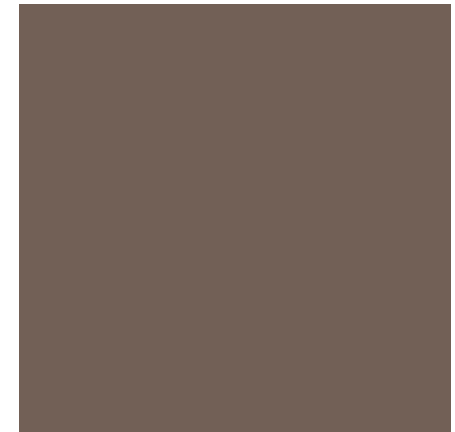




The University of
Nottingham



Studying party Competition with the EES A PTV-based Approach

Cees van der Eijk

Focus

- Substantive focus: Electoral Competition
 - generally seen as a necessary condition for responsiveness in democratic systems
 - Study of electoral competition linked to questions about quality of electoral process
- Use of the EES as a tool for comparative electoral research
- Emphasis here on instrumentation: ways in which EES can be used to measure aspects of electoral competition

Conceptualisation

- Dimensions of electoral competition (cf. Bartolini 2002):
 - a. Contestability (openness at the supply side; entry costs)
 - b. Availability (openness at the demand side; elasticity)
 - c. Decidability (relevant differentiation between the options)
 - d. Vulnerability (relevant consequence for government power)
- These dimensions relate to different units and levels of analysis: Parties and party systems (a and c); Political system (a, b, c and d); Citizens (b and c)
- EES offers unique opportunities to define interrelated measures of electoral competition for b and c, and for all these levels of analysis

Conceptualisation 2

- Competition in the sense of ‘competitiveness’ is inherently about uncertainty and evidence-based counterfactuals
“We consider a situation highly competitive if we believe the winner could easily have been different” (Elkins 1974:686)
- Counterfactuals can be based on
 - Historical comparison. But: (unrealistic) assumption that different election are each other relevant counterfactuals.
 - Experimental evidence. But: issues of external validity.
 - Survey data on electoral preferences for all parties (non-ipsative preferences). In EES (since 1989) PTVs.

PTV items in EES

- Question wording:

We have a number of political parties in (OUR COUNTRY) each of which would like to get your vote. How probable is it that you will ever vote for the following parties? Please answer on a scale where '0' means "not at all probable" and '10' means "very probable"

- Number of parties for which question is asked:

- Up to 8 in EES2014
- In earlier EESs variable across countries

Validation of PTVs

- Validation:
 - % voting for party with highest PTV
 - Low %s DK or refusals
 - Same explanatory model holds for all PTVs (requires so-called 'stacked' data analysis)
- These tests demonstrate high construct validity
- Additionally, using other data than EES: PTVs perform in these respects better than other non-ipsative measures (like-dislike scores; feeling thermometers) (cf Van der Eijk et al 2006; van der Eijk and Marsh 2012; van der Eijk and Fox 2015)

Measures of competition

- At micro-level (individual citizens)
- At party-level
- At party-dyad level
- At party-grouping level
- At party-system level

Micro-level party competition

- Various possibilities to operationalise the ‘availability’ aspect of electoral competition at the individual level:
 - a) # of PTVs above specified threshold (e.g., ≥ 8)
 - b) ‘gap’ between highest and second highest PTVObviously, such measures are heavily correlated

- Of these some form of b) has been used extensively (e.g., van der Eijk & Oppenhuis 1991; Kroh et al. 2007; van der Brug et al. 2007; Dinas 2010) and has been shown to be a stronger predictor of instability of choice than even party identification.

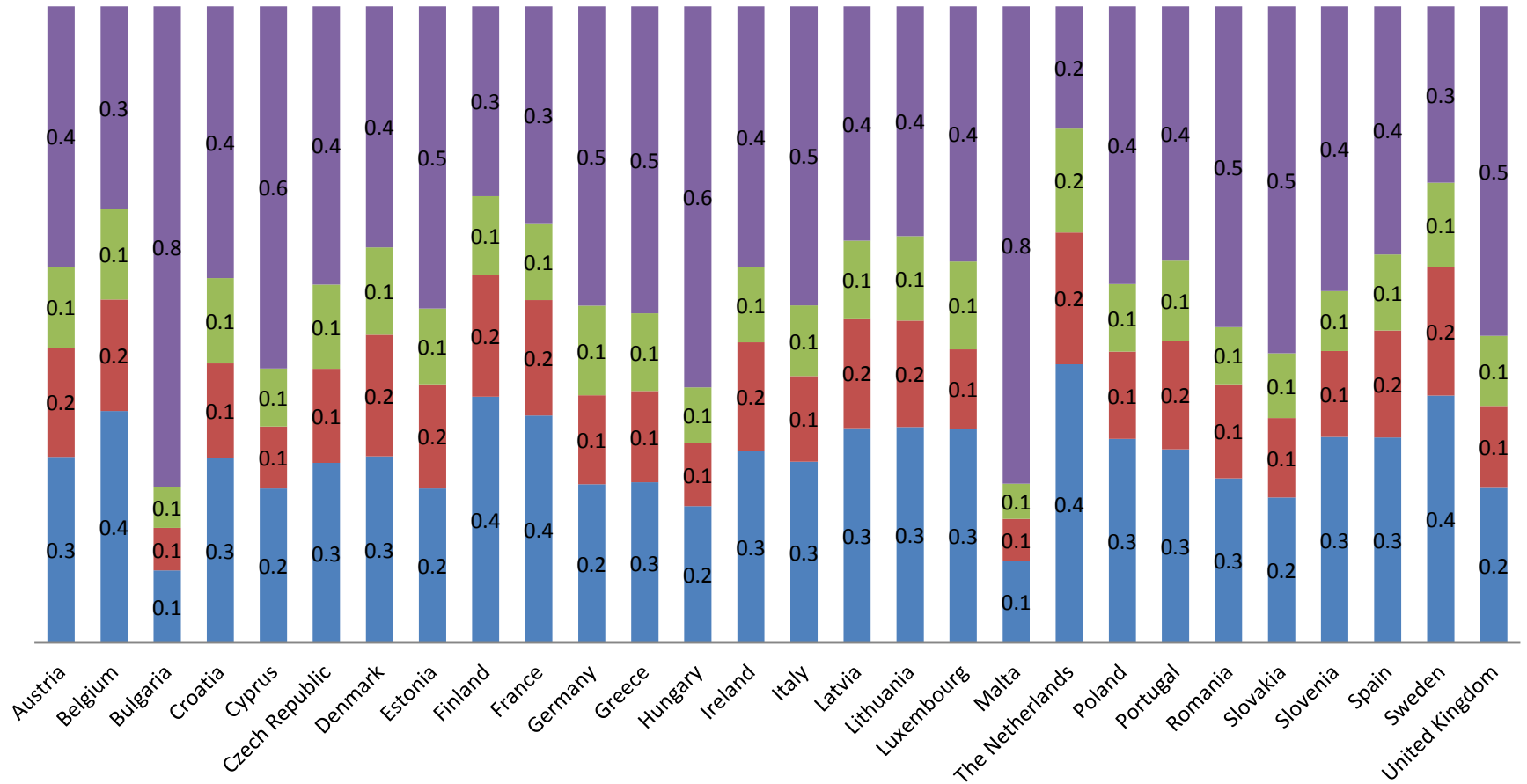
Availability at system level

- Aggregation of individual-level availability yields a system-level description
- The following graph does this for the 'ptv-gap' variable (range 0-10), which has been recoded into 4 categories
 - Gap ≤ 1 : at least two parties tied or nearly tied; high availability, from campaign panels in some countries we know that the ordering between such parties can easily 'flip' during a campaign
 - Gap = 2
 - Gap = 3
 - Gap ≥ 4 : a gap of this magnitude is very rarely bridged in the course of campaign

Electoral Availability (percentages)

blue=high ; purple = low

■ Series1 ■ Series2 ■ Series3 ■ Series4



Additional micro-level aspects

- As precondition for responsiveness, electoral availability has to be supplemented by a) relevant policy or ideological differentiation on the supply side, and b) voters preferences being structured by these differences.
- This can be gauged at the micro-level by correlating PTV scores with respondents' perceptions of party positions, and by assessing the range (across parties) of such positions.
- Doing so in EES2014 for left/right demonstrates that, the average correlation is approximately .5 , and that, on average, respondents perceive to have a choice in this respect (closest party in L/R terms is 5.6 closer than least close party, on a 10-pt range).

Example (from Kroh et al 2007)

Table 11.2 Proportions of voters subject to intense competition and beyond competition (1989, 1994, and 1999)

	Subject to intense competition			Beyond competition		
	1989	1994	1999	1989	1994	1999
Austria	-	-	0.37	-	-	0.36
Belgium: Flanders	0.41	0.39	0.33	0.39	0.36	0.34
Belgium: Wallonia	0.26	0.30	0.38	0.52	0.45	0.30
Britain	0.29	0.28	0.42	0.45	0.45	0.28
Denmark	0.37	0.39	0.40	0.34	0.28	0.28
Finland	-	-	0.56	-	-	0.22
France	0.58	0.53	0.62	0.19	0.20	0.14
Germany	0.29	0.33	0.34	0.39	0.34	0.36
Greece	0.23	0.30	0.42	0.63	0.49	0.36
Ireland	0.50	0.47	0.52	0.26	0.28	0.17
Italy	0.36	0.45	0.53	0.42	0.27	0.23
Luxemburg	0.38	0.37	0.36	0.41	0.32	0.32
Netherlands	0.35	0.44	0.51	0.40	0.25	0.18
Portugal	0.32	0.29	0.31	0.45	0.47	0.57
Spain	0.33	0.29	0.29	0.48	0.50	0.48
Sweden	-	-	0.42	-	-	0.26
Mean EU-12	0.36	0.37	0.42	0.41	0.35	0.31
Mean EU-15	-	-	0.43	-	-	0.30

- Subject to intense competition: difference between the two highest ranked parties is 0 or 1.
- Beyond competition: difference between the two highest ranked parties is more than 3.

From PTVs to Potential Votes

Electoral availability at micro-level implies that voters belong to the 'potential electorate' of more than one party.

Contribution to potential electorate can be derived from PTVs:

$$PV_{ik} = f(PTV_{ik})$$

with f being a monotone non-decreasing function and

$$0 \leq PV_{ik} \leq 1$$

NB: in this and following slides subscripts i and j pertain to parties, subscript k pertains to voters

Potential Electorates

The transformation of PTVs to PV_{ik} allows the definition of parties' electoral potential (expressed here as a proportion of the sample, or, inferentially, of the sampled population):

$$EP_i = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^N PV_{ik}}{N}$$

At party level, therefore, a simple measure of competitive pressure is therefore

$$EP_i / ER_i$$

Where ER_i is the actual electoral result of party i (as proportion of the sample)

Joint Potential Electorates

- The joint electoral potential of a set of parties can be defined in terms of respondents' highest potential vote for any of the parties in the set, to be aggregated to sample (or population) level. For a pair of parties:

$$EP_{i \cup j} = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^N ((\max PV_{ik}, PV_{jk}))}{N}$$

- Relevant for dyads of parties, as well as for other groupings

Overlap of Potential Electorates 2

Party competition between i and j can be expressed in different equivalent ways :

In absolute terms (in proportions of the entire sample) :

$$PC_{ij} = EP_i + EP_j - EP_{i \cup j}$$

In relative terms (expressed as proportion of i 's potential electorate):

$$PC_{ij|i} = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^N \min(PV_{ik}, PV_{jk})}{\sum_{k=1}^N PV_{ik}}$$

Note, the second expression leads to different outcomes, dependent on whether it is normed on party i or party j .

Example of Overlap of Potential Electorates

Empirical question: to what extent do parties' Potential Electorates overlap?

Example from 2009 European Election Study data (UK sample)

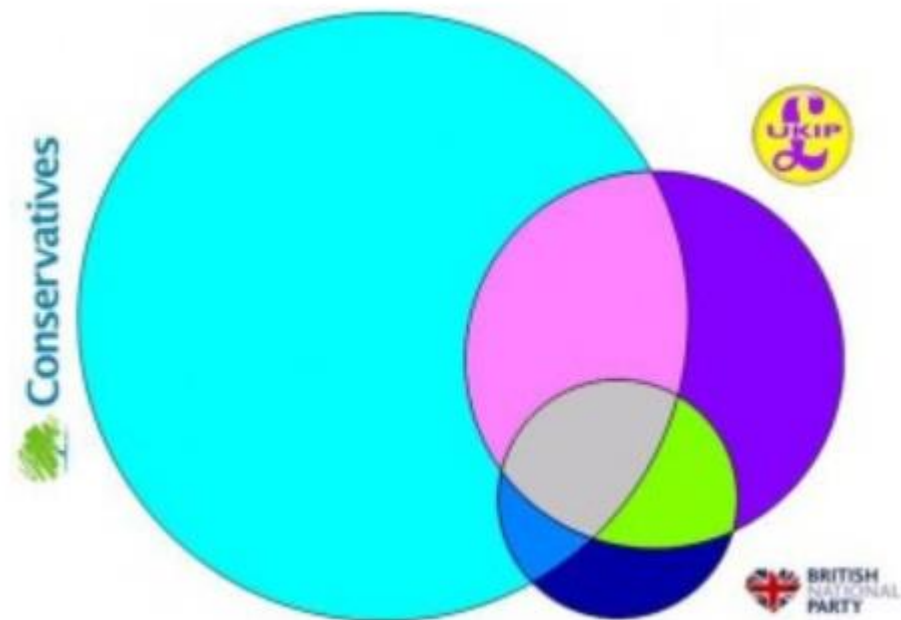


Figure 1: Overlap of support for Conservatives, UKIP and BNP

Another form of presentation

(from Franklin & Curtice 1996; based on EES1989)

Table 5.1 Potential Support and Overlap Between Parties in Britain in 1989

	Labour	Nat.	Greens	Lib.Dem.	Cons.
Labour	1.00	0.65	0.60	0.60	0.29
Nationalists	0.13	1.00	0.17	0.18	0.09
Greens	0.44	0.62	1.00	0.59	0.35
Liberal Democrats	0.35	0.52	0.46	1.00	0.30
Conservatives	0.28	0.42	0.45	0.49	1.00
Potential Support (%)	42.0	8.4	31.2	24.3	39.8
%Vote Elect	14.6	1.2	5.4	2.3	12.7
%Valid Vote	40.1	3.4	14.9	6.2	34.7
L-R median (1–10)	3.11	3.91	4.57	4.83	8.58

Competition vs all others

Party i 's competitive relations vis-à-vis all other parties can be expressed as follows:

$$PC_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1, j \neq i}^p (PC_{ij|i})}{P - 1}$$

And competitiveness of the entire party system (all parties vis-à-vis all other parties):

$$PC = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^p (PC_i \times EP_i)}{\sum_{i=1}^p EP_i}$$

Further aspects of competitive relations

- ***Incursive competition***: the extent to which those with a current choice or intended choice for party i are also available to other parties (thus: potential loss for party i)
- ***Expansive competition***: the magnitude of party i's electoral potential amongst those whose current choice or intended choice is not for i (thus: the potential gains for party i)
- These aspects are of particular relevance when studying the effectiveness of campaign strategies of parties

Database and tools under construction

- Syntaxes in STATA and SPSS for the calculation of the various measures discussed in this presentation, each allowing choice for the specification of the transformation function on slide 13
- Database for systems*election years
 - Aggregated electoral availability (e.g., slide 10)
 - System-wide electoral competitiveness
 - Electoral competitiveness for all parties in PTV battery in EES
 - Electoral competitiveness for all dyads in PTV battery in EES

Thank you

Q&A

References

- To be completed