

Explaining Small Party Survival Using Multiple Methods

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Research Question:

What explains small party survival?

Small or niche parties:

- Do not follow the traditional class-based orientation of politics
- Transcend the traditional left-right classification
- Focus on a narrow set of policies
- Include green, radical right, and ethnoterritorial or regional parties

(Meguid 2005, 347-8)

Survival is simply whether a party exists. It is *not* tied to success. Survivability is based on the decisions parties make.

Green Party 
www.greenparty.org.uk

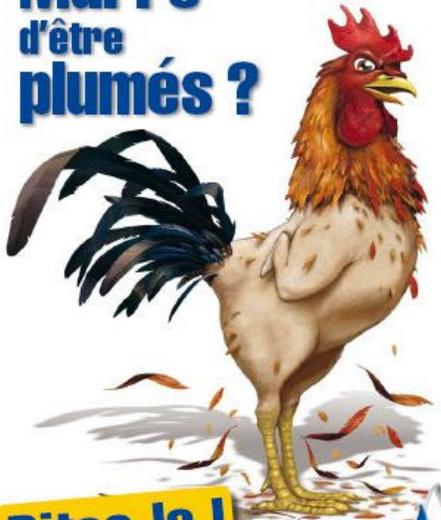
**ALL
YESTERDAY'S
PARTIES?**



**THIS TIME -
VOTE GREEN**

**IMMIGRATION, BAISSÉ DU POUVOIR D'ACHAT, MÉPRIS
DES FRANÇAIS, DÉLINQUANCE, DÉLOCALISATIONS...**

**Marre
d'être
plumés ?**



Dites-le ! **Votez** 
FRONT NATIONAL FN

Élections européennes des 9 et 10 mai 2009

Explanations in Current Literature

- Systemic: Rules and Institutions

(Duverger 1954; Rae 1967; Riker 1982; Cox 1997; Harmel and Robertson 1985; Farrell and Webb 2000; Norris 2002)

- Party: Catch-All, Cartels, and Cooptation

(Kirchheimer 1966; Katz and Mair 1995; Meguid 2005, 2008)

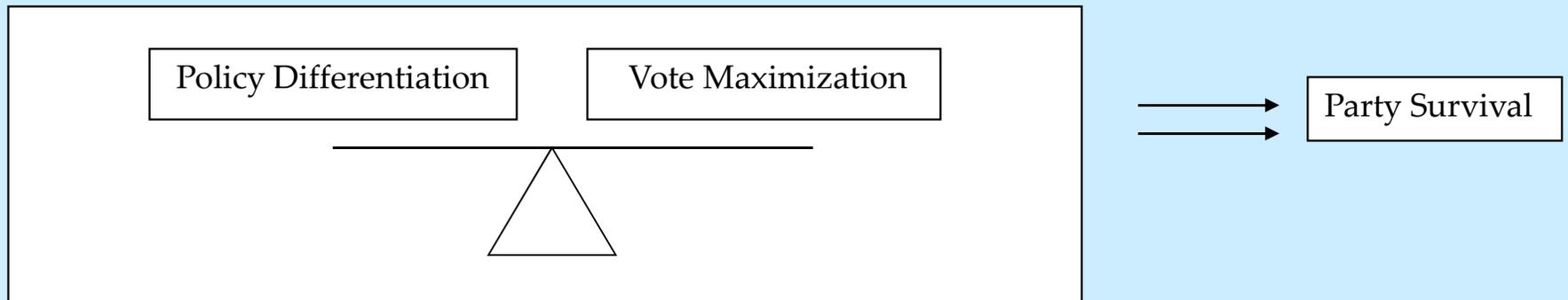
- Individual: Socialization, Partisanship, and Values

(Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus 1996; Campbell, et. al 1960; Lewis Beck, et. al 2008; Inglehart and Rabier 1986; Inglehart 1997; Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984; Kitschelt 1995)

Small Party Agency

- Dynamic, pro-active
- Based on parties' decisions and interactions with larger parties
- Changes over time and varies with political context

Small party survival is thus based on the parties' ability to balance their preferences for vote and seat maximization without sacrificing their policy preferences.



Multi-Level and Mixed Method Research Design

- Cross-national data comparing socialist and green party positions
- Comparative case studies of two green parties

Cross National Data

- Comparative Manifestos Project (Budge, et. al 2001; Klingemann, et. al 2006) from 1979-2003
- Expert survey data (Laver and Hunt 1992; Benoit and Laver 2006)

Saliency and position

Issues (green agenda): environment, decentralization, social justice, European integration, multiculturalism, anti-growth economy

Test overall balancing thesis by comparing policy positions of greens with those of largest mainstream left party.

Find that there is an optimal amount of policy differentiation between the two parties, which results in the greens' highest vote shares.

Case Studies

Most similar systems approach

- Two parties from same party family that have survived
- Plurality systems
- Green Party of England and Wales and French *Les Verts*

Goal is to determine *how* the parties balance their competing interests of policy and votes.

Look at electoral and communication strategies. Utilize both qualitative and quantitative data.

Conclusions

- CMP and expert survey data
- Case studies
- Benefit of mixed-method design for research on party behavior