

Research Project: Electoral Control in Eastern Europe

**Project Status Report and Discussions from
Workshop 3 and Specialized Course, “Electoral Control in Eastern Europe”**

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This document presents a status report on the project as presented in Workshop 3 and notes on the discussions about the project by Workshop participants.

Part I: Status Report on the Project

This project, “Who Wins and Who Loses in the Parliamentary Elections? From Formal Theory to Empirical Analysis,” is funded by Poland’s National Science Centre (Sonata Bis decision number 2012/05/E/HS6/03556). The grant lasts from 2013 to 2016 and its base is here in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN). We call the project, Electoral Control in Eastern Europe. This is a cross-national project involving Poland, Hungary and Ukraine.

There are three main aspects of this grant: collecting data, building a research team, and creating academic products.

Collecting Data

A. Collection of data on parliamentarian candidates for all elections since 1989 in three countries -- Poland, Ukraine and Hungary.

All EAST PaC data on parliamentarian candidates have been collected for Poland, Ukraine and Hungary. Poland and Ukraine data have undergone a cleaning process. The cleaning process is highly specialized, and the methodology of it was developed in the course of this research project. Hungary data will be cleaned in 2015.

The Electoral Control project encourages and provides methodological knowledge to two other data collection projects: Romania and Nepal.

B. Collection of contextual data that can be merged with the parliamentarian candidate data.

Contextual data for Poland since 2001 - 2011 has been collected. Ukraine data has been collected from 2002 to 2011. Hungarian data from 1990 to 2004.

C. Archiving the data: We will begin the archiving process in 2015. For now, the data are available to all project team members and those who request access to the data.

Table 1. Overview of Data Collection

Country	Candidates	Contextual	Cleaned?
Poland	1985 - 2011	2001 - 2011	Yes
Ukraine	1990 - 2012	2002 - 2011	Yes
Hungary	1990 - 2010	1990 - 2004	No

Building a Research Team

After cleaning and archiving these data, this grant builds a research team that will use these data to analyze issues in accountability, representation and other aspects of the democratic process. The research team will have the opportunity to work individually or together to contribute to various publications (articles, books).

Members of the Project Team come from Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, and the USA. They come from various institutes and other academic organizations, and are a mix of graduate students and established scholars.

Creating Products

1. EAST PaC will be archived at the GESIS-Berlin and the Polish Archiwum Danych Społecznych in 2015.

2. There are two Project websites that facilitate communication with social-scientists working on the topic of parliamentary elections in Central and Eastern Europe. One is electoralcontrol.org. It is open to the public and has general information about the project, including some description of the data and research on electoral accountability and representation. The other is sites.google.com/site/electoralcontrol/, currently open only to Project Team members. This has the data and other documents and products.

3. Workshops featuring the electoral database. Three international workshops on the topics of this research project bring together scholars interested in the topics of this grant. The first was October 2013, and two more in March 2014 and December 2014. The initial workshop, in the first year of the project, set the agenda for dealing with the under-researched problem of winning and losing parliamentary elections in Central and Eastern Europe by examining approaches to the problem and creating a network of researchers who will use the project's electoral database in the future. Structurally, Workshop 1 presented substantive and methodological issues of the EAST-PaC data, encouraged discussion, and facilitated networking. Presentations in the Workshop were of either substantive topics related to, or methodological issues in, political candidate data. A key theme was the collection and cleaning of EAST PaC data. The Workshop also featured hands-on training in managing EAST-PaC data held in IFiS computer lab.

Workshop 2 built on Workshop 1, and we discussed the status of the data collection effort and other administrative issues. This gave event participants the opportunity to discuss various issues on project administration, a topic that was discussed again in the concluding section of the event. Some substantive presentations allowed Project Team members to get critical feedback on their ongoing research projects, and to present new projects ideas. The Workshop featured also methodology of data collection and cleaning. The full discussion is available on electoralcontrol.org.

Workshop 3 features more substantive and methodological presentations, with an emphasis on moving from presentation of ideas to publishable articles and other products. A description of Workshop 3 is available in the document, Workshop 3 Final Report.

4. Papers prepared for high quality publication outlets, including individual articles in the top journals, and an edited volume.

The project will produce two types of publications: on substantive issues, and on methodology of data collection and data cleaning.

We are just now beginning to publish articles from the grant. The first is:

Nyćkowiak, Justyna. 2014. "Construction and Use of a Relational Database to Analyze the Careers of Professional Politicians in Poland, 1985 - 2007". Forthcoming in *Ask: Research and Methods*.

Other products already produced and available on the websites:

- a. Report on general description of EAST PaC data
- b. Codebook for EAST PaC Poland
- c. Reports on electoral systems and outcomes for Poland, Ukraine and Hungary

- d. Report on changes to Polish electoral law since 1990
- e. Report on occupational data on Polish candidates
- f. Reports on project management and data citation practices in the social sciences
- g. Powerpoint presentations from Workshops

This Workshop 3 will actively plan for more publications to be sent to various outlets in 2015. Existing products will be used in future publications.

5. Data will be part of doctoral dissertations, including those of students in the Interdisciplinary Cross-national Studies (ICNS) specialization at the Graduate School for Social Research.

These data are available to students for their PhD dissertations. Students have expressed interest in using these data for this purpose.

Part II: Notes on Workshop 3 Discussions

After the project PI presented the status of the project, Workshop participants talked about the future of the project in 2015 and beyond. This combines discussion notes from the first session of Day 1, and the two working sessions on Day 2.

Publication Strategies

Should we produce a guest edited journal or edited volume? Which is better? This is a revisit of the discussion in Workshop 2. Edited volumes have certain advantages in that one can publish longer pieces and newer ideas. An advantage of the guest edited journal is its wider availability and perception of being "worth more" in terms of career and tenure. The primary concern is to produce the best work in the highest quality outlet such that the work is as widely available as possible.

The eventual consensus was to pursue a guest edited journal. Some possible journal outlets are: Electoral studies, East European Politics & Society, International Political Science Review, Political Studies, Comparative European politics, European Political Science, European Political Science Research, and Social Science Quarterly. Some argue it would be better to go for more generalist journal than specialist.

Some argue that the editors of a guest edited journal would want something more narrow, especially substantively, that they would not want something just on a dataset. Others argue that the papers can be broader, and what links them is a common theme and a common dataset. Some

argue that the primary aim should be to present the data. National specific pieces, and a comparative piece. It can show the possibilities of these data.

We decided to collect the articles being worked on now and identify the main themes. It is clear that most articles are about the relationship between demographic characteristics, political biography and electoral outcomes and behavior. The other main theme is a focus on candidates. Party switching is also a theme.

When should we collect materials for a joint publication? How about May 2015? Some say that they cannot meet such a deadline, but most were willing to meet the deadline. As such, the deadline of May 2015 was set.

Some argued that it is important to write and publish a methodological description. This will allow users of the data to cite a publication of these new data in their substantive articles. This is the importance of the methodological description: to encourage future use and to be able to cite in substantive articles, to explain the data in-depth. It is advisable to write this methodological article by May 2015.

The Big Picture

It is easy to become too narrowly focused; to remind ourselves of the big picture, we discussed the major themes from political science and sociological perspectives.

Demographic Characteristics and Political Biographies

One key theme is the relationship between personal characteristics of the candidate and their electoral outcomes. Why is this important? Merit? Personal characteristics? With whom you associate? In trying to understand elite behavior, we consider their personal characteristics. We assume that these things matter for how they behave.

More broadly, candidate and parliamentarian characteristics are important for the quality of democracy because it is part of the discussion of representation. Professionalization of parliamentarians and incumbency has implications for the quality of democracy and the quality of representation. Who wins and who loses continues to matter for society.

What is the relevance of parties for how parliamentarians behave (Tunkis) or how voters behave (Papp)? Do people vote for people or parties?

With these data, we can also ask, What makes candidates successful? If the strategy is successful, then we can expect more of these kind of representatives in the future. Politics evolves.

Why Eastern Europe?

Why is this important to understand in Eastern Europe? Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are new democracies. The CEE context is different. We discussed a book by Roberts on policy representation in CEE and accountability. Legislative recruitment influences the quality of democracy, and the quality of representation. These remain critical issues in CEE. The Eastern European region remains interesting because of the volatility, especially Ukraine, but also Poland and Hungary and Romania. It is important to understand the conditions of how democracies develop.

It's about Change

A key feature of EAST PaC is that we can look at change, such as the changing nature of social and political cleavages. There have been changes in how gender matters, or social class or age, or their intersection.

Another type of change is change in political participation: there are fewer parties and fewer candidates over time. Is this good for democracy? Is this good for the quality of representation? Twenty five years are long enough to observe careers. With EAST PaC, we can witness the long path.

Usually we focus on the careers of winners. How about the careers of losers? Who are excluded? Who are excluded from the process of building political institutions from the inside? With EAST PaC, we can examine the truly politically excluded.

Institutions

We need to think more in terms of institutions, especially how changes in electoral laws produce different types of candidates. We noted a disciplinary difference: for political scientists, institutions are the formal laws. For sociologists, institutions can also be an aggregate of norms, such as "family" as an institution. It is here where "institutions" and "social structures" become blurred.

The Value of EAST PaC

Peter Tunkis formulated well, and simply, the value of EAST PaC data. In theory, we ask, "Who these people are, and does it matter?" With EAST PaC, we now know who these people are, and we can show that it matters for major issues in representative democracy, over time.

Others notes that EAST PaC can be used as contextual data, to understand political participation, voter mobilization. We expect to understand if popular pressure changes the composition of candidacy and parliamentarians.

It's important to be reminded of the level. Here are national parliamentarians, not local ones.

On Naming

Some argued that the name of the dataset is problematic, that the “east” in EAST PaC should be Central and Eastern. They suggested to change the acronym. In the PI’s view, a change at this point would be more problematic than beneficial. There is an ongoing debate on the use of geographical markers for historical periods, and it won’t be solved in this project.

On Ukraine

There is intense interest in Ukraine, and as such we invited many Ukrainians to discuss electoral politics. We then discussed the possibility of a group publication on Ukraine featuring EAST PaC data. What would the book cover? It would cover all eight elections, institutions and changes in electoral law. It would provide a holistic picture of electoral politics in Ukraine. Emergence and development of the party system and history of party ideologies. The parties that won, and the parties that lost: all of their ideologies matter. A major theme is the consequences of civil and political unrest from the 1990s to now. This publication is also a place for a description of the collection and cleaning of the Ukrainian data in detail.