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**THE 2016 SEIMAS ELECTION CHALLENGE
FOR THE PARTY SYSTEM AND POLITICAL SCIENTISTS:
HOW TO PREDICT AN EARTHQUAKE?**

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This article strives to begin an academic discussion about the impact of the 2016 parliamentary elections on the Lithuanian party system. On the basis of renewed measures of the electoral volatility and map of party competition, the following is argued: the observed party system stabilization around the 2012 elections was more an exception than a trend. In 2016, the party system returned to its usual track: despite the deceptively small success of new parties, an increase in total and especially external volatility (signifying a weak institutionalization of the party system) was observed. Moreover, an updated map of party competition space raises a challenge for previous research: it was accepted that traditional parties in Lithuania are quite successful regarding the integration of newcomers into the left-right competition, but the second dimension in these elections makes a very strong comeback. Resting on these preliminary findings, the need to further investigate electoral behavior in Lithuania is obvious. The second part of the article discusses what questions became relevant for the electoral research after the 2016 elections: the logic of electoral volatility at the level of voter, the (changing?) role of the electoral system, the impact of the electoral campaign, the divide between voters and politicians as well as other issues. In the context of these unknowns, the possibilities to forecast the election result are viewed critically. There is a parallel between seismologists and Lithuanian political scientists, as both an earthquake and earthquake elections are hard to predict. Lithuanian elections could be described as exhibiting a three-body: unstable interactions between the supply, demand

and the electoral system lead to an unpredictable result. But precisely because of this there is a need for continuing research.

**PROPENSITY TO VOTE (PTV) AS A NEW TOOL
FOR ANALYZING ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR:
EXPLORING ITS POTENTIAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

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When estimating the effects of party preference, it is common to use party choice as a dependent variable in discrete choice models. A new tool of measuring partisan preferences, the so-called propensity-to-vote (PTV) measure, however, is gaining ground in the studies of electoral behavior. The proponents of PTV claim that this measure provides a better estimate of party utilities than the party choice variable. Moreover, it provides many methodological advantages and research opportunities that are not available using discrete choice models. The most important advantage is the possibility to analyze factors determining the utility of a generic party using a stacked data matrix. The purpose of this article is to explore the advantages and methodological issues of this approach, applying a PTV measure for analyzing the data of the 2016 Lithuanian National Election Study. The first part of the article presents the theoretical and methodological grounds of the PTV measure. The second part reviews the variances and the degree of overlap of the PTVs of seven biggest Lithuanian parties in the 2016 parliamentary elections. In the third part, the factors of party preferences are analyzed by running separate regression models on the PTVs of the main parties. Finally, in the last part of the paper, the determinants of the preferences of a generic party are analyzed using the stacked matrix. The analysis reveals surprising differences between the determinants of the preferences of different parties in Lithuania. The models with sociodemographic variables (education, income, occupation, age, ethnicity, living place, religiosity and gender) and the attitude toward the Soviet past explain relatively well the propensities to vote for the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats and for the Polish Electoral Action – the League of Families. The preferences for the other five parties, however, are not accounted for by the sociodemographic variables. The models for all parties improve substantially when the evaluation of the economic situation, the perceived level of corruption, the attitudes on Russia and the evaluation of party leaders are added.

**A MANDATE OR A DICTATE?
LEGITIMACY OF THE EU FINANCIAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

UGNĖ BARTAŠIŪTĖ

The main aim of this article is to evaluate the legitimacy of the EU financial crisis management. The key question of this analysis is the following: Was the management of the EU financial crisis illegitimate in respect of the citizens? If yes, to what extent was it illegitimate? This analysis concentrates on one particular measure – financial assistance given to the EU member states. The states that are being analyzed in this thesis are the following: Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Greece. In order to answer the question, the democratic legitimacy evaluation theoretical model of Fritz W. Scharpf was chosen. Based on this model, two dimensions of political process – input and output – are analyzed. Two hypotheses were raised in the work based on the theoretical model. H(1) Financial assistance to EU member states during the crisis measure was illegitimate because the citizens of the EU did not have influence in the decision making process. H(2) Financial assistance to EU member states during the crisis measure was illegitimate because it did not bring positive results. Based on the analysis, hypotheses are tested and the main findings are presented. Based on the analysis of input legitimacy, hypothesis H(1) was confirmed and hypothesis H(2) was partially denied.

**PROMOTION OF UKRAINE'S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY
IN THE EU**

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The paper provides an overview of existing research on Ukraine's cultural diplomacy and sets the framework for further research. In other sections, the gathered practical insights about Ukraine's cultural activity abroad and in the EU can be applied to the development of a new approach to the promotion of national interests and the examination of their impact on the current state of regional cooperation. The main time period covered in this study is the time after 2014, when Ukraine signed the Association Agreement with the EU. It was found that the promotion of Ukrainian cultural products contributes to the deepening of the state's integration into Europe and to developing political, economic and civic relations between Ukraine and other countries of the region.