In-Class Activity: Exploring Party Position Data Using the Chapel Hill Expert Survey

Stephanie N. Shady, Ph.D.

Assignment originally designed for POL 201: Introduction to Political Studies at the American University of Sharjah

Learning Objectives
- Apply new concepts of party families, issue positions, and dimensions of party competition to specific cases
- Gain an introductory-level understanding of using a data source to visualize and compare party positions

Time: 30 minutes

Instructions

1. Open the Chapel Hill Expert Survey: https://www.chesdata.eu/
2. Go to 'CHES Stats' page
3. Build one (1) bar graph
    a. 2019
    b. any country
    c. position on an issue that interests you (not salience or dissent)
    d. sort by values
    e. click to download PNG file
4. Refer to the 2019 codebook (https://www.chesdata.eu/ches-europe) for:
    a. measurement of the position you've chosen
    b. party names for the abbreviations
5. Research two (2) of the parties represented on the graph (Hint: Wikipedia actually does provide good introductions to political parties)
    a. What party families do they belong to, and how does this help explain their positions on the issue you have chosen?
    b. Explain in a short paragraph
6. Submit paragraph and graph on iLearn Discussion Board (your university's online learning management system forum)

Variations
- For a European politics course, students may choose a country that is a core case study of the course or that they are studying for a research project.
- For more advanced courses, have students compare positions and salience or dissent across issues/countries/party families.