

COST IS0806 THE TRUE EUROPEAN VOTER
 1st European Conference on
 Comparative Electoral Research
The state of the art in comparative electoral research

**Electoral Research and
 Predictions in Bulgaria:
 Contextual and Methodological
 Challenges**

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 Bulgaria



Content

- Electoral research background in Bulgaria
 - History of sociology: Beginning; Development and spread; Current state of art
 - Electoral research and predictions: Main agencies; ASSA-M
- Structural and contextual challenges
 - Party positioning within three Transition Decades
 - Main parties' electoral trends
 - Elections '2011: the main results and consequences
- Tools and methodological challenges
 - The "controlled vote" '2011; the "organized chaos"; the "convenient third"
- Monitoring and analyses of Elections '2011:
 - The main findings and questions
 - The main methodological challenges

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**Electoral
 RESEARCH BACKGROUND
 in Bulgaria**

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**HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY
 in Bulgaria**

Beginning
 (20's and 30's of XX century)

Significant development and spread
 (1956-1992)

Current state of art
 (1992-2011)

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**HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY in Bulgaria
 Research background (1)**

1990-until now – gradual reduction; shrinkage of the academic network; politisation of sociology
 1968-1992 – active network of sociological institutes, scientific journals, Bulgarian sociological association, participation in ISA (International Sociological Association)
 1970 – The VII World Congress of Sociology of ISA, Varna
 1968 – Empirical Sociological Survey (ESS) of the city and the village
 1965 – Macro-theoretical concept of the sociological structure of society as a system
 1962 – ESS of the denomination of population
 1956 – breakthrough in the communist party-ideological interdiction

Beginning

30's of XX c. – political suppression of the sociology development; Ivan Hadzhiyski's three volumes "Optimistic theory of the Bulgarian people" – complex sociological and socio-psychological survey

20's of XX c. – initial development of sociology as a modern science; beginning of institutionalisation – establishment of 15 scientific associations: sociological, socio-psychological, socio-economic; first empirical surveys; beginning of authors' publications, textbooks, sociological monographs

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**HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY in Bulgaria
 Research background (2)**

Significant development and spread

1968-1992 – active network of academic, university and research sociological institutes, scientific journals, active regional sociological organizations, participation of Bulgarian sociologists in the governing bodies of several RC of ISA, high public prestige and status at national level; Bulgarian SA, participation in ISA

1970 – The VII World Congress of Sociology of ISA, Varna – the first and so far the only congress of ISA in East-European state; 3000 participants from all countries with developed sociology (except from the Republic of South Africa)

1968 – Empirical Sociological Survey (ESS) of the city and the village (second extensive survey; sample – 18 996 respondents; the theoretical and the methodological program are based on the concept of the sociological system)

1965 – Original macro-theoretical concept of the sociological structure of the society as a system (Stoyan Mihaylov)

1962 – ESS of the denomination of population (first extensive empirical survey; sample – 42 664 respondents; original theoretical program and methods)

1956 – Science breakthrough in the communist party-ideological interdiction: the sociology is a modern science for the society and therefore has to develop; division from the doctrine of the so called "historical materialism" (Zhivko Oshavkov)

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HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY in Bulgaria

Research background (3)

Current state of art

1990-until now – gradual reduction of the empirical sociology to the level of electoral surveys and POPs; foundation and high activity of private research agencies (marketing, electoral, POP); extreme politization of the sociology and its public activity; shrinkage of the research institutes network – closure of the specialized institutes for youth, trade-union and regional problems; increase of the university sociological departments – currently in 5 Bulgarian universities...

Significant development and spread

1968-1992 – active network of sociological institutes, professional magazines, sociological associations, participation in ISA

1970 – The VII World Congress of Sociology of ISA, Varna

1968 – Empirical Sociological Survey (ESS) of the city and the village

1965 – Macro-theoretical concept of the sociological structure of the society as a system

1962 – ESS of the denomination of population

1956 – Breakthrough in the communist party-ideological interdiction

Beginning

30's of XX c. – political suppression; Ivan Hadzhiyski

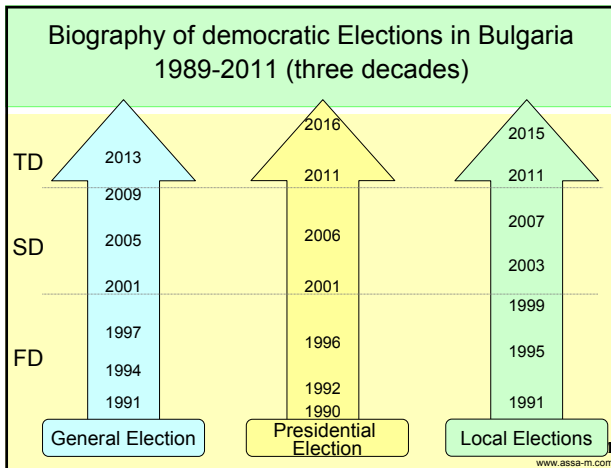
20's of XX c. – initiative development as a modern science; beginning of institutionalization, empirical surveys; sociological monographs

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BIOGRAPHY

of electoral research and predictions in democratic Bulgaria 1989-2011

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Conduction of National Election Studies (NES) in Bulgaria

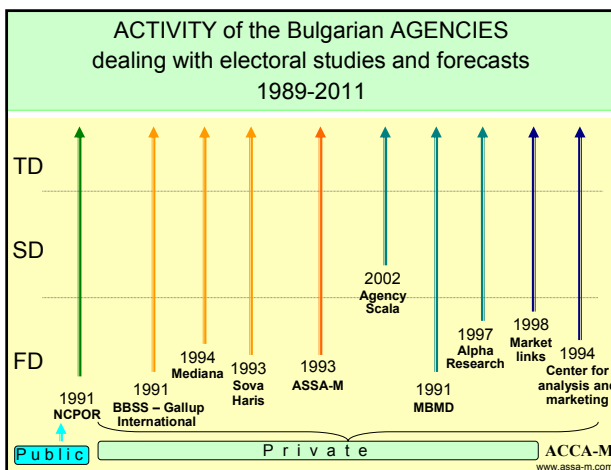
Since 1990 different kind of research organizations conduct surveys in Bulgaria:

- Academic Institute of Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS);
- Public National Centre for Public Opinion Research (NCPOR);
- Private sociological agencies which are complying with the international standards in research, most of them are members of ESOMAR.

National Election Studies (NES) are conducted primarily by NCPOR and nine private sociological agencies. Some of them are publishing a monthly rating of the political parties and leaders. All of them work actively and publish their predictions before elections.

The Institute of Sociology at BAS, as well as universities and research centers at universities conduct electoral studies very rarely.

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Methodological specification

- National and regional stochastic and representative sociological samples for the potential voters (18+)
- Sample size – 1000-1400 respondents
- Registration methods – standardised interview, face-to-face, in respondents' house
- Qualitative methods: focus groups, in-depth interviews, personal profiles, desk research, media monitoring
- The biggest national media present the actual ratings of the political parties and their leaders every month
- The leading sociologists from the various research agencies comment in the media the actual positioning of the political parties and leaders as well as the dynamics of the potential and the pre-electoral situation
- During the official electoral campaign media present comparative ratings of all leading agencies
- Such publicity of the ratings, analyses and predictions of the agencies is traditional in Bulgaria in the last two decades

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Challenges of methodological preciseness of research and predictions: questions and answers

- Who do we examine? This is a problem with growing number of unknowns.
- Who do we conduct electoral predictions for? For the existing political segmentation within the real civil society or for an artificial electoral result?
- Do we need a precise research methodology for accurate predictions or we need something else in addition?

My formula for an accurate prediction:

- Precise research methods for better representativeness and accuracy of the prediction;
- Plus data weighting, because of misrepresentation of the real and planned sample;
- Plus rating correction through an expert evaluation of the electoral social context unconventionality, as well as of the "technical" factors for the final electoral result!

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Structural and CONTEXTUAL

Challenges

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PARTY POSITION within three

Transition Decades (TD)

1990-2000 – First TD

2000-2010 – Second TD

2010-...(2020?) – Third TD

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The main PARTIES in Bulgaria

Who is who? (1)

Abbreviations:

- BSP** – Bulgarian Socialist Party; KB – Coalition for Bulgaria (left)
- CB (Coalition for Bulgaria)** – BSP plus average 10 Left other parties
- CEDB** – Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria
- DSB** – Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria
- UDF (UDF)** – United Democratic Forces (Union of the Democratic Forces)
- NMSS (NMSP)** – National Movement Simeon the Second (National Movement for Stability and Prosperity)
- MRF** – Movement for Rights and Freedoms
- Ataka** (meaning: Attack)
- NFSB** – National Front for Salvation of Bulgaria
- BMPO** (only abbreviation)

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The main PARTIES in Bulgaria

Who is who? (2)

- **BSP** – member of the Socialist International; member of S&D within the European Parliament; BSP is the successor of the Bulgarian Communist Party (the party has changed its name and policy line in 1990); in practice BSP is a social-democratic party with typical centre-left rhetoric and political behavior
- **CEDB** – a new political party, formed in support of one powerful populist leader – Boyko Borissov, after his constant five-year launching in the Bulgarian political life. CEDB was found in 2006, after the fade of the former significant flash-party NMSS. After the CEDB entrance into political life the party is trying to fill up the right political spectrum. CEDB is a member of the European People's Party (EPP). The party is striving for total domination in the country governance and has a large media influence. CEDB can be characterised as a "short-term pragmatic party of catching the power institutions".
- **UDF and DSB** – the so called "democratic alternative" of the former communist party; with total domination in the country governance during 1997-2001, it lost the General and the Presidential election in 2001 and afterwards broke in 4 small parties (two of them are in unstable coalition in the National Assembly – the Blue Coalition now)

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The main PARTIES in Bulgaria

Who is who? (3)

- **MRF** – the ethnic party of the Bulgarian-turks (about 7% of the population, concentrated in 7 of the 28 regions of the country); in very close relations with the government of the neighbor-state Turkey; found in 1990 – in contradiction with the Bulgarian Constitution; MRF participated in the government in 2 consecutive mandates – 2001-2005 and 2005-2009; with large media, regional and business influence; with many experienced and educated political leaders: the "spoilt child" of BSP – from 1990 to 2009
- **Ataka** – nationalistic party with extreme anti-turkish and anti-roma rhetoric and several provocative public actions; found in 2005; in coalition with the ruling party CEDB – 2009-2013; since 2011 Ataka is in a situation of melting electoral crisis and of disintegrating leader group
- There are only **5-6 other small** and active parties – each of them has a minimal electoral share, with less than 1%; a way under the 4% boundary for entering the National Assembly; those small parties are hardly accepted by the bigger ones as coalition partners

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Methodology: What are the party positioning axes?
Positions of the main political parties.

- Axes choice:** dimensions of "left-right" and "nationalism-multiculturalism" – theoretical and practical arguments; overarching the main political dimensions at present in Bulgaria, and probably in Europe
- Positioning is based on the **self-labeling** by the parties and their partisans and supporters, and on the basis of the character of their **actual political activity**, actual policy profiles
- Identifying the gaps** (vacuum) within the party structure: when there are massive ideological civil communities that do not recognise a political party, adequate to their interests and needs, and therefore, do not have "their" political representative in politic and government
- Emergence of **civil need for populist** parties and willingness to accept their power upsurge – citizen base for the rise of a new "hope-seller" party in an extremely demagogic form

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Party position – the supply side

Axes choice

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Three decades (1990-2000-2010-2020) of system transition in Bulgaria, in parallel with Globalization in Europe

The situation in Bulgaria is an Early Warning pattern for many countries in the EU. There is methodological challenge for a more precise registration of party-political attitudes, civil segmentation in democratic and anti-democratic groups and communities, reporting in the estimates of the "technical" factors to manipulate the election results.

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The supply side in 90's (1990-2001)
First Transition Decade (FTD)

Party positioning
партийно позициониране

Two-party and two-pole (left-right) party system

Nationalistic electoral GAP

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The supply side in Second TD '2001-2009

Left electoral GAP

Left electoral GAP

First populist phenomena ("flash" party)

Semi-Right electoral GAP

What has happened?

- Total party-system transformation
- Rise and domination of populist parties
- Left and Right GAPS

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The supply side in Third TD '2009-2011-...?

Left electoral GAP

Left electoral GAP

Right electoral GAP

Second populist dominator: one leader – one party – brutal domination

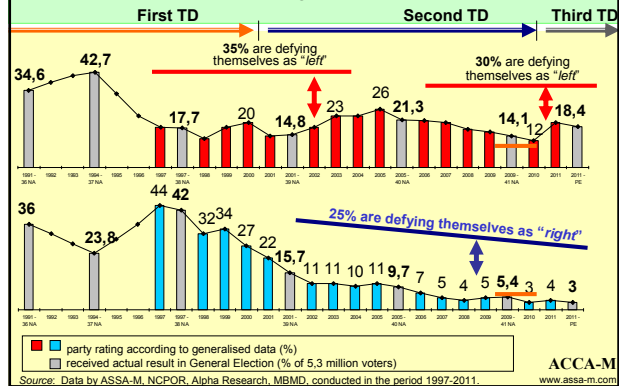
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The electoral trends of the main parties

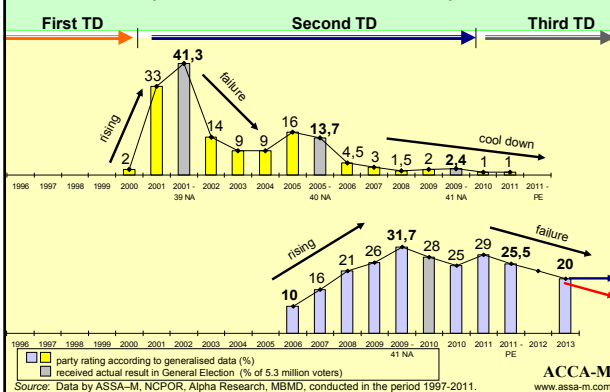
- The sunset of the “democratic-blue” party of the 90’s, possessed an absolute state power in the period of 1997-2001
- The melt down of BSP – there is a risk for BSP to follow the fate of the disintegrated and marginalised right parties after 2001
- The first populist flash-party NMSS: for 10 years it managed to fall through from over than 2 mil voters to under than 100 000 voters
- The second populist party – CEDB: is trying to occupy the right electoral spectrum and therefore to transform itself into a real right party

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Trend of the two main “democratic” parties: left–BSP and right–UDF/UDF/DSB



Trend of the two main “populist” parties: “tsar-party” – NMSS and “police-party” – CEDB



Elections ‘2011:

main RESULTS
and CONSEQUENCES

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ELECTIONS ‘2011: character and context

- **Both Presidential and Local Elections** – an unique election situation, not only because of the combination of two types of public campaigning, but also because of the extremely complicated organisation of the election process and the public control
- In the middle of the **3rd year in power** (2009-2013) of the new “populist” party CEDB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria) – this is a critical period for the government, for the CEDB’ dominated National Assembly, for the “charismatic” leader Boyko Borissov, and for the second most influential person in CEDB – Tsvetan Tsvetanov
- In the beginning of the **second wave of the global recession** and the extremely sharp **political crises in the EU**
- In the **third wave of excessive impoverishment** of the lower class, as well as rising insecurity and impoverishment of the middle class – reverse into **critically high unemployment rate** in 2/3 of the country
- Rising **feeling of confusion and helplessness among the citizens**, feeling of fear from the politicians and the state bureaucracy, of predestination from the grey economy and the impunity of the criminal structures.

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Who won and who grasped the elections?

(on the base of 33 biggest towns –
57% of voters by official electoral register
and probably over 65% of real voters in the country)

	N of towns	
	Based on registered vote (incl. controlled vote)	Based on real civil vote (minus controlled vote)
CEDB /Member of EPP/	17 / 41,1%	12 / 32,8%
BSP /Member of S&D/	8 / 8,3%	11 / 10,5%
Traditional right-wing parties	7 / 6,3%	9 / 12,4%
MRF /Member of ALDE/	1 / 0,9%	1 / 0,9%

Towns include: district towns,
plus Kazanlak, Asenovgrad, Dimitrograd
Petrich, Karlovo, Gorna Oriahovica

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Elections '2011: GENERAL RESULT (1)

- ❖ The elections were won by the already ruling political party CEDB but only with minimal lead. There is a substantial number of complaints to the court for recounting of the ballot-papers and for cassation of the elections in various municipalities. There is also an appeal to the court of cassation of the Presidential Election. Such an appeal occurs for the first time in the 22 years of democracy in Bulgaria.
- ❖ In their essence, those elections have a "Third Round" – we are expecting the decisions of the court for replacement of the electoral reports and/or for cassation of the election in various municipalities. It is possible those decisions could change the official results in many Bulgarian towns and municipalities.
- ❖ There were manipulations of the democratic electoral procedures in extremely high degree. The extent of the manipulations is so large and common that raises the question: Were the elections democratic at all?
- ❖ For the first time in 22 years, the opposition does not accept the election results and requires cassation of the Presidential Election from the court and new election to be conducted.

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Elections '2011: GENERAL RESULT (2)

- ❖ The public behavior of the Government becomes more and more cynical. This is also a violation of democracy and alienation from the European standards for public political behavior.
- ❖ There are two clear examples for that: (1) the actual Minister of the Interior and police (Tsvetan Tsvetanov) was the head of the pre-election office of CEDB – this is more than a "conflict of interests". This is a practical confession, that the police is used as a direct instrument for securing the electoral victory of the political party in power and for opposition repression; (2) The Prime-minister Borissov and the vice-prime-minister Tsvetanov are tenaciously demonstrating via media some excellent personal relations with several candidates for mayors nominated by CEDB which are officially convicted by the court as criminals (they have sentences for misuses during their mandates as mayors) – e.g. Yordan Lechkov in Sliven and Georgi Slavov in Yambol.
- ❖ This type of organization and conduction of the Elections '2011 in Bulgaria earned the official support of the European right party (EPP), the EU leaders and the leaders of several big European countries – Merkel, Berlusconi, Sarkozy, Brown, Barroso, 4 EU commissioners. This fact raises several questions with more general political character. Is that threat in front of the democracy in Bulgaria in front of the democracy in whole Europe? Are those political processes in Bulgaria too brilliantly lit up or in reality this is a simultaneous process in Europe?

There was a real Summit EU meeting in the support of Boyko Borissov-CEDB and their brutal election victory.

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Elections '2011: GENERAL RESULT (3)

- ❖ By its essence, after 20 years of democratic development in Bulgaria we are facing a change towards new one-man and one-party regime dressed in democratic cover. Moreover, this regime is publicly using many criminal structures. This is especially unacceptable form of extreme right policy.
- ❖ The realities after the 2011 Elections are giving many grounds to talk about an attempt for the **establishment of new dictatorship** in Bulgaria: with extreme right economic and social policy, leading to extreme forms of social polarization and to even more public merger between the official authorities (both state and local) and the organized crime structures (at local and sub-national level).
- ❖ This picture of elections' reality is not exaggerated. The democratic character of Elections '2011 was extremely compromised. E.g. the spread of so-called "controlled vote" (by Government and the ruling party CEDB) is in the range of 15% from the officially registered vote.
This elections showed that the real democracy in Bulgaria is in danger. And not only under the pressure of Government and Police but put together with public activities of criminal structures.

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Rating PRE-DISLOCATION

- Strategy and relevant instruments of the ruling and opposition parties
- Media context and instillation of the electoral choice and behavior
- "Technical" way for artificial increase in the percentage of "our" candidate and for decrease in the percentage of the "opponent"
- The role of the "convenient third" candidate, which in fact, is supporting the "first" and is trying to reduce artificially the result of the "second" candidate

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How CEDB won Elections '2011?

- **Enlarging core of the ruling party CEDB** – this is normal for a political party in power. Moreover, in a situation where CEDB and it's leaders dispose a formidable institutional, financial, HR and media power.
- **Periphery destabilization**, which was predicted 100% accurately at the elections in 2005-2009. Now, for the first time there was a risk 2/3 of the declared periphery to refuse to vote for CEDB.
- Sharp **decline of the personal rating** of the CEDB leader and Prime Minister Boyko Borissov – the positive and the negative sides of his rating had leveled. He is no longer the "indisputable charismatic" leader.
- CEDB are in the middle of their **third year in power** (2009-2013). Usually this is a problematic period for the rating of each governing party, especially considering the current conditions of European and Global recession.
 - ❖ Those were the first risky elections for CEDB!!!
 - ❖ The possibility of failure for CEDB had to be averted.
 - ❖ They used one of their available instruments – to act based on fear and violence.

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How BSP lost the Elections '2011?

- There were several cases with 2-3-4 parallel of BSP candidates – which managed to divide and demotivate the partisans core and periphery groups of the socialist party
- Through the "convenient third" candidate who is stating that is going to contend against the domination of the "first-CEDB" candidate but actually is destabilising the core, depriving part of the periphery and the media attention from the "oppositional second" candidate. Thus the "third" candidate is suppressing and "eating" from the potential electorate of the "oppositional second".
- There are two clear examples for such manipulation (which are given at the end of the presentation):
 - From the Presidential Election: the "convenient third" (Kuneva) can be characterised as right, accepted by EU, ex-minister of "the European matters", member of the European Parliament and ex-euro-commissioner (has a symmetric profile as the oppositional left candidate Kalfin)
 - From the local elections in one of the regional centers in the country – Yambol: the "convenient third" candidate was also a left candidate, who was fighting artificially against the "powerful first" CEDB candidate
- "The spiral of silence" in all leading national media
- System of "technical factors" and "controlled vote" – a "double effect" which simultaneously increases the CEDB percentage and decreases those of BSP.

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Media context

TOTAL MEDIA CULTIVATION of the public awareness – 3 key suggestions about the Presidential Election:

- (1) The CEDB candidate will win the election with a significant superiority
 - Possible electoral victory for Plevneliev (CEDB) **at the 1st round** of the Election
- (2) **The 2nd candidate is Meglena Kuneva** (without a party)
 - If there is a 2nd round of the election, she will participate in it, but she will lose it with a large difference from Plevneliev (CEDB)
- (3) **The 3rd is the BSP candidate – Ivaylo Kalfin** (left – BSP)
 - Kalfin is far behind Meglena Kuneva, without any chance to participate in the 2nd round of the election. However, if there is a 2nd round and Kalfin participates in it, he will **lose it with a greater difference** than Meglena Kuneva.

There was Polarized DOSAGE of the media presentation:

- (1) **Excessive** speaking about **Meglena Kuneva**
- (2) **Self-confidently** speaking about the **CEDB candidate**
- (3) **"Spiral of the silence"** for the **BSP candidate**

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IMPLIED AND ACTUAL electoral result

The "left" candidate Kalfin (BSP) was **squeezed from two sides** – by a candidate of a "right" party (CEDB) and by a "civil right" candidate (M. Kuneva)

Implied predictions
8 months before the 1st round

First round prediction

Stubborn awareness –
up to October 15th,
a week before 1st round

Second round prediction

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PROMPTED AND ACTUAL electoral result (2)

Implied

First round prediction

Actual result

Second round prediction

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Tools and METHODOLOGICAL Challenges

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"CONTROLLED vote" '2011

➢ **Beginning and biography:** who started, who "creatively" developed the methodology, when the range of the "controlled vote" had broadened?

The **PHENOMENON of the Elections '2011:** for the first time there is a such complex system within very wide social range with such great change of the final election result

The **Methodological Challenges:** not only as new variables/indicators and filters for more reliable answers, but also as a need of expert assessment of the ratings in order to make an accurate prediction

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"Controlled vote": Beginning and biography (1)

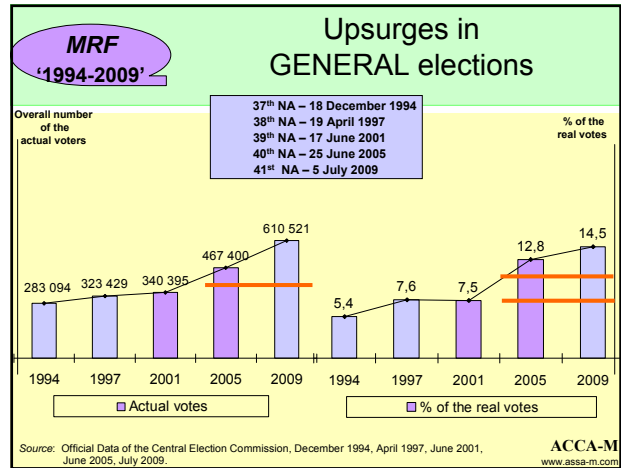
- The phenomenon of "controlled vote" was not widespread in Bulgaria until 2005
- Before that time only the "Turkish" party MRF (Movement for Rights and Freedoms) used a mass technique in order to control their "own" electorate – compact living communities of Bulgarian-Turks (an average of 300 000 voters in Bulgaria, plus more than 200 000 voters in Turkey – emigrants from Bulgaria)
- MRF started to enlarge their territory of "controlled vote" after 2001 (after 2001 MRF was involved in the Government). This enlargement was among the Bulgarian-Mohammedans (more than 150 000 voters), the Bulgarian-Islamic Roma/Gypsies (40% of all 300 000 voters) and the Bulgarian orthodox in poverty which are highly economically dependant and usually live in small villages and towns

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“Controlled vote”: Beginning and biography (2)

- At the 2005 General Election MRF has increased its received votes with 50% while at the 2009 General Election – with 100%. There is no other explanation for such increase except a better organized, mass spread and more efficient system for “controlled vote”
- Such a move in the party rating cannot be predicted using the indicators in a pre-election research. Those “technical” factors which contributed to the rather unexpected rise of the vote were taken into account in our predictions (through the usage of a predictive expert assessment) in order to determine the final electoral rating
- This electoral “activity” of the MRF can be described as the “cancer disease” of the Bulgarian democracy

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“Controlled vote”: Beginning and biography (3)

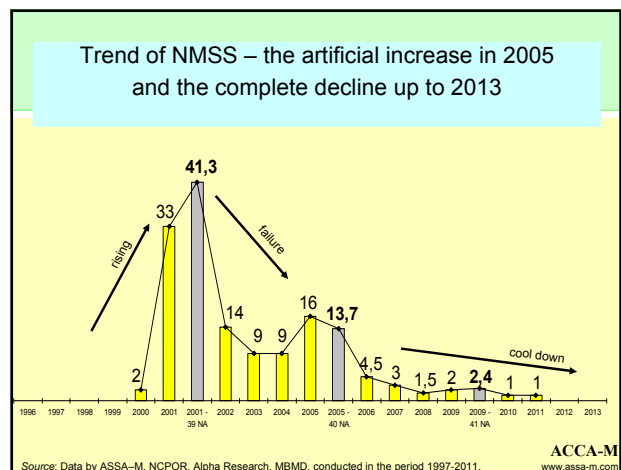
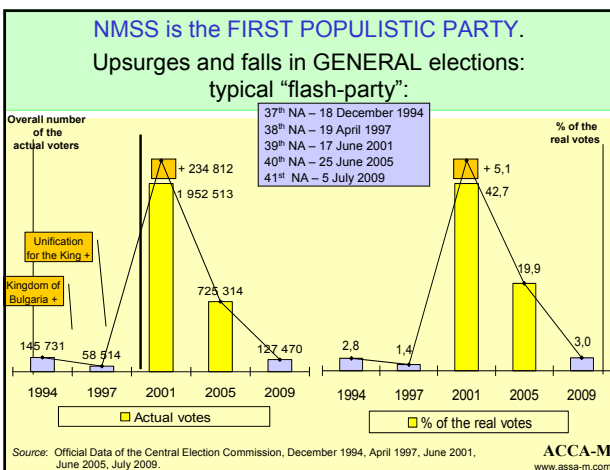
- The phenomenon of “controlled vote” exploded as electoral tool of many other political parties in Bulgaria at 2005 General election. By that time the ruling center-right party, the so called “Tsar-party” – **National Movement Simeon II (NMSS)** managed to set up a well-organized system in order to manipulate (buy) many votes. This strong system can be a logical explanation for the (unexpected) rise of the NMSS’ votes in 2005 General Election – from predicted result of 7% to achieved result of 14%.
- In 2007 at Local Elections there was an attempt of new “business” parties and coalitions to become part of the governing body in their municipalities. These “business” parties and coalitions were registered just before the elections. This was an attempt of doubtful business structures (predominantly part of the grey economy and some of them part of the organized crime) to **penetrate directly into the local government** (through their “own” mayor or significant group in the local Municipal Council). There were many examples of “controlled vote” which can be put in a textbook – examples of brutality and public cynicism.
- But in many municipalities in 2007 those brutal efforts for capturing the local authorities were not successful. At that time the legal political parties have managed to oppose to those unfair mechanisms. They were supported by the leading televisions and other media, as well as by the high police activity. In that case the democracy won.

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“Controlled vote”: Beginning and biography (4)

- During 2009 General Election the “controlled vote” acquired an **epidemic character**. All populist and business parties relied mainly on this method in order to enter the National Assembly (Parliament).
- At this election the leading party was Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria, CEDB (received 1 670 000 votes, from which 250 000 was through a “controlled vote” according EA). Thus, they have managed to receive 116 seats in the Parliament (from 240), instead of the probable 95 seats!!!
- Another political party which received more than expected votes in this election was the MRF (received 610 000 votes, including about 200 000 which cannot be explained logically).

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“CONTROLLED vote”: The Phenomenon of the Elections ‘2011

- ❖ As an **entire system**
- ❖ With **extremely high practical effect**
- ❖ In **brutal public forms**
- ❖ With spread **demoralizing impact** in the entire society and public affairs

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“Controlled vote”: an entire system with extremely high effect (1)

- In 2011, the process of **criminalization of the elections has reached its peak**. According to the expert assessments the controlled and criminalized vote is about 15% from all votes.
- This additional and “technical” vote was not evenly distributed among the political parties or among the various regions in the country. The “controlled vote” was **concentrated in particular municipalities** where it reached up to 25% of the votes.
- Like in 2009 the “leader” of this method was the already ruling political party CEDB. It was supported by several **business coalitions**, including criminal structures. The MRF gave up their leading place in the “controlled vote” championship. The other small players in the electoral process did not played a major role in the “controlled” vote process.
- They have played a **supporting role for the leading party** CEDB. In the first round of 2011 elections the small parties were used to disperse the vote of the citizens and to reduce the expected percentage of the major opposition parties. In the second round those small parties have managed to guarantee the CEDB victory through their support.

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“Controlled vote”: an entire system with extremely high effect (2)

- ❖ Organized chaos: aiming at “double effect” - artificial increase of the percentage for the ruling party along with decrease of the opposition percentage
- through changes in the Electoral code and the electoral procedures;
- through opposition discrimination by the various Municipality Electoral Commissions (MEC);
- through scandalous poor organization of election application submission after First Round in Sofia;
 - (lack of sanctions for MP’s and ministers from CEDB after their direct interventions in CEC, MEC and in the election sections; lack of sanctions for replacing the official electoral reports and “producing” invalid ballot-papers; illegal extension of the electoral day; etc.)
- ❖ Blocking of the electoral sections with threatening intercessors;
- ❖ Damaging of standard ballot-papers and their transformation into invalid ballot-papers;
- ❖ Change of original electoral reports with fake ones;
- ❖ Unpunished public buying of votes – police refusal to react after signals by the citizens or the oppositional political parties;
- ❖ Buying of new types of voters – e.g. young votes;
- ❖ Extraordinary activity by criminal local structures and their clear toleration by the police.

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Example of “organized chaos”: a big difference between the number of voters (aged 18+) according to the NSI (National Statistical Institute) and the CEC (Central Election Commission) – they are the two fundamental institutions of the Government

	Number of voters (aged 18+)	
National Statistical Institute (NSI); CENSUS, February 2011	6 162 747	} Difference of about 770 000 voters
Central Election Commission (CEC) – decision for admission of the electoral roll (Decision № 1458-PVR Sofia, 01.11.2011)	6 933 615	
GRAO (October 20 th , 2011): a national institution for citizen registration which is instantly updating after every status change of a Bulgarian citizen	6 933 748	

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PARADOX of the state counting of the population and the potential voters: *the population is decreasing while the potential voters are increasing*

The paradox of Official Electoral List	Number of voters (aged 18+)	Population number (aged 18+)
Presidential Election – 2011	6 933 615	6 162 747
Presidential Election – 2006	6 477 126	6 352 165
Presidential Election – 2001	6 889 638	6 389 689
Presidential Election – 1996	6 837 737	6 541 199
Presidential Election – 1992	6 817 914	6 496 874

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The “convenient third” and the “double effect” for vote manipulations

➢ A strategy which was implemented by CEDB at the Presidential Election as well as at many places at the Local Elections

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Case 1: Presidential election
Ivaylo KALFIN (BSP-candidate):
*He was about to win!
How to prevent this?*

Prediction based on electoral research

Risk of turning the first round, and of loss in the second.
Risk of repeating the 2001 surprise scenario. In 2001 Petar Stoyanov led with 10% according to the predictions, but in the Election was second with 1% loss.

CEDB needed to avoid such scenario

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Case 1:
Ivaylo KALFIN (BSP):
*He was about to win!
How to prevent this?*

Practical result of the election

The risk is avoided.

Request for cassation of the Presidential Election from the Constitutional Court.
This request will not be satisfied.

The win is a fact – the risk was overcome

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Case 1:
Ivaylo KALFIN (BSP):
*He was about to win!
How to prevent this?*

Methodological challenges: how to reduce the account of the “double effect” from the “controlled vote”?

- the “double effect” sharply increases the distance between the first and the second
- the “double effect” averts the risk for election loss by the ruling party when the predicted distance between the candidates is too small – like the case of 2001 Presidential Election
- the “double effect” cannot be realized completely in the second round of the Presidential Election (because the voting procedure is much more simplified and moreover, because the system of “organized chaos” cannot be applied) – in this case the distance between the first and the second is again manipulated but only in terms of one component of the “double effect”

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The “convenient third” at the Presidential Election 2011

First round – 23 October 2011

Predicted versus nominal results for the core and periphery

Recalculated result taking into account the “double effect”

Legend: Plevneliev/CEDB (blue), Kalfin/BSP (orange), Kuneva/no party (yellow)

Source: NRS, ASSA-M, September and October 2011; website of CEC.

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Case 2: Local elections – The municipality of Yambol

- The Yambol case is representative because it shows a fight between two polarized candidates
- “The First”: **Georgi Slavov** (CEDB) – with preceding mandate as a mayor of Yambol (2007-2011); during his mandate there is a total retrogression of the city, economic decline, emigration of the young and educated people, large scale poverty and desperation, there is no manifesto/program for the next mandate, silent public pre-election campaign, extremely corrupted and compromised mayor – with 7 running lawsuits against him, with 3 sentences of first judge-instance
- “The oppositional second”: **Marieta Sivkova** (BSP) – a successful deputy mayor of adjoining flourishing municipality; proved to be competent and non-corrupted through 16 years work; with open media and citizen pre-election campaign, with detailed four-year manifesto/program, supported by the local media, intellectuals and professional organisations
- “The convenient third”: an ex socialist party fellow; with a quiet and underhand organisation, spreading rumors against the official BSP candidate (M. Sivkova), using the “controlled vote” method

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PARTY rating: voting for party members of local parliament Yambol, 23 October 2011

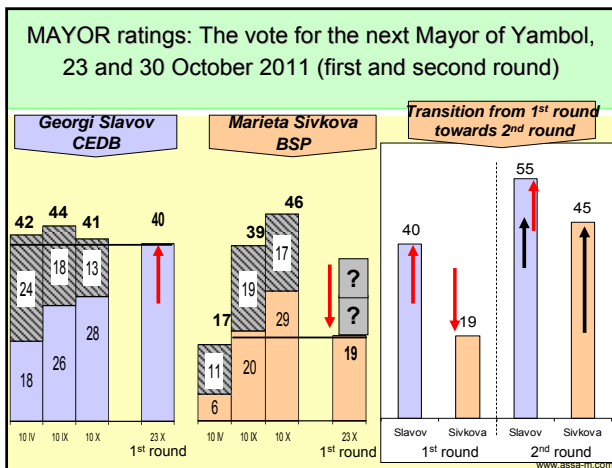
CEDB BSP Coalition for Yambol

Contra-BSP Labeled as “another left”: the “convenient third”

Hidden vote

Source: NRS, ASSA-M, September and October, CES.

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Monitoring and Analyses of Elections '2011:

main FINDINGS and QUESTIONS

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Methodological challenges: how to detach the core from the closer and the more distant periphery? How to track their pulsations?

As precise as possible.

- profile for:
 - core detachment (steady voters) from the closer and the more distant periphery (unsteady voters with high and low probability rate)
- filters assessing the honesty about: political party identification, decision for voting, choice of candidate.
- ASSA-M filters:
 - degree of conformism-nonconformism;
 - observation: degree of answer spontaneity;
 - evaluation of the interviewer' observations: degree of trust-worthiness.

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We are examining the pre-electoral attitudes and are making our predictions on that base under the conditions of more and more "floating" political party structure and inexplicit party positioning!!!

- How to react in terms of instruments?
- How to increase the accuracy of the filters for "hidden" vote or for "conformist declared and artificially increased" vote?
- How to distinguish between the two segments of declared periphery: with high or low probability for actual voting?
- How to predict the influence of the "privileged" media performance and the "technical" factors of "controlled vote"?

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Methodological examination of the predictions

There is an **INCREASING INSTABILITY** of the electoral groups!!
How the indicators have to be upgraded??

- Destabilization of the old political parties' cores (both left and right)
 - BSP-2003: -15%
 - BSP-2005: -25%
 - BSP-2011: -35%
- The populist and the new political parties have massive "floating" peripheries
 - R. Plevneliev
 - M. Kuneva
- In general, increasing number of people who are making the decision who to vote for in the last moment
 - 2003
 - 2007
 - 2011

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Methodological challenges:

Core	Periphery	
	Close	Distant
BSP – the big "left" party: 2005-2009-2011 – with minimal periphery, along with increasing instability of the core. A political party, which by now cannot stop the erosion and the shrinkage of its potential voters, or to break its own civil and political isolation		
CEDB: 2007-2009 – a new "populist-right" political party, with large and still growing periphery, which is used completely by CEDB in a series of general and local elections and thus, to achieve their full result potential; CEDB is party in an upsurge, having a claim on an absolute domination.		
2011 – increase of the core, but for the first time there is some periphery destabilisation – clear limitation of the very possible (close) periphery and the less possible (distant) periphery. For the first time, CEDB have received only small part of their pre-electoral declared periphery. This is the risk for their dominating position.		

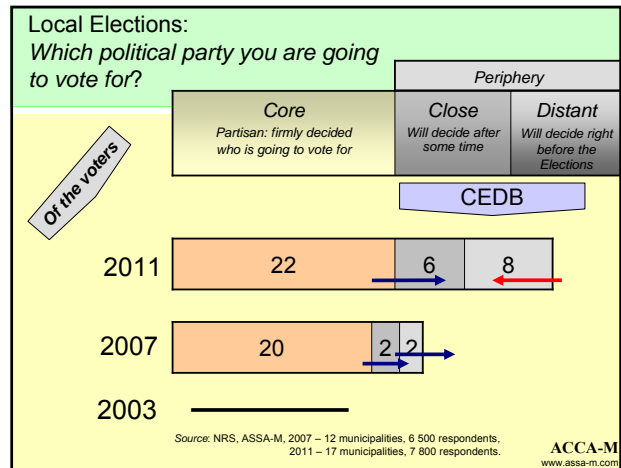
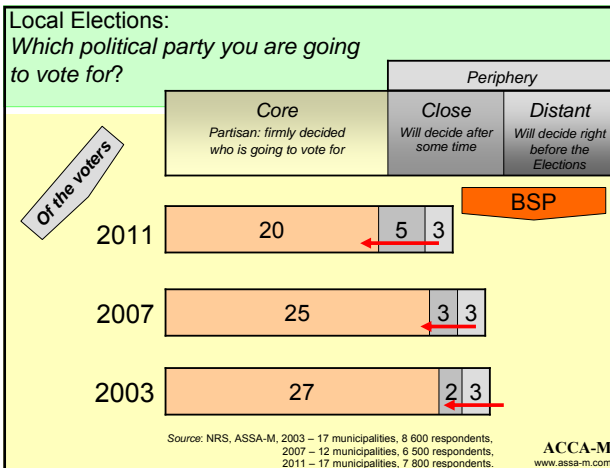
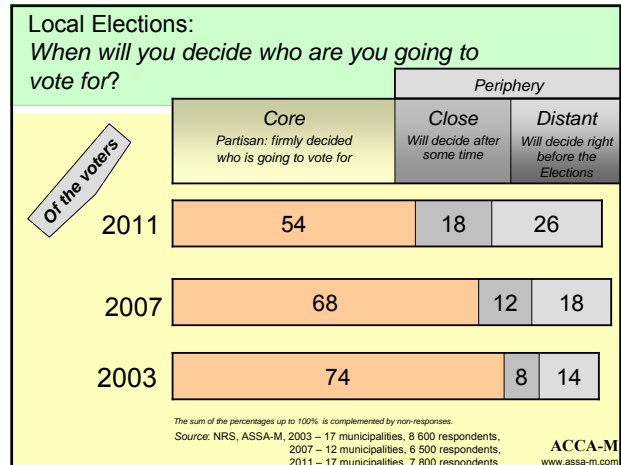
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ASSA-M block of variables: nominal rating weighing for more precise prediction

TEV
Variables

- ❖ MICRODATA indicators
 - Are you interested in politics in Bulgaria? (point)
 - What is better: the present authorities would stay in power or there should be a change of party/leader? (natissue)
 - Do you intent to vote? (turnout)
 - Which political party candidate would you vote for? (vote)
 - When will you decide which party to vote for? (when)
- ❖ MACRODATA indicators – social context
 - How has the situation changed in your town/village in the last two or three years in terms of economy, social sphere, social order? (natissue)
 - If you have to rate the authorities according to the six-rate system, what mark would you give to its activity so far? (govper)
 - How has your material status changed during the last 3-4 years? (reee)
 - Can you keep your present job for a long time? (peeep)

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In summary: Which are the main methodological challenges of the electoral surveys and the methods for comparison of indicators and data?

- The need of **more detailed and sensitive indicators** for hidden or artificially increased declared vote – in an more aggressive and manipulative media and government environment
- The need of **new methods for predicting** in terms of a sudden increase in the proportion of the voters **who change their minds** who to vote for in the last week or in the last day
- The need of **special filters to register an eroded electoral core** or **the two segments of the electoral periphery** of a given party – close, very possible and distant, less possible periphery
- The comparative analysis needs reporting the phase of **transition from classical left-right political configuration** to the **dominant populist party configuration** or to **brutal dictatorship** dominant parties in the different countries

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Thank you for your attention!

Have a good time in Sofia,
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