Party Positions[1]

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[1] This paper has grown out of a study of programmatic party competition in four East Central European countries directed by Herbert Kitschelt (Duke University, Durham, North Carolina), and in response to some ingenious proposals by him (see Kitschelt 1994). The comments and encouragement received at various stages of my work on this topic from him, Zsolt Enyedi (Central European University, Budapest), Radoslaw Markowski (Institute of Political Studies, Warsaw), George Rabinowitz (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and the participants in the "Identity and Equivalence" workshops convened by Jan van Deth at the University of Mannheim are gratefully acknowledged. The remaining errors are, of course, mine. The present paper has been written largely while I was a guest researcher at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research at the University of Mannheim.

Introduction

Scholarly literature on political parties and party systems often refers to policy distances[1] between parties. This is most obvious in the vast literature on the spatial theory of voting, but polarisation between the parties has also been suggested to influence the stability and/or quality of democracy (Sartori 1976; Mainwaring and Scully 1994), the occurrence of minority governments (Dodd 1976; Strom 1990), cabinet endurance (King *et al*. 1990), and electoral turnout (Crepaz 1990). Whatever indicators of polarisation these studies used, they seem to have understood them as a measure of policy distances summed across one or more policy dimensions. They seem to have agreed that the degree of distance is one of the most important traits of a party system. Similarly, individual parties are routinely called "centrist " or "extremist", and such positions are considered among their most salient traits.

However, the same distance between the policies of two parties (or the lack thereof) may mean different things depending on the clarity of party positions. Inter-party relations, the accountability of representatives, voter's behaviour, and even regime stability may be differently affected if (1) all significant parties are clearly close to each other on all relevant issues; and (2) all significant parties have obscure, fuzzy positions. For instance, some studies suggested that the sheer clarity of party positions may increase electoral support for parties over and above the level explained by their relative proximity to the voters on the various issues (Bartels 1986; Iversen 1994; Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989; Reynolds 1974). Clearly, then, the relative obscurity of party positions is relevant for party competition.

The more obscure the issue positions of parties and candidates, the more likely they should appeal to voters via other routes than policy proposals. Since charismatic leaders rarely abound, clientelistic linkages are the most obvious alternative. But the absence of distinctive, predictable and consequential policy differences between the parties may undermine the accountability of political leaders or let the exchange of personalistic favours become the dominant bond between parties and their voters. As Kitschelt (1995a) has argued, political cynicism is likely to grow in the electorate in either case, and the quality of democracy cannot be very high. Furthermore, the more obscure party positions are, the less analysts gain by applying "Western" theoretical frameworks which emphasise the role of cleavages, issues, and policy distances in party competition.

In addition, the clarity of party positions is more easily and unambiguously linked to themes in normative democratic theory than polarisation. It is simply not obvious whether

[1] I.e. a spatially represented difference in what government actions and legislation they favour.

relatively great policy distances between the parties are good or bad for the quality of democracy. The responsible party government ideal requires that the competing parties have distinctive, unambiguous, and binding policy commitments. In the absence of policy differences between the parties, governments cannot be held accountable for their policies. But the requirements of responsible party government may well be in conflict with the ideal of responsive government (cf. Pennock 1979: 283-86, 293-303). In a pure Downsian world, Tweedledee and Tweedledum may converge around a single position - either as a consequence, or an anticipation of electoral pressure -, and thus create responsive party government. Here, the dearth of policy differences between the competitors would actually help to ensure that popular preferences (whatever that means) determine public policies[2]. However, the clarity - as opposed to the differentiation - of party positions at any one point in time is part of both responsible and responsive party government ideals. In both cases, parties offer identifiable products. Therefore, the clarity - not the differentiation - of party positions is the decisive sign of programmatic party competition.

The competing pledges of convergent parties can hardly be distinguished from each other. This is the phenomenon that Stokes (1963) called a "valence" issue. Suppose that the parties in question are as firmly committed to a certain position on an issue as anyone can be, and thus have identifiable positions. Even so, they may create confusion about party positions - in responses to survey questions about party positions, for instance -, if they compete on that issue by intensely questioning the true position, credibility and commitment of their opponents, rather than by outmaneuvering them through changing their own position. In this case, perceptions of party positions may widely vary depending on the partisanship of the observer, yet the parties do compete with each other in terms of offering identifiable collective goods. Party positions are clear, even if not uncontested.

The predictability of party positions is not just a potentially important factor, but it is likely to vary considerably across countries. As Kitschelt (1994, 1995a) has argued at length, the emergence of programmatic parties - i.e. parties which appeal to the voters mostly through offering the delivery of distinct collective goods if elected - is not automatically guaranteed after transitions to democracy. In the medium term clientelistic parties, social movements, and parties built around a charismatic leader may be more easily developed and maintained. As programmatic parties may provide superior solutions to the organisational needs of a

[2] The decisive factor in guaranteeing this outcome is free competition, just as in for the ideal of responsible government.

voluntary political organisation (by providing for an enduring organisation, building on selective incentives, and extracting support from unpaid members and voters via offering collective goods), it is no surprise if the literature on "old" Western party systems often overlooked variations in the degree to which programmatic differences regulate the dynamics of inter-party relations. Once we consider emerging and/or non-Westerm democracies, however, variations in the clarity of party positions - and, even more fundamentally, in the sheer institutionalisation of political parties (see Mainwaring and Scully 1994) - become more readily visible. Regarding the four countries analysed in this paper, Kitschelt (1994, 1995a, 1995b) predicted that because of differences in (1) the education and affluence of the population; (2) traditions of democratic party competition; (3) emphasis on personalistic factors in electoral competition by the institutional framework (i.e. Poland has a semi-presidential regime with open list PR while the three others have parliamentary systems with little or no opportunity for within-party electoral choices); and (4) the influence of the mode of transition (e.g. revolution in Czechoslovakia, negotiated transition in Poland and Hungary, and incumbent-controlled in Bulgaria) on programmatic differentiation between the former communist parties and their challengers, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria would, respectively, have significantly clearer and significantly more obscure positions than Poland or Hungary[3].

The identifiability of party positions is primarily a characteristic of the relative position of a set of parties on an individual issue. The meaningful question is not whether a single party has a "clear" position in some absolute sense. Rather, the degree of predictability is always relative to the range of positions people believe may be taken by one or another actor within the party system. The next section of this paper proposes a measure of the clarity of party positions on this level, i.e. on individual issues. This measure enables us to make cross-national comparisons on the same issue and cross-issue comparisons within the same country.

Section three below confronts the more difficult question of how to construct a cross-nationally valid measure of the overall degree of programmatic crystallisation in a national party system. Given the obvious cross-national differences in the political agenda, we need a country-specific weighting of the issue domains.

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[3] The prediction about the precise ranking of Poland and Hungary is less clear, but the latter is probably more likely to lead the former on the ground of the third and fourth factor. It is less clear which of the two nations has weaker traditions of free party competition, and the two socio-economic variables (affluence and

The final section considers how the validity of the measures can be checked. A partial empirical test is offered and the results are discussed together with the general relationship between the clarity of party positions and their popular perception.

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educational level) rank them differently.

I: Identifying party positions on individual issues

I.A: The data

As Laver and Hunt (1992: 31ff) persuasively argued, the single best method of collecting comprehensive and cross-nationally comparable data on policy distances between parties is to conduct an expert survey. This seems all the more advisable since policy distances between parties affect human behaviour via human perceptions. While Laver and Hunt (and their several predecessors who were less outspoken in the defence of this methodology) interviewed small national samples of political scientists[4], this paper relies on judgements provided by more partisan actors: middle-level party activists. The two crucial advantages to this second solution are that (1) larger samples can be obtained even in small countries, and that (2) the analyst need not speculate about how "objective" policy distances translate into the actors' perceptions.

The data base was created by a project directed by Herbert Kitschelt, and co-directed in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary by Dobrinka Kostova, Zdenka Mansfeldova, Radoslaw Markowski and the author, respectively. In each country, we conducted face-to-face structured interviews with 100 to 135 middle level party activists (i.e. municipal and regional party executives, mayors, committee chairs of city councils, etc.), stratified by party[5] and region[6] in Spring 1994. In the computation of most of the indices reported below the respondents were weighted so as to adjust the data for the slightly unequal representation of the parties in the sample[7]. The assumption behind this procedure is that in

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[4] In a few smaller countries Laver and Hunt's sample also included newspaper editors and party, union and employers' federation chairs (see pp. 35-36 of their 1992 book).

[5] The interviewees were recruited in approximately equal numbers from each party that the respondents were asked about in the given country. Major deviations from this rule occurred in the case of extremist parties: in the Czech Republic SPR-RSC-members declined from participating in the survey, and we did not even attempt to interview MIÉP-members in Hungary (at three out of four sampling points there was no trace of their local organisation). In the Czech Republic, ODS-, KDS-, and CMSS-members are also underrepresented in the sample.

[6] The fieldwork was completed before the first round of the May 1994 Hungarian elections. In each country we had the following sampling points: the capital city, a relatively agricultural area, a major provincial industrial centre, and a fourth area/city with idiosyncratic electoral returns (as different from the election results at the three other sampling points as possible).

[7] In fact, two different weighting procedures were employed depending on the number of issue scales

this way we obtain the message that the voters would receive from the parties if all significant parties have equal access to all channels of elite-mass communication. While this assumption obviously does not hold, it yields a rule no worse than any alternative, and is at least unambiguous - which would not be the case if we tried weighting the data by the size of the parties (i.e. by their share of votes or seats in the most recent election). Figure 1 lists the parties covered by the perception data and roughly indicates their political orientation.

Figure 1 about here

The respondents were asked to tell how important some 10 potentially controversial issues were for their party and to locate all parties on a 20 point scale of the issues, plus some abstract ideological scales (e.g. clerical vs. secular). All of the questions defined explicitly two opposite policy or ideological positions as points 1 and 20 of the scale. For example, the first question stated:

> "Some politicians think that social policy cannot protect citizens from all risks, but they also have to rely on themselves. For instance, all costs of medical treatments should be paid either directly by everybody from his or her own pocket, or by joining voluntary health insurance schemes individually.
>
> In contrast, other politicians think that the social policy of the state must protect citizens from every sort of social risks. For instance, all medical expenses should be financed from the social security fund."

Thus, every respondent had to locate every party on the respective scales which had its own parliamentary party or which seemed to have (according to public opinion polls) a reasonable chance to gain parliamentary representation in the next election. The basic unit of observation was the combination of respondents and rated parties. Thus, in the present analysis, we have 500 cases in the Bulgarian data, i.e. 100 respondents rating 5 different

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considered simultaneously. In section one, every computation involves just one scale at a time. The weighting procedure assures an equal representation of judges from each party on the issue in question. First the number of respondents from party *x* who gave a valid answer about the position of party *j* on issue *k* was calculated: let's denote this number by n_{xjk} (where *x* and *j* may mean the same party). To guarantee the equal representation of each party *j* in the jury on all divisions, a weight of $20/n_{xjk}$ (where 20 is an arbitrarily selected constant) was assigned to each respondent *i* from party *x* who gave a valid answer about the position of party *j* on issue *k*. In section one missing values were deleted from the analysis listwise.

parties, and so on. Note that this fact has clear implications for the use of significance tests - which would anyway be of dubious value given that (1) the sample is stratified; and (2) the data are weighted (see above).

Figure 2 gives a short summary of the content of the various scales (the full text of the items is shown by Tóka 1995). Note that fewer parties and fewer items were covered in Bulgaria than elsewhere. The reason for this is that the pilot study revealed only confusion about some issues and about the position of some parties on whichever issues. Therefore these items and parties were eliminated from the final questionnaire. Whether or not this was a mistake, it certainly made it easier to reject the key hypothesis of the project that Bulgaria had fuzzier parties than the other three countries.

On VAR51, respondents had to evaluate the parties in terms of sympathy-antipathy. This variable certainly does not define an issue domain, it is rather a measure of partisanship. But precisely because of this, it generates certain patterns in the answers that a real "valence issue" would have - had any been present in the questionnaire. Therefore, the data on the results with the sympathy scales are presented with those of the issue and ideological scales in order to show which of the latter tend to behave - under certain conditions - as valence issues.

Figure 2 about here

The present analysis uses the mean rating of the parties. This means that we ignore the difference between a respondent who located a certain party on point 10 of a scale, and another who located the same party on points 8, 10 and 12 of the same scale. The mean_{ijk} matrix provided directly by respondents *i* about the mean location of parties *j* on scale *k* - was replaced with the xmean_{ijk} matrix (see the definitions below). In substantive terms this means that I analyse the positions of the parties *vis-a-vis* each other, rather than the verbally defined endpoints of the scales[8]. In the first issue question, for instance, one alternative mentioned covering "all medical expenses" by the social security. Perhaps some Hungarians believed

[8] The reason for this is simple and purely technical. Suppose we had just four respondents, all from the same party, and they were asked to rate just two parties on a left-right scale, where 1 means the leftmost, and 20 the rightmost position. Assume that two of them placed party A on point 8 and party B on point 12, and the other two placed party A on point 6 and party B on point 10. Obviously, there is uncertainty in the sample about whether party B is centrist or centre-right, but such implicit differences in the precise meaning of the mid-point of a 20 point scale can only be expected.

that this hinted at also covering ordinary dental treatment, others might have recalled the widely publicised treatment of a famous TV-personality in a private clinic in Mexico covered by private donations. Such differences in the interpretative framework ought not to have prevented the respondents from indicating essentially the same policy distance between parties, but we are clearly better off if we eliminate this "noise" from the data on perceived party positions.

To sum up:

$mean_{ijk}$ is the mean placement of party *j* on issue *k* by respondent *i* on a 20-point scale; and

$xmean_{ijk}$ is the mean placement of party *j* on issue *k* by respondent *i* relative to his or her anchor $point_{ik}$; where

$anchor\text{-}point_{ik}$ is the average location of all rated parties on issue *k* by respondent *i*.

In other words, $xmean_{ijk}$ is the deviation of party *j*'s mean position on issue *k* in the judgement of respondent *i* from the average of the mean position on issue *k* of all parties that respondent *i* rated on that issue.

I.B: Programmatic crystallisation, asymmetry of judgements and random noise

Kitschelt (1994) measured the "diffuseness" of party positions on a given issue by the standard deviation of the placements of party *j* given by the respondents. While this proposition has considerable merits, it also has two problems. The smaller one is what was indicated above in the discussion of valence issues: some of the variation in the placement of a party on an issue reflects merely the diversity of partisan viewpoints in the jury, and not a genuine lack of an identifiable party position. This problem is easily handled by a simple adjustment procedure. The standard deviation of the $xmean_{ik}$ ratings of each party *j* can be computed separately for each partisan group of jurors, and then averaged (with an appropriate weighting of the groups). I believe that this adjusted version of Kitschelt's measure of "diffuseness" would be a perfectly valid measure of the clarity of party positions - for comparing parties on a given issue.

There remains, however, a fundamental problem with all measures based on standard deviation. Namely, their value is dependent on the definition of the endpoints of the scales. Had, for instance, point 20 of our income tax scale meant a poll tax (instead of a less progressive tax than the existing one), the same respondents might (indeed should) have placed the same parties in a narrower range. Then, the standard deviation of the judgements

on party *j*'s position would have been smaller. Obviously, sensible researchers never define the endpoints of their issue scales in a totally arbitrary way. Rather, they try to design scales that do not prevent any respondent from expressing large differences between the parties on the issues. Hence the endpoints must denote at least as extreme positions as that taken by any significant political force in the given country. At the same time, they must allow for minute distinctions among non-extreme parties and avoid the appearance of treating the question frivolously - so the endpoints cannot be wildly extreme positions that cannot conceivably be taken by any politician in the given country.

But this is exactly the heart of the matter: issue scales are (and must be) constructed to reflect political reality. Therefore, they take for granted some, indeed most, of what researchers should explain. To put it in another way, a unit distance (or variance) on an identically phrased scale is not cross-nationally comparable for it is not obvious why the range of conceivable positions on an issue would be identical across countries.

Needless to say, distances and variances are not comparable across issue domains either - as long as we cannot define an explicit exchange rate between a unit difference on issue A (say income taxation) and issue B (say abortion rights or NATO-membership). Therefore, I propose to introduce relative measures of the claritiy of party positions, which I call random noise and image crystallization. These are percentage based measures. Their minimum value (0) indicates the total absence of the respective trait in the relevant data, and their maximum value (100) suggests that the trait totally determines the responses, and leaves the respondents no room to deviate from a given pattern.

Technically, the xmean_{ij} variance on every issue *k* (i.e. the total variation in the responses concerning all of the parties' positions on each of the issues) is decomposed into three parts. Three percentage figures are obtained, each showing the relative amount of variance due to one or another component, and all three totalling 100. Table 1 shows the numerical values for each scale in each country. The same table also shows the average salience rating of the issue by the respondents (i.e. "how important" the issue is for their party).

The first component is <u>image crystallisation</u>. Judges agree that on the given scale party A is on a certain distance and direction from party B, and they respond to the issue question accordingly. Irrespective of the extent of polarisation and whether or not polarisation can have a standardised measure, image crystallisation will be high whenever a strong consensus on individual party stances on the issue tends to be the only source of variation in the responses

about party positions. Conversely, even if the polarisation of parties on issue *k* is very great, the respondents may disagree on whether the true distance between two parties is 4 or 7 units. If this is so, the variance of $xmean_{ij}$ explained by the identity of the rated party will be less than 100 percent of the total.

But predictable party positions do not imply a perfect consensus of perceptions. If programmatic party competition is strong, the members of different parties are unlikely to agree on the precise size of the policy distance between their parties. Some parties are likely to feel electorally insecure on some issues (e.g. pro-market parties on welfare state issues when they sense a statist electoral majority). In this case, a sophisticated respondent is apt understate or overstate the between party differences on the issue, depending on whether or not her party is on the electorally advantageous side. The crucial question is whether the judges share an understanding of which party should understate and which should overstate the between-party differences[9]. To the extent they do, programmatic party competition may be well developed even though the variation of responses concerning each party *j*'s position is seemingly high. But a high systematic asymmetry does not necessarily signal the clarity of party positions - in fact, the opposite is more likely. When it comes to an issue where there is a good deal of inter-party dissensus about the perceived positions of the parties, but little about values, then we face an intensely contested valence issue. This is precisely the case with the sympathy scale in our data: the judges apparently agree that being sympathetic is better than being unsympathetic, but disagree on which party is more sympathetic. Yet a high systematic asymmetry does not necessarily signal the clarity of party positions. In fact, the opposite is more likely. Depending on whether consensus or disagreement on values exist within the parties, the variance due to systematic asymmetries of judgements may be either the main source of variation in the answers or negligible compared to the vast amount of

[9] Of course, it is of interest too whether or not this shared understanding of public opinion is correct. But the present analysis avoids this question which poses measurement problems just as difficult as the ones tackled here.

random noise - likely generated by the internal division within each party on the issue[10].

In technical terms, the systematic asymmetry of judgements will be measured here as the impact of an interaction term (party membership of the judge*identity of the rated party) on the total variance of the $xmean_{ijk}$ values. This, in other words, is the amount of variance explained by which party is judged by which party's members. Not all asymmetric judgements are part of this phenomenon. Most importantly, when different types of asymmetric judgements by members of party A cancel out each other in terms of the mean placement of party B, I will count that as random noise.

The term "random noise" refers to the tendency that members of party *j* attribute different positions to party *g* (where *j* and *g* may denote the same party). The greater portion of the total variance in the $xmean_{ijk}$ values is due to this tendency, the more obscure party positions are. The amount of random noise is easily measured as the variance explained by none of the previous factors. In the absence of announced party positions, the preferences of party members and their judgements about their own party's position are likely to vary considerably. Members of a Christian party may wonder whether Christian humanism or the dogma of original sin would dictate their party's platform on using the stick or the carrot in the classrooms or rearing children. Some liberals may consider the stick the symbol of inviolable parental rights, while radical socialists may treat advocates of the carrot as representatives of middle-class cultural imperialism, and so on.

Table 1 about here

Random noise measures the inverse of "image crystallisation". Not surprisingly, the correlation of the two measures across the issues is negative and extremely strong (see table 2). Where they differ is in the assumptions they make about voters. If, in judging party positions on issues, voters can discount for the conflicting signals (systematic asymmetries and anchor point differences) they receive from the various sources, then the first is the better

[10] Suppose that there can be just two positions on the issue and everybody tends to claim his or her favoured position for his or her party. If each party is divided by the same 6:4 ratio on the issue, then the collective judgement of the sample (1) will not see much difference between the individual parties; but (2) systematic asymmetries will be substantial (on the average, members of each party *j* will see their own party closer than the other parties to the majority view); yet (3) systematic asymmetries will only explain a smaller part of the total variance in the responses, as the bulk of the variance will be explained by within-party

measure of programmatic party competition. If they cannot, then "image crystallisation" has the greater validity. In practice, little difference exists between the results obtained with the two measures.

Table 2 about here

To sum up, the three measures are derived from a variance analysis of the $xmean_{ij}$ values on each scale *k*. This analysis shows how much of the variance in the party placements are explained by the identity of the rated party (image crystallisation), by the party affiliation of the respondents (systematic anchor point differences), by which party is rated by the members of which party (systematic asymmetries of judgements), and by how much of the variance remains unexplained by these factors (random noise).

I.C: Results

Let's evaluate briefly the results on an issue-by-issue basis. Overall, the data seem to have some face validity. Hungarian parties have a well-established reputation for fuzzy stances on economic issues, and stark disagreements on a variety of non-economic issues related to different concepts of nationhood, moral, the role of religion, and retroactive justice. In contrast, Czech parties project sharply differentiated images on economic issues, but are less easily distinguished from each other on a number of non-economic issues than their Polish or Hungarian counterparts (cf. Tóka 1997). These common places seem to be nicely echoed in the results obtained with the above proposed indicators.

Random noise is the mmost important indicator of the clarity in the responses about party positions. It seems to have the lowest variation across issues in Poland, where random noise is quite low on virtually any issue question. The extremes are apparently high confusion on party positions towards environment vs. industry and unusually low confusion on the religious issues (VAR38 and VAR39) and on the treatment of former communists (VAR44). In the Czech Republic, religious issues elicit as little, and quasi-economic issues (VAR36 on immigration, VAR37 on kindergartens, and VAR40 on urban-rural conflicts) about as much random noise as in Poland. On other non-economic issues (VAR41, VAR43 and VAR44) the Czech parties appear to have vastly less - and on the economic issues (VAR30 to VAR35) somewhat more - crystallised profiles than do the Polish parties.

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disagreements about where each party *j* stands on the issue.

On VAR42 (environment) we find somewhat less random noise in the Bulgarian than in the Czech and Polish answers, and on the appropriate treatment of ex-communists (VAR44) there may be somewhat more clarity concerning Bulgarian than Czech party positions. Otherwise, however, Bulgaria is a world apart. The random noise component of the Bulgarian answers is high not only in a cross-national perspective, but also in absolute terms. On the average issue question, three-fifths of the total variance in the Bulgarian answers is "random noise". Even fellow party members disagree on where the five parties stand *vis-a-vis* each other. Let me stress that this picture emerges even though several parties and issues were eliminated from the Bulgarian questionnaire following the respondents' inability to make sense of them during the pilot study.

In terms of the amount of the random noise surrounding party positions, Hungary is in between Poland and the Czech Republic on the one hand, and Bulgaria on the other. By and large Hungary may be closer to the former, even though four issues (the "economic" VAR31 and VAR33, the "quasi-economic" urban-rural conflict, and environment) generate slightly less random noise in Bulgaria than in Hungary. On economic issues, the Hungarian respondents see much fuzzier parties than the Czechs and the Poles, but - on the bulk of the economic items, including the abstract ideological VAR46 - not quite as fuzzy parties as the Bulgarians. On non-economic issues, Hungarian party images appear the best crystallised of all. The only exceptions to this rule are environment and - on a more significant scale - urban-rural conflict.

On the amount of systematic asymmetries in judgements, overall cross-national differences seem negligible, though Poland may have somewhat fewer than the other three countries. As a result, the average difference between Poland and the Czech Republic in terms of "image crystallisation" is almost as big as the average difference between the Czech Republic and Hungary.

However, it would be premature to conclude that Poland has the clearest party positions. While there is no evidence that our 14-16 issue scales represent all relevant issues in each of the four countries[11], the precise ranking of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary is at least partly a question of the weighting of economic and non-economic issues. If we believe that the former should be given more weight, then probably the Czech Republic would probably obey Kitschelt's (1994) hypothesis and end up with apparently less average random noise than either Poland or Hungary. However, if the opposite is true, then even

[11] Indeed, I am sincerely puzzled about what would make a good criteria of such representativeness.

Hungary may end up "ahead" of the others. What can we do to measure programmatic clarity on the national rather than single-issue level?

II: The country specific weight of individual issues

One obvious way to deal with national differences is to weight issues and issue domains by their salience in the countries in question (or, indeed, by their salience for individual parties)[12]. Table 1 reveals that economic issues are clearly more salient than anything else in all four countries except in the Czech Republic, where environment tops the list. Hungarian politicians, in contrast, find religious issues (VAR38 and VAR39) much more salient than do the Czechs. If this is so, is it not possible that the Czech Republic actually has the more obscure party positions overall, especially given the greater crystallisation of party positions on non-economic issues in Hungary?

Table 2 provides a tentative answer. In all four countries a weak positive correlation exists between random noise and salience. Everywhere except in Bulgaria we find a weak positive correlation between salience and the systematic asymmetry of judgements[13] (but this correlation is probably strongest in Hungary[14]). Therefore, if we weight the issues by their salience, we will likely obtain the same, even bigger, difference between Hungary and the Czech Republic as that already suggested by table 1 - namely that party positions are clearer in the latter than the former.

More often than not, however, a brief look at the noise-salience correlations may not answer the question, and an explicit weighting is likely called for. Yet if we derive the weight

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[12] I do not discuss here the serious problems with conveying the notion of salience in interviews. It suffices to note that our interviewers kept reporting that the respondents were puzzled about the meaning of the question on issue importance. Furthermore, the problem at hand seems analogous to introspective assesments of our own motives - the results of which are proverbially suspect. For instance, while it is hard to believe that all issues in the questionnaire (including those on which parties have hardly any identifiable position) would be at least moderately salient for each party, our respondents almost never declared any of the issues "not really important" for their party. Partly because of this, it is unclear whether an average salience rating of 4 represents twice as high, or just 25 percent higher salience than an average rating of 3.

[13] The consistency of this pattern suggests that as issue salience increases, party positions become blurred and the inter-party dispute about the true party positions and their credibility becomes more intense.

[14] Note that the dubious representativity of our - or any other - issue sample prohibit the use of

of individual issues from a survey question on issue salience, some fundamental problems are encountered. If we multiple the value of "random noise" for each issue with its weight and sum the products, then we implicitly give a higher weight to those issue domains which were represented with more items in the questionnaire. However, some highly salient dimensions may be so nicely captured by just one item (think of VAR45 in Bulgaria, about the language rights of the Turkish minority), or linked to so few issues that the number of items devoted to a dimension in our sample of issues has nothing to do with its importance. Reducing the number of dimensions by factor analysis or multidimensional scaling cannot resolve this problem. The issue dimension(s) represented by just one item in the questionnaire will most likely be lost in the process. Conversely, if several issues of different salience load highly on a factor, then estimating the salience of the dimension becomes anything but uncontroversial.

Factor analysis relies on the notion of internal or construct validity. Items uncorrelated to all other items in the study are made automatically suspect and probably invalid by this method. Thus, when there is no guarantee that every relevant dimension is represented by more than one measurement in a study and there is no proportionality in the representation of underlying dimensions among the indicators, we must instead maximise the external validity of the resulting composite measures. This can be done if (1) we find a presumed correlate of the variable under construction; and (2) the theory linking this criterion to the variable-to-be is not related to the theory that we are about to test once the measures are validated. Unfortunately, this is not the case with these variables. We have no firm theoretical expectations of what variables could correlate with the overall clarity of party positions. Or, inasmuch as we have, we would rather like to test these theories instead of relying on them to calibrate the other side of the equation.

Thus, we must take a further step. Let me assume that the weight of an issue dimension in defining the overall clarity of party positions is identical to its relative weight for the actors' calculus of political utility. Consequently, the greater impact an issue dimension has on electoral decisions or on politicians' coalition preferences, the more weight it should be assigned in measuring the identifiability of party positions in a given country.

In the context of the present paper, we need a measure of the utility of the evaluated political parties for the respondents (this is readily provided by their sympathy ratings of the parties), and we need to regress it on the distance between the respondents' ideal points on each issue from the (perceived) position of the party in question on the same issue.

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significance tests, which would anyway be of limited value given the small number of cases in this analysis.

Unfortunately, our survey had no question on the respondents' own issue preferences. In place of it, I substitute the position they attribute to their own party. The downside of this choice is that it makes the distance between the respondents' "own" position and their own party's issue positions zero by definition. Therefore, I have excluded from the regression analyses the observations referring to a respondent's evaluation of the party that he or she belongs to.

In order to be sure that each party has an appropriate representation in the jury, I replace the missing $xmean_{ijk}$ values with estimates[15], and a weighting procedure was designed which insures that (1) each party is equally represented in the weighted national sample and (2) the weighted number of cases in the analysis[16] is identical to the actual number of respondents in the survey. This step was necessary as the approximate significance level of the regression slopes was of interest in finding the weights of the various issue dimensions.

Various experiments with the data suggested that the estimated ranking of the four countries in terms of the overall clarity of party positions may radically differ depending on how we tackle the strong multicollinearity between the newly created variables measuring the distance between the ideal point of the respondents' and their perceptions' of party *j*'s issue position on the various issues. Below I describe the alternative I consider technically soundest. In this solution the multicollinearity between the party-respondent distances is cured by replacing the 10-odd issue scales (15 in Bulgaria and Poland, 16 in Hungary, and 17 in the Czech Republic) with their unrotated principal components. The distances between the perceived party positions and the respondents' own ideal points (i.e. the position they attribute to their own party) are calculated for each of the 15 to 17 principal components, and the sympathy ratings of the parties are regressed on these in each country separately. In each country, three to four coefficients seem statistically significant[17].

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[15] Each missing $xmean_{ijk}$ value was replaced with the average placement of party *j* on issue *k* by the fellow party members of respondent *i*. Since the originally calculated anchor point of respondent *i*, and the deviation of the other parties from this point obviously depended on which party or parties were not evaluated by him or her, all $xmean_{ijk}$ ratings provided by the respondent had to be adjusted after the replacement of missing values. Namely, for each respondent who evaluated some but not all party *j* on issue *k*, the (sum of the) value(s) substituted for their missing ratings of party (parties) *j* on issue *k* was divided by the number of parties that they did evaluate on the given issue, and the result subtracted from their own $xmean_{ijk}$ of these parties.

[16] The unit of analysis is the combination of respondent *i* and the evaluated party *j*, except that the evaluations given by the respondents about their own parties are excluded from the regression analyses.

[17] First, all the 15 to 17 independent variables were entered into the equation. The theoretical expectation, that they have either negative or statisttically insignificant effect on the sympathy ratings, was borne

The regression coefficients are taken to indicate the importance of the given dimensions for politicians' sympathy ratings in the given country. Note that they have a common metric since all principal components have a unit standard deviation. The random noise, image crystallisation and systemic asymmetry components of the respective three to four principal components are computed according to the procedure described in the first section above. Then they are weighted by the respective regression coefficients (divided by a constant)[18]. Because the metric regression coefficients refer to the same metric as the principal components (which all , have a standardised unit variance), the final estimates of random noise etc. on the national level can be directly computed by multiplying the weights with the percentage of variance in the respective principal components stemming from random noise, image crystallisation and systematic asymmetries in the respondents' judgements.

Table 3 about here

Table 3 presents the results of these computations. Poland and the Czech Republic seem to have equally clear party positions. The only difference between them is that systematic asymmetries are more pronounced and straight image crystallisation probably less pronounced in the Czech Republic than in Poland. In other words, the former has slightly more centripetal competition on (partially) valence issues, while the latter has slightly more cross-party consensus regarding the divergence of party positions. Hungary, and particularly Bulgaria, have even more valence competition than the Czech Republic. Since image crystallisation is considerably weaker in Hungary and even weaker in Bulgaria than in the Czech Republic and Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary owe a considerably larger part of their little programmatic party competition they have to predictable and systematic patterns in how competing parties question each other's issue positions.

Obviously, then, the starting hypothesis about the ranking of the four countries is partly rejected (regarding Poland) and partly supported (regarding the relative ranking of the

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out in all four countries. Next, the regressions were re-run with all independent variable with a T-value below an absolute value of one eliminated from the equation. Finally, from the remaining set the independent variables the effect of which failed to reach the .10 significance level were eliminated one by one. Since the sample is far from random, this procedure is open to criticism - but no unproblematic alternative seems to have been available.

[18] To assure that the weights add up to one in each country, the raw regression coefficients were divided

other three countries). The unexpected clarity of party positions in postcommunist Poland may emerge because Poland had more electoral contests and a greater turnover of parties in government than the other East Central Europan countries at the time of our survey (Kitschelt 1995b).

III: Validating the measures

A common problem in studies of unexplored territory is the absence of previous measurements to validate the newly introduced instruments. Kitschelt (1994, 1995) obtained very similar results in the survey analysed in this chapter as in his four-country pilot survey of national level party office-holders in early 1993. While this strongly suggests the cross-national comparability of the survey data at hand, it has no bearing on the quesiton of whether Kitschelt's measures (not to speak of the present ones) really capture the clarity of party positions.

Probably the most promising way to validate our measures is by analysing announcements and comments by partisan sources on policy issues. However, the cross-national coding of the clarity and differentiation of party positions from manifestos in any other way than counting the sentences or words devoted to various topics appears to be prohibitively labour-intensive and probably impossible (cf. Budge, Robertson and Hearl 1987). Such a coding was carried out for many post-1990 East European party manifestos by Hans-Dieter Klingemann and his associates, but these data reveal only whether or not individual manifestos tend to combine issue concerns like their competitors. Even if we follow Converse (1964) and interpret this as an expression of ideological constraint (deeming, for instance, a party which simultaneously stresses law and order, religious education and generous welfare provisions as less ideological than the one which mixes the first two with free enterprise and private initiative), it is better treated as a different phenomenon than the clarity of party positions. The clarity of party positions may well be influenced by the degree of ideological constraint in party appeals, but they are not identical characteristics.

In the absence of valid comparable measures, we can only examine whether the measures in question show the expected relationships with some other variables. In the present case the most straightforward proposition seems to be that the clarity of party

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by their sum.

positions must influence the degree to which the general public recognises policy differences between the parties on the issue. Obviously, no deterministic relationship can be expected here.[19] Furthermore, it is not clear whether we should expect a very clear replication of the elite-level systematic asymmetries of judgements about party positions on the mass level.

Be that as it may, strong doubts about the validity of the measures will appear if the clarity of party positions turns out to be totally unrelated to the degree to which voters are capable of recognising between-party differences. Thus, I attempted to compute the same measures of the clarity of perceived party positions on the same issues in mass survey data as were computed from the elite data. Then I will compute the correlations between the two sets of estimates across issues and countries.

Unfortunately, comparable relevant mass survey data are available only for the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, and even that data covers somewhat different issues and uses different quesiton format than the elite survey. Nevertheless, in April 1994 Hungarian and November 1994 Czech and Polish surveys (CEU 1994a, 1994b), responses are available from national samples about which (up to three) parties are most, and which are least "likely to pursue" certain goals, including five that seemed to tap nearly the same issue dimensions as VAR31, VAR33, VAR46, VAR39, VAR45 and VAR47 in the elite survey. (On the phrasing of the questions, see table 4).

From these materials a new data base, parallel to the elite data, was created. Here too, the unit of observation was the combination of respondent *i* and party *j*. The same parties were considered as those rated by the elite respondents, except that the Polish UD and KLD, which merged between the time of the elite and the mass survey, were replaced with UW, and the mass responses about the Czech Socialist Party and their Agrarian ally were considered equivalent to the elite responses about their coalition, the LSU. Initially, each party *j* mentioned by respondent *i* as likely to pursue the goal in question was coded plus one, the party "least likely" to do that was coded minus one, and all others were coded zero. Then,

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[19] A previous study showed, for instance, that in 1980 the American electorate failed to realise widely publicised, firm and clear differences between President Carter's and Ronald Reagan's views on abortion rights (Granberg and Holmberg 1988: 41ff). Carmines and Stimson (1980) have speculated that at least three issue-specific factors may influence the extent to which voters (and the less sophisticated voters in particular) can grasp policy differences between candidates and parties. These factors are whether the issue (1) has already fuelled partisan divisions for a long time; (2) is framed as a disagreement about goals rather than one about means, technical details; and (3) is easily related to the social group identities of the voters (as in racial issues, for instance).

exactly as in the elite level analysis, the anchor point of each respondent *i* was computed for each issue *k*, and subtracted from his or her rating of each party *j* on that issue. The variance due to systematic anchor point differences across the respondents was thus fixed to zero. Finally, the same variance analyses were carried out for each issue as on the elite level, with the rating of parties *j* by respondents *i* as the dependent, and the identity of the rated party and the party preference of respondent *i* as the two independent variables. Only those respondents were included in the analysis who said that in an election next weekend they would vote for one of the parties covered by the sample of the elite survey. Table 4 shows the percentages of the random noise, systematic asymmetries, and image crystallisation components of both the mass and elite answers. Table 5 displays the pairwise correlations between the elite- and the mass-level findings.

Overall, the results conform to expectations. True, some cross-country variations are hard to explain: the correlation between the elite and the mass level random noise is .98 in the Czech Republic and .89 in Poland, but it is practically non-existent (and is, in fact, negative) in Hungary. Yet, the main point is that for both image crystallisation and random noise, the expected positive, sizeable, but only moderately strong correlations obtain in the pooled three country sample (N=15, i.e. five issue domains in each of three countries), and that the results for the individual countries (N=5 for each) are by and large consistent with this general pattern. The prevalence of asymmetric judgements in elite- and mass-level responses are also consistently correlated, although apparently less strongly than the measures of image crystallisation on the two levels. As noted above, this is not unexpected.

Deviations between the elite and mass level findings seem to be twofold. First, however clear party positions are on nationalism-related issues in the elite survey, confusion ensues in the mass responses on the question of which parties are most and least likely to seek a strengthening of national consciousness. It may well be that this question - a pale attempt at having an identical item on nationalism in three countries where ethnic heterogeneity is nearly nil - is too abstract and fails to capture the same issue dimension as its elite-level match.

Secondly, even in the case of a similar clarity on the elite-level, any issue - particularly any economic issue - is likely to generate more noise and less meaningful pattern in the Polish and Hungarian than in the Czech mass responses. This seems to fit nicely Carmines and Stimson' argument about why the same clarity of party positions may not be able to produce as much issue voting on hard as on easy issues, particularly in relatively less sophisticated parts of the electorate. Three of the major Czech parties (CSL, CSSD, KSCM) are historical parties whose ideological orientation has changed relatively little since the First Republic

(1918-1939). In contrast, in Poland and Hungary only the agrarian parties (PSL and FKGP, respectively) have a historical pedigre, and even they changed their relative ideological location in the party space considerably compared to the 1940s. Partly because of this, the main issue dimensions and their hierarchy in contemporary party politics seem to show a lot more pronounced continuity with the previous democratic regime in the Czech Republic than in Poland or Hungary. Thus, socio-economic and cultural left-right issues may be much "easier" for Czech voters. Furthermore, given the much greater endurance of the previous democratic regime, the higher levels of affluence, the smaller size of the rural population, and the slightly higher educational levels in the Czech Republic, Czech voters may also be more politically sophisticated than voters in Poland or Hungary.

These are, of course, exactly the kind of arguments which anticipate the postulate above: the clarity of party positions on the elite level has no one to one relationship with the crystallisation of party images on the mass level. Yet, the expected positive correlation does obtain in the data, despite the substantial differences between the phrasing of items in the mass and the elite surveys.

Conclusions

The measures proposed here seem promising for a cross-national comparison of the clarity of party positions. Their development was cumbersome, but most complications (e.g. the weighting of the elite data and the argument about the incomparability of policy distances across issues and countries) have been triggered by the very demands of comparative inquiry: namely, by its call for an explicit discussion of problems too often dealt with intuitively. Hopefully this chapter has managed to show that tackling uneasy technical questions may be beneficial for concept and theory formation.

First, it has been argued that policy differences between competing parties affect mass and elite behaviour not only by their size. It is worth recalling that classic discussions of party and electoral behaviour (e.g. Lipset and Rokkan (1967)) have stressed the importance of the relative salience and the negotiability of issues (with conflicts involving worldviews and ethnic or religious identities less negotiable than those involving material interests). Following the theoretical arguments and revising the meauserement proposals of Kitschelt (1994, 1995b), this chapter has focused on yet another factor, the clarity of party positions. This trait is conceptually distinct from either the size, the salience, or the negotiability of inter-party policy differences. Only with these four measures together can one hope to capture the true impact of policies on inter-party competition, conflict, and co-operation, and the

clarity of the party positions may have important effects of its own. Apart from Kitschelt's theory, some empirical studies of electoral behaviour have been cited to indicate the factors that may be directly affected by the latter.

Second, a procedure has been developed to arrive at a cross-nationally valid indicator of the clarity of party positions. Thirdly, recent data from four East Central European countries has been used to demonstrate that the clarity of party positions can vary widely across countries and issue domains. Given how similar these four polities would seem to be on a world-wide perspective, it is striking how the sample shows almost as much variation on the variable of interest as is theoretically possible.

Finally, mass survey data has been used to validate the measurement instrument. By and large, the theoretically predicted correlations between the clarity of party positions and their most immediate mass-level consequence have been observed.

Two more general methodological propositions seem to arise from the cumbersome journey reported above. Measuring policy distances across different issues but within the same country raises similar problems of comparability to those encountered in cross-national research. A promising way of treating those problems in the absence of a metric properly standardised across contexts (i.e. issues or nations) is to define the values of the variable in question relative to a theoretical maximum and minimum. This is precisely the case when one measures X as the percentage of variance on Y explained by Z. What the development of such an instrument requires (indeed, prompts) is, above all theoretical reflection on what we really want to measure. In the absence of either a satisfactory standardised metric or an identifiable theoretical maximum and minimum on a variable, valid comparisons are hampered across both issues and nations. However, the reason for such failures is probably less the nature of the phenomenon than the insufficient definition of the concept used in the analysis. This, it has been suggested, is probably the case with polarisation, at least as long as that is to be a concept distinct from the negotiability, salience, and clarity of policy differences.

A second general proposition concerns the aggregation of information across issues in such a way as to reflect the context dependent nature of (national) issue agendas. It has been proposed that the notion of criterion-related validity might help in assigning country-specific weights to - partly or entirely - country-specific individual issue dimensions in the calculus of the overall clarity of party positions in a country. While numerous problems must be overcome, the key methodological point is simple: the greater the role of an issue-dimension in a country, the greater importance the clarity of party positions on that issue has for the overall clarity of party positions in that country. The road to measuring identical phenomena

in different countries leads through an explicit recognition of cross-country differences in the measurement process.

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Figure 1: The objects of evaluations in the four countries

orientation:	Bulgaria	Czech R.	Hungary	Poland
postcommunist	BSP	LB	MSZP	SLD
agrarian	BANU	LSU	FKGP	PSL
social democrat	BSDP	CSSD		UP
Christian		CSL	KDNP	ZChN
liberal I		ODA	SZDSZ	UD
liberal II		SD	FIDESZ	KLD
nationalist		SPR-RSC	MIÉP	KPN
ethnic	DPS	CMSS		
conservative I	SDS	ODS	MDF	BBWR
conservative II		KDS		PC
other				NSZZ "S"

Figure 2: A guideline to the content and endpoints of the scales

Point 1	**Point 20**
"ISSUE" SCALES	
VAR30: social security	
citizens pay	compulsory insurance
VAR31: market-state	
privatise all	substantial public sector
VAR32: speed vs. justice of privatisation	
justice	speed & efficiency
VAR33: inflation vs. unemployment	
fight inflation	fight unemployment
VAR34: foreign investment	
welcome	dependence
VAR35: income taxation	
more progressive	more equal
VAR36: immigration (not asked in Bulgaria)	
restrictive	permissive
VAR37: women at work	
subsidise kindergartens	women stay home
VAR38: abortion (not asked in Bulgaria)	
extreme pro-life	extreme pro-choice
VAR39: churches and schools	
should influence	should not
VAR40: urban-rural	
neutral or pro-urban	agrarian
VAR41: authority-autonomy in education	
authority	autonomy

(continued on next page)

Figure 2 (continued from previous page)

VAR42: environment protection

industry first — environment

VAR43: censorship

permit — prohibit

VAR44: former communists

discriminate — equal rights

VAR45: national issue I

Bulgaria: pro-Turkish — anti-Turkish

Hungary: for basic treaties — against basic treaties

VAR52: national issue II

Bulgaria: pro-Turkish — anti-Turkish

Czech Republic: centralist — favours regional autonomy

VAR53: effectiveness of decentralisation

Czech Republic: centralist — favours regional autonomy

"ABSTRACT" SCALES

VAR46: state intervention-free market

state — free market

VAR47: individual-tradition

freedom — tradition

VAR48: national-paneuropean

nation — Europe

VAR49: clerical-secular

clerical — secular

VAR50: Left-Right

Left — Right

VAR51: sympathy

unsympathetic — sympathetic

Table 1.A: Decomposing the variance of judgements about party positions and the mean salience of the issues

Bulgaria

Variable: No. Content domain	NOISE	CRYST	ASYMM	. Issue salience
30 social security	65	24	11	4.8
31 market-state	49	45	6	4.8
32 privatisation	87	9	4	4.8
33 inflation-unemployment	59	37	3	4.8
34 foreign investments	55	40	6	4.3
35 income taxation	85	5	10	4.7
36 immigration (not asked)				
37 women at work	83	5	12	3.9
38 abortion (not asked)				
39 churches, schools	56	25	19	4.3
40 urban-rural	45	51	5	4.5
41 authority-autonomy	67	27	6	4.6
42 environment	66	25	9	4.5
43 censorship	76	11	13	4.4
44 former communists	35	57	8	4.4
45 minority rights	38	60	2	3.8
46 state-free market	49	48	3	
47 individualism-tradition	66	23	11	
48 national-European	72	19	10	
49 clerical-secular	65	27	8	
50 left-right	39	59	3	
51 sympathy	28	17	55	
52 relations with Turkey	40	58	2	4.2

Notes:
NOISE: random noise, percentage of variance unexplained by VAR4, VAR22 and the VAR4*VAR22 interaction term.
CRYST: Image crystallisation, percentage of variance explained by VAR22.
ASYMM: Systematic asymmetries of judgements, percentage of variance explained by the VAR4*VAR22 interaction term.
Issue salience: the mean of the responses to the question "How important is this topic for your party?" (5=very important, 1=not really important). The question was not asked about VAR46 to VAR51.

In calculating the above figures the survey data were weighted as described in note 7.

Table 1.B: Decomposing the variance of judgements about party positions and the mean salience of the issues (contd.)

Czech Republic

Variable:				Issue
No. Content domain	NOISE	CRYST	ASYMM	salience
30 social security	32	64	4	4.3
31 market-state	27	69	4	3.9
32 privatisation	34	63	3	4.2
33 inflation-unemployment	25	71	4	4.2
34 foreign investments	24	73	3	3.9
35 income taxation	35	60	5	4.0
36 immigration	62	27	11	3.5
37 women at work	42	51	7	3.7
38 abortion	27	69	5	3.3
39 churches, schools	22	75	3	3.1
40 urban-rural	30	65	5	4.3
41 authority-autonomy	70	17	12	3.8
42 environment	69	14	17	4.4
43 censorship	64	26	10	3.9
44 former communists	38	53	9	3.8
45 (not asked)				
46 state-free market	29	65	6	
47 individualism-tradition	58	32	11	
48 national-European	47	46	7	
49 clerical-secular	25	71	4	
50 left-right	24	73	3	
51 sympathy	33	17	50	
52 decentralisation I	57	18	25	4.2
53 decentralisation II	53	18	29	

Notes:
NOISE: random noise, percentage of variance unexplained by VAR4, VAR22 and the VAR4*VAR22 interaction term.
CRYST: Image crystallisation, percentage of variance explained by VAR22.
ASYMM: Systematic asymmetries of judgements, percentage of variance explained by the VAR4*VAR22 interaction term.
Issue salience: the mean of the responses to the question "How important is this topic for your party?" (5=very important, 1=not really important). The question was not asked about VAR46 to VAR51 and VAR53.

In calculating the above figures the survey data were weighted as described in note 7.

Table 1.C: Decomposing the variance of judgements about party positions and the mean salience of the issues

Hungary

Variable:				Issue
No. Content domain	NOISE	CRYST	ASYMM	salience
30 social security	59	26	15	4.5
31 market-state	62	31	7	4.8
32 privatisation	56	36	8	4.6
33 inflation-unemployment	69	24	7	4.7
34 foreign investments	41	46	13	4.3
35 income taxation	79	16	5	4.1
36 immigration	49	45	5	3.7
37 women at work	43	52	5	4.2
38 abortion	23	72	5	4.1
39 churches, schools	16	81	3	4.1
40 urban-rural	50	42	9	4.6
41 authority-autonomy	22	74	4	4.1
42 environment	69	7	24	4.3
43 censorship	34	62	4	4.0
44 former communists	27	69	4	3.5
45 foreign policy	28	68	4	4.3
46 state-free market	38	40	22	
47 individualism-tradition	24	75	2	
48 national-European	28	65	7	
49 clerical-secular	15	82	3	
50 left-right	16	82	2	
51 sympathy	21	6	72	

Notes:
NOISE: random noise, percentage of variance unexplained by VAR4, VAR22 and the VAR4*VAR22 interaction term.
CRYST: Image crystallisation, percentage of variance explained by VAR22.
ASYMM: Systematic asymmetries of judgements, percentage of variance explained by the VAR4*VAR22 interaction term.
Issue salience: the mean of the responses to the question "How important is this topic for your party?" (5=very important, 1=not really important). The question was not asked about VAR46 to VAR51.

In calculating the above figures the survey data were weighted as described in note 7.

Table 1.D: Decomposing the variance of judgements about party positions and the mean salience of the issues

Poland

Variable: No.	Content domain	NOISE	CRYST	ASYMM	Issue salience
30	social security	40	54	6	4.4
31	market-state	39	53	8	4.5
32	privatisation	45	49	6	4.6
33	inflation-unemployment	37	58	5	4.6
34	foreign investments	36	58	6	3.9
35	income taxation	45	47	8	4.4
36	immigration	54	39	8	3.0
37	women at work	59	34	7	3.7
38	abortion	25	72	3	3.7
39	churches, schools	20	77	3	3.7
40	urban-rural	35	60	5	3.8
41	authority-autonomy	39	55	7	4.0
42	environment	75	9	16	4.1
43	censorship	39	55	6	3.5
44	former communists	19	78	3	3.4
45	(not asked)				
46	state-free market	38	56	6	
47	individualism-tradition	32	63	5	
48	national-European	30	66	4	
49	clerical-secular	24	73	4	
50	left-right	32	62	6	
51	sympathy	29	5	66	

Notes:
NOISE: random noise, percentage of variance unexplained by VAR4, VAR22 and the VAR4*VAR22 interaction term.
CRYST: Image crystallisation, percentage of variance explained by VAR22.
ASYMM: Systematic asymmetries of judgements, percentage of variance explained by the VAR4*VAR22 interaction term.
Issue salience: the mean of the responses to the question "How important is this topic for your party?" (5=very important, 1=not really important). The question was not asked about VAR46 to VAR51.

In calculating the above figures the survey data were weighted as described in note 7.

Table 2: Pairwise correlations between random noise, image crystallisation and systematic asymmetries on the level of issues

Bulgaria (N=14)

	NOISE	CRYST	ASYMM
CRYST	-.97		
ASYMM	.36	-.56	
SALIENCE	.29	-.25	-.05

Czech Republic (N=16)

CRYST	-.99		
ASYMM	.77	-.87	
SALIENCE	.16	-.19	.24

Hungary (N=16)

CRYST	-.98		
ASYMM	.51	-.68	
SALIENCE	.49	-.50	.34

Poland (N=15)

CRYST	-1.00		
ASYMM	.90	-.93	
SALIENCE	.12	-.14	.19

Note: VAR46 to VAR51 and VAR53 were excluded from the computation of the correlations. On the construction of the variables see the notes to tables 1.A to 1.D.

Table 3: Calculating the overall level of image crystallisation, systematic asymmetries and random noise

Bulgaria

	DPC1	DPC2	DPC3	DPC10	TOTAL
weight:	0.23	0.19	0.31	0.27	
CRYST	64.93	50.30	25.65	4.01	33.35
ASYMM	5.41	4.81	27.25	4.61	11.78
NOISE	29.66	44.89	47.09	91.38	54.87

Czech Republic

	DPC1	DPC2	DPC4	TOTAL
weight:	0.57	0.15	0.28	
CRYST	83.82	32.63	44.41	64.95
ASYMM	2.83	26.57	10.23	8.54
NOISE	13.34	40.86	45.36	26.52

Hungary

	DPC1	DPC2	DPC3	DPC5	TOTAL
weight:	0.50	0.13	0.18	0.19	
CRYST	81.17	38.62	18.00	25.27	53.66
ASYMM	3.34	15.26	30.27	5.72	10.20
NOISE	15.49	46.13	51.73	69.13	36.16

Poland

	DPC1	DPC2	DPC4	TOTAL
weight:	0.36	0.44	0.20	
CRYST	77.64	72.04	41.47	68.10
ASYMM	2.75	6.65	8.50	5.60
NOISE	19.56	21.36	50.03	26.31

Notes:
The last column (heading: TOTAL) shows the final estimates of the overall amount of image crystallisation, systematic asymmetries and random noise on the national level.
DPC1, DPC2, etc. refer to the distance between the respondent's own ideal point (measured by the position that they attributed to their own party) and the position that they attribute to each party j on the first, second, etc. unrotated principal components of the xmean_{ijk} ratings (with missing values on the latter substituted by estimates as explained in the notes).
The weights of DPC1, DPC2 etc. were derived from a regression analysis as explained in section 2 of the main text.
CRYST, ASYMM and NOISE are the percentage values of image crystallisation, systematic asymmetries and random noise on PC1, PC2 first, second, etc. unrotated principal components of the xmean_{ijk} ratings (with missing values on the latter substituted by estimates as explained in the notes).

Table 4: The percentage values of random noise, image crystallisation, and systematic asymmetries in the mass and elite level data on five issue domains.

variable:	NOISE		CRYST		ASYMM	
survey:	elite	mass	elite	mass	elite	mass
Issue domain:						
			Czech Republic			
privatisation	27	39	69	57	4	3
market economy	29	45	65	43	6	11
church influence	22	41	75	57	3	2
former communists	38	55	53	40	9	5
nationalism	58	87	32	2	11	11
			Hungary			
	elite	mass	elite	mass	elite	mass
privatisation	62	88	31	9	7	3
market economy	38	83	40	5	22	11
church influence	16	64	81	35	3	2
former communists	27	83	69	14	4	4
nationalism	24	91	75	5	2	4
			Poland			
	elite	mass	elite	mass	elite	mass
privatisation	39	86	53	8	8	6
market economy	38	87	56	5	6	8
church influence	20	56	77	42	3	2
former communists	19	61	78	34	3	5
nationalism	32	86	63	5	5	9

Notes:
NOISE: random noise, percentage of variance unexplained by the party of the respondent, the identity of the rated party, and the interaction of the two independent variables.
CRYST: Image crystallisation, percentage of variance explained by the identity of the rated party.
ASYMM: Systematic asymmetries of judgements, percentage of variance explained by the interaction of the party of the respondent and the identity of the rated party.
The phrasing of the issue alternatives in the mass (M) and elite (E) surveys were as follows (on the question format see the main text):

Privatisation, (E): "According to some politicians the privatisation of the state owned companies and the selection of the new owners should be directed by the goals of economic efficiency and fast privatisation. According to other politicians, also the aspects of social and political justice must be taken into account even if this leads to a slow down of the privatisation process." (M): "Speed up the privatisation of state-owned companies" [pro or con]

Market economy, (E): "Please place each party on a scale where supporters of state intervention into the economy are on the one end, and supporters of free market economy on the other." (M): "Help the development of private enterprises and a free market economy in ... [COUNTRY]" [pro or con]

Churches, (E): "According to some politicians religion has to provide the moral guidelines for post-communist ... [COUNTRY]. Therefore, it is mandatory for the state to help promoting religious faith *[belief]*, and the

churches must have a significant saying on the content of public education. According to other politicians religion belongs to the private sphere and it is not the responsibility of the state to help promoting religious faith. Thus, churches should not exercise a significant influence on the curicula of state run schools." (M): "Increase the influence of religion and the Church(es)" [pro or con]

Former communists, (E): "According to some politicians the former upper and intermediate level leaders of the ... [ruling party of communist period], because of their past sins, must be excluded from political life and from the privatisation of state property by legal, administrative and political means. According to other politicians former communists must be guaranteed the same opportunities to exercise political and economic rights as anybody else. They think that any law, administrative or political rule that aims at excluding former communists from economic or political life is unjustifiable." (M): "Removing former communist party members from positions of influence" [pro or con]

Nationalism, (E): "Please place each party on a scale where supporters of the values of liberal individualism are on one end, and supporters of traditional ... [Polish, Czech, Hungarian] culture and national solidarity are located on the other end." (M): "Strengthen national feelings" [pro or con]

Table 5: Pairwise correlations between the size of the random noise, image crystallisation and systematic asymmetries components of elite and mass responses across five issues and three countries.

Czech Republic (N=5 issue domains)

	NOISEE	NOISEM	CRYSTE	CRYSTM	ASYMME
NOISEM	.98				
CRYSTE	-1.00	-.97			
CRYSTM	-.98	-.99	.97		
ASYMME	.94	.90	-.96	-.91	
ASYMMM	.64	.63	-.65	-.75	.67

Hungary (N=5 issue domains)

	NOISEE	NOISEM	CRYSTE	CRYSTM	ASYMME
NOISEM	-.12				
CRYSTE	-.94	.07			
CRYSTM	-.54	-.76	.58		
ASYMME	.29	.14	-.59	-.41	
ASYMMM	.99	-.16	-.97	-.52	.39

Poland (N=5 issue domains)

	NOISEE	NOISEM	CRYSTE	CRYSTM	ASYMME
NOISEM	.89				
CRYSTE	-1.00	-.90			
CRYSTM	-.94	-.98	.94		
ASYMME	.97	.95	-.98	-.95	
ASYMMM	.79	.59	-.77	-.75	.64

Pooled three country sample of issues (N=15)

	NOISEE	NOISEM	CRYSTE	CRYSTM	ASYMME
NOISEM	.36				
CRYSTE	-.97	-.37			
CRYSTM	-.55	-.96	.56		
ASYMME	.47	.28	-.68	-.37	
ASYMMM	.82	.34	-.80	-.57	.40

Notes:
NOISEE: random noise component (%) of the elite responses.
NOISEM: random noise component (%) of the mass responses.
CRYSTE: Image crystallisation component (%) of the elite responses.
CRYSTM: Image crystallisation component (%) of the mass responses.
ASYMME: Systematic asymmetries component (%) of the elite responses.
ASYMMM: Systematic asymmetries component (%) of the mass responses.