

Changing party-systems? Wrapping-up workshop on electoral volatility

Session 07

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Overview of the last session

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Take-home points from Session 6:

- 1 There is a **bunch of ways of assessing party system change**, from volatility indices to compound indices of party system closure or restraint
 - 2 The **debate on party system change** has revitalized in the past years. According to some analysts, the general bias towards stability of party systems remains strong, while others suggest that some European party systems have de-institutionalized in the last decade
 - 3 There is not a correct **answer** and it **depends a lot on the way you conceptualize and measure party system change**
 - 4 There is an **open venue for new research and innovation!**
- **In this session** we will move from the theory and the review of previous analyses to **perform one empirical analysis ourselves**

A replication exercise

A replication exercise

- **What is replication?**
- Replication consists of the **repetition of an earlier study** using sufficiently **similar methods** and under **sufficiently similar circumstances**
- **Different types:**
 - ① Systematic repetition of the exactly same analysis over the exact same data
 - ② Additional analyses over the exact same data
 - ③ Exact same analyses over different but similar data
 - ④ Additional but related analyses over different but similar data

A replication exercise

- Important for science because of:
 - ① **Verifiability**
 - ② **Validity**
 - ③ **Scope conditions** testing

An empirical exercise with real world data

An empirical exercise with real world data

- **Why are we doing a replication exercise ourselves?**
- First of all, just to show that **it can be done!**
- We can test the implications of what we have seen so far, validate previous results, and maybe even discover something new
- We will focus on the most used indicator to assess party system change: **electoral volatility**
- Specifically, we will use the data produced by Vincenzo Emanuele ([2015](#)) on electoral volatility in Western Europe from 1945 to 2015
- This is one of the dataset that he and his colleagues use to analyze party system change (i.e., [Chiaromonte & Emanuele, 2017](#))

The empirical exercise

The empirical exercise

- First of all, **download and install R and RStudio**
- **R** is a free software environment for statistical computing and graphics with a vast collection of packages, all of them open source
- **RStudio** is an Integrated Development Environment (IDE) specifically suited for R
- It is also free and open source!
- In addition, it supports other languages too (these slides have been done with Beamer in RStudio!)

The empirical exercise

- First step, **download the latest version of R and RStudio**
- Second step, go to the website of the course and **download the file replication_exercise.Rmd from the folder 07_session**
- Third step, **open the file replication_exercise.Rmd with RStudio**

More on replication: what you can do

More on replication: what you can do

- Look at the papers in the course bibliography
- **The most recent papers normally come with replication files** (most high ranking journals nowadays demand these files for publication)
- If not, **they will refer to the data they use** somewhere in the paper and you can always google it! This usually works
- Now that you have R and you know the basics, **you can repeat this exercise with other datasets**
- Of course, **R programming can be difficult** at the beginning **but it is a matter of practice** and *lot of google searching*
- **Is there anything specific that you would like to do?**

Feedback and or organization of the second block II

Feedback and or organization of the second block II

- **Congratulations!** We have finished the first block of the seminar
- In the second block we will move from the country/party-system level to the party and voter levels:
 - ① Review some demand-side factors that explain party system change/continuity
 - ② Review some supply-side factors that explain party system change/continuity
- You will also have to present your work
- Finally, we will review what we have discussed together

Feedback and organization of the second block II

- There are three final things that we must take care of now:
 - ① Sort out the presentations
 - ② Get your feedback on the course so far
 - ③ Is there anything that you would like to discuss in the next session that is not included on the syllabus?
- Would you like a different arrangement for the rest of the sessions?

Feedback and or organization of the second block II

That's all!

Many thanks!



References

References I

- Chiaramonte, A., & Emanuele, V. (2017). Party system volatility, regeneration and de-institutionalization in Western Europe (1945–2015). *Party Politics*, 23(4), 376–388.
- Emanuele, V. (2015). Dataset of Electoral Volatility and its internal components in Western Europe (1945-2015). *Rome: Italian Center for Electoral Studies*.