

Party strategies and party budgets: what is their relationship?

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Abstract

This work presents two original datasets built in order to shed more light on the relationship between party campaigning strategies and party budgets. The first dataset contains data collected from annual financial reports of all registered and active political parties in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia between 2003 and 2013 and available financial data of largest political parties in Austria, Germany and Slovenia between 2006 and 2013. The data were collected both from online sources as well as via field research from hard copies of financial reports. The second dataset is comprised of data from a questionnaire answered by 117 political parties in the six Central European countries between December 2013 and March 2014. The questions asked about parties' opinion on the current state of party regulation in their respective countries (4 questions), party policy towards potential reform of party regulations (4 questions), and parties' conduct of election campaigns (6 questions). Using data from the first dataset, two classifications of political parties are proposed: first, based on parties budgets, divides parties into sets of super heavyweight, heavyweight, middleweight, lightweight and bantamweight parties and second, based on the use of financial assets in party campaigning and day-to-day activities, divides parties into sets of all-rounders, polipreneurs, vote-seekers and hedgers. Juxtaposing these classifications with data from the second dataset shows that certain sizes and structure of party budgets correlate with certain party policies towards party regulations and towards state funding as well as certain party campaigning tools and strategies.