cases from the universe of European democracies focusing on one of the topics discussed throughout the seminar. In addition, students learn how to engage in academic dialogue with each other during the workshop where they present and comment on the work of their peers.

Requirements and modalities

Requirements for this course are threefold: First, you come to class having carefully read and thought about the assigned reading materials for the week, and participate actively in class discussions. You may fail to attend two sessions. Please note that the workshop on July 11, 2015 counts as three individual sessions.

Second, you write one 1-2 page (double spaced, times new roman or similar, 12pt) review of one of the assigned readings. You can choose for yourself for which session and on which article you want to do your review. The review must be submitted by midnight of the day before the day the text you chose to review is due to be discussed in class. The idea behind the review is that by writing a critique that addresses all elements a good research paper should include, you become better prepared to write your own.

Third, you develop, present at the workshop and hand in a comparative case study on your chosen topic related to party competition. You are free to choose your cases from the universe of European democracies, and you are also free to do a small or a medium-N comparison, but you should

compare a case/cases from Western Europe to a post-communist case/cases. The research paper should be appr. 10-12 pages (double spaced, times new roman or similar, 12pt), and should cover a research question, hypotheses to answer the question, a justified case selection, the chosen methodological approach and an empirical analysis. It must be submitted by **15 September 2015**. A short outline/handout/ppt of your presentation at the Workshop must be submitted by noon of **July 9, 2015** to give your discussant a chance to prepare comments for July 11, 2015.

Course evaluations will be based on a combination of in-class participation (10%), the review (10%), presentation of your comparative case study and comments on somebody else's during the workshop (20%) and the research paper (60%). Late submissions will lower your grade by 0.3 for each day your work is overdue, unless you provide a justified excuse. Please note that a student job does not count as a justified excuse.

I will provide you with more detailed guidelines on how to write a review and a research paper in class. I will also provide guidance on narrowing down your topic for the research paper. Please note that I have zero tolerance for plagiarism, which according to the Oxford Dictionary (online edition) is defined as “the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own”. Students caught plagiarising will automatically fail the seminar. For further information on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, see e.g Jones, Lars R. (2011): *Academic Integrity & Academic Dishonesty: A Handbook About Cheating & Plagiarism*, Revised & Expanded Edition. Available at <http://www.fit.edu/current/documents/plagiarism.pdf>.

Recommended literature to prepare for the seminar

- ≡ Sartori, G. (1976). *Parties and party systems: A framework for analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Part 2).
- ≡ White, S., Batt, J., & Lewis, P. G. (Eds.). 2007. *Developments in Central and East European Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press (chapters 9 and 11).
- ≡ Donovan, M., & Broughton, D. 1999. Party system change in Western Europe: positively political. In: Broughton, D (Ed.). *Changing party systems in Western Europe*. London/New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 255-274.

Individual sessions and literature to be prepared for each week

7 May 2015. Introduction. Party competition as cooperation and contest

For this first session, you do not have to prepare any material. We will define key concepts (party competition, position, salience, dimensions) and establish our overarching question for the whole seminar: What are the main differences and similarities in the structure of party competition and the strategic behaviour of parties between Eastern and Western Europe?

14 May 2015. PUBLIC HOLIDAY

21 May 2015. Challenges for comparing party competition in the East to the West

- ≡ Kitschelt, Herbert. 1995. Formation of Party Cleavages in Post-Communist Democracies Theoretical Propositions. *Party Politics* 1(4): 447-472.
- ≡ Innes, Abby. 2002. Party Competition in Postcommunist Europe: The Great Electoral Lottery. *Comparative Politics*, 35(1): 85-104.

28 May 2015. Why parties cooperate – electoral alliances

Guest Lecturer: Dr Edina Szöcsik, Zukunfts Kolleg Konstanz (<http://www.edinaszoecsik.net>)

- ≡ Golder, Sona N. 2006. Pre-Electoral Coalition Formation in Parliamentary Democracies. *British Journal of Political Science* 36: 193–212.
- ≡ Ibenskas, Raimondas. 2015. Understanding Pre-electoral Coalitions in Central and Eastern Europe. *British Journal of Political Science*. Published online: 23 February 2015. DOI: 10.1017/S0007123414000544.

4 June 2015. PUBLIC HOLIDAY

11 June 2015. How parties contest each other: “left” versus “right”

- ≡ Rovny, Jan, & Erica E. Edwards. 2012. Struggle Over Dimensionality: Political Competition in Western and Eastern Europe. *East European Politics and Societies* 26 (1).

18 June 2015. How parties contest each other: European integration

- ≡ Whitefield, Stephen and Robert Rohrschneider. 2015. The Saliency of European Integration to Party Competition: Western and Eastern Europe Compared. *East European Politics & Societies* 29(1): 12-39.

25 June 2015. Methodological interlude: Comparative Case Studies

- ≡ Lijphart, Arend. 1971. Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method. *The American Political Science Review*, 65(3): 682-693.
- ≡ Rohlfing, Ingo. 2012. *Case studies and causal inference*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, chapter 3: “Types of Case Study and Case Selection”.

2 July 2015. Stability and Change

- ≡ Tavits, Margit. 2007. Party Systems in the Making: The Emergence and Success of New Parties in New Democracies. *British Journal of Political Science* 38: 113–133.
- ≡ Zons, Gregor. 2013. The influence of programmatic diversity on the formation of new political parties. *Party Politics*. Published online before print November 25, 2013, doi: 10.1177/1354068813509515.

9 July 2015. ! No session possible (I will be at a conference), in the first session, we need to agree on a date to which we can move this session. We can then also choose a topic for this session together, since depending on where we move it, some topics make more sense than others.

SATURDAY 11 July 2015. Workshop on Party Competition in the East and West, 10-15h

15 July 2015. Concluding discussion answering the seminar's guiding question.