**Introduction**

This dataset comprises pre-electoral coalitions of parties. We confront numerous problems that the empirical research on pre-electoral coalitions has identified and try to provide a dataset that makes it possible to extract data suitable for a number of different questions that are connected to PECs.

In this dataset we try to code pre-electoral coalitions (PEC). The minimal definition for a PEC is :

“a mutual, public commitment of parties during the electoral campaign to cooperate after the election”

The word “cooperate” refers to “governing together” if the combination of parties is able to collect the necessary votes. In the case of a combination of smaller parties, “cooperation” might not refer to “governing together” because there is no realistic hope of being able to govern together.

The basic intuition behind PEC is that they structure the post-election coalition bargaining. They make it easier for voters to see which government alternatives are available, even if many parties are able to gain representation.

**Problem: tautological measurement**

The main danger of our dataset is, that we want to be able to actually *test* if PECs structure the post-election coalition bargaining (among other things). Therefore, the observation that PECs structured post-election bargaining or that they did not structure them is NOT PART of our definition. This is tricky because often we depend on expert judgement or narratives of electoral campaigns that are written by people who have actually observed post-election bargaining. Therefore, there is always a danger that our measurement is tautological to some degree.

**Problem: degrees of commitment**

Some PECs seem to be “tighter” than others, we have to decide the “threshold of commitment” to speak of a PEC. This is very hard given that we mostly use secondary sources and interpretations that are very hard to compare systematically.

**Problem: commitment towards what? Government or Threshold?**

Some parties cooperate to gain office. Other coalitions are made to be able to jump the electoral threshold. Some PECs have both in mind. It is very hard to focus on “commitment towards office” because it is hard to say at which point the chance for office is “too weak”. We prefer to code all “alliances”. Maybe we can later exclude very small alliances (this can be done easily) if we want to focus on alliances for governments.

**Problem: local and technical cooperations**

We have excluded those PECs that are “local” and/or “technical”, that is, they can only be found in small parts of the country or do not paint a “national picture” of alliances that could structure a national coalition formation or national legislative activity. An example of this is Finland.

We have also excluded alliances that are “technical” in a sense that they are made without explicit public commitments to cooperate in an electoral system which gives parties very strong incentives to cooperate technically for the sake of electoral gains. An example of this would be many alliances in the Netherlands.

**Problem: Diversity of Sources**

**Strategy 1: Code all alliances that are not just purely technical**

**Strategy 2: Code accompanying variables to be able to group PECs later**

**[1] Incumbent PECs**

**[2] PECs with a joint policy program**

**[3] type of PEC (just public commitment, or some kind of technical cooperation on top of that, e.g.: joint lists, nomination agreements, vote instructions/dual ballot instructions)**

We code all PECs using the party\_id variables of Parlgov. This way, our dataset can easily be joined with parlgov (stable 14). A number of PECs are coded in Parlgov already, but these coding are not systematic and we code more PECs than they do.

**Var pec\*\_type**

*1 Nomination agreements (ein gemeinsamer Kandidat, v.a in Einerwahlkreisen)*

*2 Joint lists (eine gemeinsame Kandidatenliste)  
3 Dual-ballot instructions (Verschieben der zweiten Stimme, in Zweitstimmen-Systemen, DEU)  
4 Vote transfer instructions (Anweisung, dem PEC-Partner zweite Stimme zu geben, in Transferable Vote Systems, AUS )   
5 Public commitment to govern together*

*6 individual (see documentation below)*

*„.a“ wir haben KEINE Ahnung, unser Wissen basiert auf der (undeutlichen( Einschätzung eines Experten*

documentation

*6 – NOR 2005 : parties did NOT explicitly rule out cooperation with progress party (as in earlier elections) 🡪 had the effect of creating a defacto two-bloc campaign*

**Var pec\_progr**

1 gemeinsames Policy-Programm

0 kein Policy-Programm

*Alte Kodierung:*

*add 10 to this number, if parties agree on a policy-program for the coming legislative turn*

*schriftliches Programm!*

**Var pec\_incumbent**

*add … 1 – Weiterregierung (Regierungsparteien schließen weitere Koalition nicht aus)*

*0 – keine Fortführung der ehemaligen Regierungskoalition (d.h. wenn mind. 1 weitere Opposition in die PEC aufgenommen)*

*9 – problematischer Fall (ParlGov kodiert „kurze künstliche Minderheitsregierung“ zwischen Präsidenten- und Parlamentswahlen, daher unklar, wer incumbent ist, oder davor Caretaker)*

Neue Variable: PEC\_local

0 keine oder nur nationale PECs

1 Mittelding

2 nur lokale PECs