Partisan and ideological bias in citizens' perceptions of parties' electoral chances

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the accuracy with which citizens perceive the electoral chances of parties. It is often assumed, for example in studies of strategic voting, that citizens' perceptions of parties' electoral chances are correct on average. Previous research has however shown that citizens are affected by wishful thinking. They tend to overestimate the chances of their preferred candidate. This research has focused only on majoritarian electoral systems. This paper extends this line of research by considering the accuracy of citizens' perceptions in a PR election. It also considers two different sources of bias: partisan and ideological preferences. The analysis is based on a panel internet survey conducted at the occasion of the regional parliamentary election in the canton of Zurich, Switzerland, in April 2011. The results show that both sources of bias influence the quality of citizens' perceptions. Political sophistication and political interest increase the accuracy of perceptions, but they do not reduce the strength of partisan and ideological biases.

Introduction

Many studies of voting choices have shown that citizens can behave in a strategic way (e.g., Alvarez and Nagler 2000; Cox 1997). Rather than simply supporting the party that best represent their views, they also consider parties' electoral chances. When their preferred party has only slim chances of success, some citizens will prefer casting a vote for a party with better electoral prospects. Such strategic behaviour is more demanding. It not only requires that citizens are aware of party positions, but also that they can estimate parties' viability. The literature on strategic voting generally assumes that citizens' perceptions of parties' electoral chances are correct on average. But there are relatively few studies in political science which have attempted to directly test this assumption. Blais and his coauthors have shown that the accuracy of voters' perceptions is far from being perfect (Blais and Bodet 2006; Blais et al. 2008; Blais and Turgeon 2004). Citizens' perceptions are influenced by both individual-level and context-level characteristics. Citizens with a high degree of political sophistication are better at identifying the weakest candidate in their electoral district (Blais and Turgeon 2004). Party identifiers, by contrast, tend to view more positively the chances that their preferred party will be successful (Blais and Bodet 2006; Meffert and Gschwend 2011). They are thus more likely to overestimate the viability of their traditionally preferred party. As far as context-level factors are concerned, parties who performed well in the previous election in a citizen's constituency are credited with better electoral chances in the upcoming election (Blais and Bodet 2006).

These previous studies point to important sources of variation in the accuracy of citizens' perceptions. However, they have focused only on majoritarian electoral systems. Yet, the assumption that citizens' perceptions of parties' chances is correct on average is also relevant for proportional electoral systems. Recent publications have revealed different forms of strategic voting in PR systems (Abramson et al. 2010; Kedar 2005). This paper adds to this stream of research by examining the accuracy of citizens' perceptions in the context of a PR election. The study focuses on citizens' perceptions of the chances of losing parties. That is, I examine how voters, before the election, rated the chances of parties that eventually ended up not winning any seat in their electoral district. I expect the accuracy of these perceptions to be influenced by partisan attachments, ideological orientation, as well as by voters' degree of political sophistication. These hypotheses are tested with data collected at the occasion of the April 2011 regional election in the canton of Zurich in Switzerland. A panel internet survey was conducted in the framework of the project *Making Electoral Democracy Work* (Blais 2010). The results confirm that citizens' perceptions are biased by their ideological and

partisan preferences. A higher degree of political sophistication increases the accuracy of voters' perceptions, but it does not weaken ideological and partisan biases.

This paper is structured as follows: section two discusses in more detail the assumptions made in the literature regarding citizens' perceptions of parties' chances. Section three presents the individual and contextual characteristics that affect citizens' perceptions and introduces the hypotheses of this research. Then, I introduce the data used for this study, as well as the variables' operationalization. Section five presents the results of my analyses. The conclusion offers some thoughts about possible future avenues of research.

Perceived electoral chances and strategic voting

The assumption that citizens' perceptions of the electoral chances of parties are correct on average is an important precondition for theories of strategic voting (Cox 1997). Strategic voting means that citizens do not support the candidate they prefer when its chances of being successful are weak. Instead, citizens decide to support a party they like less, but which has better chances of winning the election. This behaviour is driven by the aim of avoiding wasting one's vote on a chanceless candidate. A central condition for this model is that 'voter beliefs about which candidates are stronger and weaker will be generally correct' (Cox 1997: 72).

Most studies of strategic voting have focused on majoritarian electoral systems. There is widespread evidence that a non negligible proportion of citizens in such elections display strategic behaviour (e.g., Alvarez and Nagler 2000; Blais et al. 2001). In single-member plurality elections, it is generally accepted that only two candidates have real chances of being elected. This corresponds to the 'M+1 rule', which states that a maximum of M+1 candidates can be viable in a district of magnitude M (Cox 1997: 99). In a single-member plurality election, this means that only two candidates have real chances of being elected. Accordingly, if voters' perceptions are accurate, they should perceive as low the electoral chances of all but the two top contenders in their electoral district.

Strategic voting, however, is not limited to majoritarian electoral systems (Cox 1997). Recent studies have shown evidence of strategic behaviour in proportional electoral systems (Abramson et al. 2010; Meffert and Gschwend 2011). Like in majoritarian electoral systems, voters in a PR system may face incentives to depart from their preferred party. While the number of viable contenders (i.e., party lists) is likely to be higher, there are also usually more parties in competition. Minimum thresholds of votes required for entering into Parliament (such as the 5% threshold used in Germany) and districts of relatively small magnitude imply

that many small parties may not be viable – at least not in all districts. PR voters may thus face the same type of strategic incentives as voters in single-member plurality elections. Hence, the assumption that citizens have correct perceptions of parties' electoral chances is also important in PR electoral systems. More precisely, citizens should be able to recognize which parties are not viable in their electoral district.

It must also be emphasized that other, more complex forms of strategic behaviour are possible in PR electoral systems, which also require accurate perceptions of parties' chances. For instance, citizens may not only care whether a given party is likely to win *at least one seat*, but also how big the chances are that it *wins one seat more or less*. A voter might for instance strategically depart from her preferred party, not because it is chanceless, but because the voter is certain that the party will win, let us say, 2 seats, but is unlikely to receive enough votes to win a third seat. Still a different type of strategic incentives occurs when citizens take into consideration the likely impact of their electoral choice on the position of an expected coalition government formed after the election (Kedar 2005).

Nonetheless, this paper will focus only on the perceived electoral chances of *non-viable candidates*, that is, on the assumption required by the 'traditional' form of strategic voting. In a majoritarian electoral system, it is relatively straightforward to design criteria by which to judge the accuracy of citizens' perceptions of parties' electoral chances. Blais and Bodet (2006), for instance, looked at the perceived chances of the three main parties in Canadian elections. Following the 'M+1 rule' (Cox 1997), two of them can be qualified as viable and the task for voters is to recognize which of the three parties has the weakest chances.

In the proportional electoral system on which this study focuses, by contrast, it is more difficult to define clear criteria by which to evaluate the accuracy of voters' perceptions. In this paper, I will focus on the perceived chances that a party wins *at least one seat* in a voter's electoral district. This is the minimal criteria for distinguishing successful parties from weaker competitors. It represents only a limited aspect of parties' chances of success, but it is the most important one from the point of view of the 'traditional' form of strategic voting. Furthermore, this paper considers only the perceived electoral chances of *losing parties*. That is, I include only parties which ran in a respondent's district but which did not succeed in winning any seat. As I will explain in more detail below, perceptions are measured with a battery of questions asking respondents to evaluate the chances that a number of parties will win 'at least one seat' in their electoral district. These perceptions are measured using a scale ranging from 'no chances at all' to 'a certain winner'.

Voters' perceptions are least accurate if they rated such a party as a certain winner (of at least one seat) in their constituency. They are most accurate if voters estimated before the election that this party had no chance at all of winning a seat. While the extremes of such a scale are relatively straightforward to interpret, determining the degree of accuracy of answers that lie between these extremes is more difficult. One way would be to set an arbitrary threshold and to consider, for instance, that voters are accurate if they do not give a chance larger than 30% to a losing party. The problem with this approach is that such thresholds are arbitrary and that they may strongly influence the results. An alternative solution is to rank perceptions from least accurate to most accurate. This avoids setting arbitrary thresholds and allows making more fine-grained distinctions among respondents. I will thus consider that voters' perceptions are most accurate if they consider that a (future) losing party had no chances at all, and that they become less accurate as perceived chances become higher.

Explaining the accuracy of voters' perceptions

Having explained how voters' perceptions, in the framework of this study, can be rated as accurate or inaccurate, I turn to the factors that may explain voters' accuracy. Previous studies on this subject have emphasized both individual-level and context-level factors. At the individual-level, two characteristics seem to play an important role: political sophistication and party preference. It is not surprising to see that political experts perceive more accurately the chances of parties than political novices do (Blais and Turgeon 2004). Citizens with a high level of political sophistication should pay more attention to political news relating to the campaign (Price and Zaller 1993; Zaller 1992). They should have more information about the parties in competition, not only regarding the parties' positions, but also regarding their electoral chances.

The second important individual-level characteristic is party preference. Various studies have shown that expectations about election outcomes are biased by voters' partisan preferences (Babad 1997; Babad and Yacobos 1993; Blais and Bodet 2006; Blais and Turgeon 2004; Meffert and Gschwend 2011; Uhlaner and Grofman 1986). Such 'wishful thinking effects' have been demonstrated with a variety of measures of party preference, such as party identification (Blais and Bodet 2006), ranking of parties in terms of personal preferences (Meffert and Gschwend 2011), or voting intention (Babad and Yacobos 1993). This study will include citizens' party preferences, but it will also consider one other possible source of bias: ideological preferences. Based on the same logic, if voters overestimate the chances of

success of their preferred party, they may also estimate more favourably the electoral chances of parties that are close to their own ideological position.

The perceived electoral chances of parties, obviously, also depend on objective information. Previous electoral results and polls conducted between elections are important sources of information for voters (Blais and Bodet 2006; Meffert and Gschwend 2011). In the specific electoral context on which this study is based, however, polls are not likely to have been of much influence. Polls are rarely conducted at the regional level in Switzerland – and those which are virtually never break down the results at the electoral district level. Similarly, Blais and Bodet (2006) have shown in the Canadian case that polls are relevant for explaining perceptions at the national level, but not at the level of provinces. Parties' results in the previous election, by contrast, should represent an important source of information. Citizens should evaluate more positively the electoral chances of the previous election's winning party. In the Canadian case, such effects were demonstrated by Blais and Bodet (2006).

In sum, I expect that citizens' perceptions of parties' electoral chances are influenced by:
- previous electoral results, with better results in 2007 increasing the perceived chances in 2011,
- citizens' party preference and ideological orientation, with citizens evaluating more positively the electoral chances of their preferred party and of parties that are close to their own ideological position,
- citizens' degree of political sophistication, with political experts having more accurate perceptions (i.e., perceiving the chances of success to be smaller) than political novices.

In addition, I will also test whether political sophistication moderates the effects of previous electoral results, ideology, and party preference.

Data and operationalization

In order to test these hypotheses about the accuracy of voters' perceptions of parties' electoral chances, I use data from a survey conducted at the occasion of a regional election in Switzerland. On 3 April 2011, citizens in the canton of Zurich were called at the polls for the election of the regional parliament and government. At this occasion, a two-wave internet panel survey was conducted as part of the research project Making Electoral Democracy Work (Blais 2010). This paper focuses on citizens' perceptions of parties' chances of success in the parliamentary election, at the electoral district level. The election is based on an open-list 'bi-proportional' system, with electoral districts of varying magnitudes. The 180 seats of

the regional parliament are contested in 18 districts, varying in magnitude from 4 to 17. The party system is relatively fragmented, with 13 parties in competition (10 of which succeeded in entering parliament). Table 1 presents summary information on the parties in competition.

[Table 1]

The 'bi-proportional' electoral system used in Zurich was designed by the mathematician Friedrich Pukelsheim and is often referred to as the 'double Pukelsheim system' (Pukelsheim and Schuhmacher 2004). While citizens cast their votes in the same way as in a standard open-list system of proportional representation, the system differs in the way in which votes are translated into seats. Although the territory is divided into 18 electoral districts, parties' shares of seats are determined using the overall results at the canton level. That is, parties' seats shares are computed as if citizens had been voting in a single constituency. Then, these seats are distributed across electoral districts proportionally to parties' shares of votes in each district. The system also involves a minimum threshold: a party needs to reach 5% of votes *in at least one constituency* in order to be represented in Parliament. The system is qualified as 'bi-proportional' as parties' shares of seats are first distributed proportionally to their overall share of votes, and as these seats are then distributed proportionally to parties' strength in the various districts. This system was designed to advantage small parties with votes scattered across many electoral districts. With the old electoral system (a traditional open-list PR system), parties which received only a small percentage of votes in many districts were only able to win seats in large districts – if at all. With the new system, all votes count towards determining their share of seats – even the votes in districts in which they are not strong enough to pass the effective threshold.

In terms of parties' chances of winning at least one seat in a given electoral district, the implications of the new system are difficult to grasp, however. The most likely implication for this study is that citizens' perceptions and their degree of accuracy may be more difficult to explain than under a traditional PR electoral system. Citizens may find it more difficult to evaluate parties' chances of success in their electoral district, if they are aware that a party may end up winning a seat even if it did not reach enough votes, had only the district votes been considered. However, there are also reasons to think that the implications of this bi-proportional system on citizens' perceptions should be rather limited. The system is relatively new. The 2011 elections were only the second elections based on this new system, following its introduction in 2007. In the survey used for this study, only twelve percent of respondents

said they had heard about the introduction of the 'double Pukelsheim system'. Less than 10 percent of respondents had heard about the new system *and knew* it benefited small parties. This study's dependent variable is a measure of the expected chances of success of each of the different parties in competition in the respondent's electoral district. For each party, respondents were invited to evaluate the chances that it 'wins at least one seat' in their district, using an eleven-point scale, ranging from 0 ('no chance at all') to 10 ('certain to win'). This question was asked for all 13 parties in competition (as listed in Table 1). As explained before, this study is limited to the losing parties. That is, for each respondent, I consider only the estimated chances of the parties that did not succeed in winning any seat in the respondent's electoral district. As there are several parties in competition, I have several measures of estimated chances for each respondent. As a consequence, the observations are not individuals, but 'individual × party' combinations. As all parties included in the analysis are (local) losers, a higher value of the dependent variable (i.e., chances estimated to be higher) corresponds to a less accurate perception. Also, the analysis is limited to the parties that competed in both the 2007 and 2011 election. This limitation is necessary as the 2007 electoral results are one of the explanatory variable (see below). This implies that four of the parties in Table 1 are excluded from the analysis: the SPS because it was successful in all districts, as well as the Pirate Party, the European Reform Party, and the Conservative Democratic Party, which did no run in 2007.

The explanatory factors are characteristics of both individuals and parties (in a given electoral district). At the individual level, this study considers the level of political sophistication, the partisan preference, and the ideological distance from a given party. As far as political sophistication is concerned, I rely on a battery of knowledge questions. Such items have been shown to be the best single indicators of political sophistication (Fiske et al. 1990; Luskin 1987; Price and Zaller 1993). They are also frequently used to measure sophistication in the context of Swiss elections (Lachat 2007). Respondents were asked to match photographs of candidates in the election of the regional executive with their corresponding party. Respondents were presented with eight photographs and were told that four of them were candidates, one each from the four major Swiss parties (SVP, SPS, FDP, and CVP). They were asked to identify the candidate from each party. I count the number of correct answers, which results in a five-point scale, coded from 0 (no correct answer) to 1 (four correct answers). In addition to factual items, I also control for citizens' degree of interest in the election. Respondents indicated their interest on an eleven-point scale, coded here from 0 ('no interest at all') to 1 ('a great deal of interest').

To measure citizens' party preference, I rely on indicators which are independent from the voting choice in the present election. Focusing on voting choice or voting intention in the election surveyed would be problematic, as it may be affected by strategic behaviour and by the accuracy of the perceived electoral chances that this study tries to explain. Instead, I rely on a question that asks citizens which party they 'like the most'. This information is coded as a dummy variable.

The last individual-level variable is the ideological distance from the various parties. Citizens' ideological orientation were measured by inviting them to indicate their position on an eleven-point left-right scale, ranging from 'far left' to 'far right'. I use the same question to determine the positions of parties, computing it as the average position of the respondents who like this party most. For the purpose of this study, left-right positions were coded in the 0–1 range, and ideological distances can thus also range, in theory, from 0 to 1.

Finally, the model also includes parties' results in the previous election, at the district level. Two variables are included. A dummy identifies the parties which, in 2007, won at least one seat in the respondent's electoral district. Second, I consider parties' share of votes in 2007. As the districts vary in magnitude, a given percentage of votes does not point to the same objective chances in different districts. Receiving 10% of the votes is sufficient to win a seat in a district of magnitude 10, but not necessarily in a district of magnitude 4. As a consequence, I divide the shares of seats by the effective threshold, that is, by the share of seats necessary to win a seat. This threshold is equal to 100 divided by M+1 (where M represents the district magnitude). This variable takes a value greater than 1 if, in a given district, a party's share of votes in the 2007 election was larger than this district's effective threshold. Values smaller than one mean that the vote shares of the corresponding parties were smaller than the effective threshold.

Results

In order to have a first look at the accuracy of voters' perceptions, we can simply consider the distribution of perceived electoral chances, separately for winning and losing parties – that is, considering separately the parties which won at least one seat in a respondent's district and those which did not won any seat. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the estimated electoral chances of these two groups of parties.

[Figure 1]

It appears clearly from Figure 1 that citizens rate differently the chances of future winners and losers. Respondents gave much better chances to parties that eventually ended up gaining one or more seats in their electoral district. In this group of parties, the modal answer was 'certain to win' and this by a very large margin. For future losers, by contrast, the modal answer was 'no chance at all'. Thus, citizens are able to recognize which parties have chances and which ones do not. But still, there is considerable variation in the perceived chances, and this in both groups of parties. Among losing parties, on which the remainder of this study will focus, many respondents credited the parties with real chances of being successful in their electoral district.

In order to explain these inaccurate perceptions, I turn to regression models. The perceived electoral chances (for which higher values signify less accurate perceptions) are regressed on parties' previous electoral results and on citizens' party preference, degree of political sophistication, and on their ideological distance from the corresponding party. I first test a model without any measure of political sophistication, and then two models with sophistication and political interest, respectively, as well as the corresponding interaction terms. Results are in Table 2.

[Table 2]

The first model shows a strong impact of the two 'objective' sources of information, related to parties' results in the previous election. Parties are perceived to have better chances if they share of votes in 2007 was larger (compared to the district's effective threshold) and if they already won one or more seats in that election. Obviously, voters do not perceive all of these parties to be equal. This is not a surprising finding at all: citizens account for past results in evaluating parties' future chances. The effect is also quite substantial. In this subset of observations, the 'strength' variable ranges from 0.02 to 0.90. In other words, the parties' vote shares in 2007 corresponded to a proportion of the district's effective threshold lying between 2 and 90 percents. A ten percent increase of this variable leads to a four per cent increase of the perceived chances.

In addition, the perceived chances of the parties who did manage to win a seat in 2007 are almost 10 per cent higher (0.09 on the 0-1 scale of perceived chances). Most interesting for this study are the effects of party preference and ideological distance. Both variables exert a significant and substantial impact on voters' perceptions. In line with the previous literature, this study finds strong wishful thinking effects. Citizens estimate more favourably the chances

of their preferred party than other citizens do. This effect is quite substantial, as it corresponds to more than 15% of the range of values of the dependent variable. Furthermore, Table 2 also shows a similar effect of ideological distance. Citizens rate less favourably the chances of parties that are ideologically more distant from them. This fits with the hypothesis formulated above. The wishful thinking effect does not only translate into a bonus for one's preferred outcome. Rather, the bias linked with voters' preferences appears to vary in intensity across parties, as a function of the ideological voter-party distance.

The second and third models in Table 2 add a measure of citizens' degree of political sophistication, as well as the corresponding interaction terms. In model 2, sophistication is measured by a knowledge scale. This variable is centred, which means that the variables' main effects correspond to the effects among citizens with an average degree of political sophistication. Sophistication itself has a negative effect on the perceived chances. As expected, political experts have more accurate perceptions than political novices. They are more likely to recognize that the parties included in this analysis had low chances of winning a seat. Political experts are also more strongly influenced by parties' share of votes in the previous election. Whether a party won seats or not in the previous election, by contrast, has the same effect among all voters. This type of information is apparently easier to use for voters and its effect does not depend on their degree of political knowledge. Model 2 also shows that the effect of one's party preferences is not affected by political knowledge. Having a higher degree of political sophistication does not decrease the wishful thinking effect. Similarly, the interaction between sophistication and ideological distance does not reach the threshold of significance, meaning that the strength of the ideological bias does not vary across levels of political sophistication.

The last model in Table 2, which includes interest in the election rather than political sophistication, shows similar effects. The only noticeable difference is that the magnitude of the effect of political interest is somewhat larger than that of political knowledge. Having a higher degree of interests increases the accuracy of one's perceptions – as does a higher level of political knowledge. However, the difference between the very interested citizens and those who are not interested at all is larger than between political experts and novices. Similarly, the relation between previous results and perceived future chances is stronger among both politically interested and politically knowledgeable voters. But the interaction effect is more pronounced interest than knowledge.

Conclusion

This paper analyzed the degree of accuracy of voters' perceptions of parties' electoral chances, focusing on the case of the 2011 regional election in the canton of Zurich. The analysis was limited to unsuccessful parties, that is, it considered only the electoral districts in which a given party did not gain enough votes to secure one or more seats. Voters' perceptions are far from being off the mark. The modal answer was that the corresponding party had no chance at all of winning at least one seat. However, there is quite a lot of variation in respondents' evaluations. Most important, some characteristics of voters exert a systematic bias on their perceptions of parties' chances. The results presented in this paper confirm the 'wishful thinking effect' that has been demonstrated in previous studies. Citizens are influenced by their partisan preferences. They rate higher the chances of their preferred party than other voters do. They are also biased by their ideological orientation and view more positively the electoral chances of parties that are closer to their own ideological position. Higher levels of political knowledge and of political interest increase the accuracy of citizens' perceptions. However, they do not seem to reduce the strength of partisan and ideological biases.

These results are important for studies of strategic voting. The assumption that citizens' perceptions are correct on average is a central precondition for theories of strategic voting. The wishful thinking effect illustrated by this study's results may help to better understand why strategic voting is not more widespread. Recognizing when one's preferred party is not viable is a necessary condition for voting strategically. Wishful thinking thus reduces the chances that citizens react to strategic incentives.

Most previous studies of the accuracy of voters' perceptions have focused on majoritarian elections. This analysis of a PR election thus extends this literature to a new type of context. However, the analysis was limited to very specific aspects of voters' perceptions, namely the perceived chances of losing parties. One possibility for extending this research would be to focus as well on the chances of winning parties, to see if this type of perception is influenced by the same sort of biases. Also, the analysis did not use the full potential of the data. As there are several observations for each respondent (i.e., one for each party), the data could be analyzed in different ways. Perceptions of the same respondents for various parties could be compared, in order to consider more or less accurate *configurations* of perceptions.

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Table 1. Parties in competition and electoral results

| Party | Votes | Seats | Number of districts where: | |
			elected	not elected
Swiss People's Party (SVP)	29.6	54	17	1
Social-Democratic Party (SPS)	19.3	35	18	0
Liberals (FDP)	12.9	23	17	1
Greens (GDP)	10.6	19	17	1
Green Liberal Party (GLP)	10.3	19	17	1
Christian-Democratic Party (CVP)	4.9	9	9	9
Evangelical People's Party (EVP)	3.8	7	7	11
Conservative Democratic Party (BDP)	3.5	6	5	11
Federal Democratic Union (EDU)	2.6	5	5	13
Alternative List (AL)	1.6	3	3	15
Pirate Party (PP)	0.6	0	0	9
Swiss Democrats (SD)	0.4	0	0	10
European Reform Party (ERP)	0.0	0	0	1

Source: Statistical office of the canton of Zurich

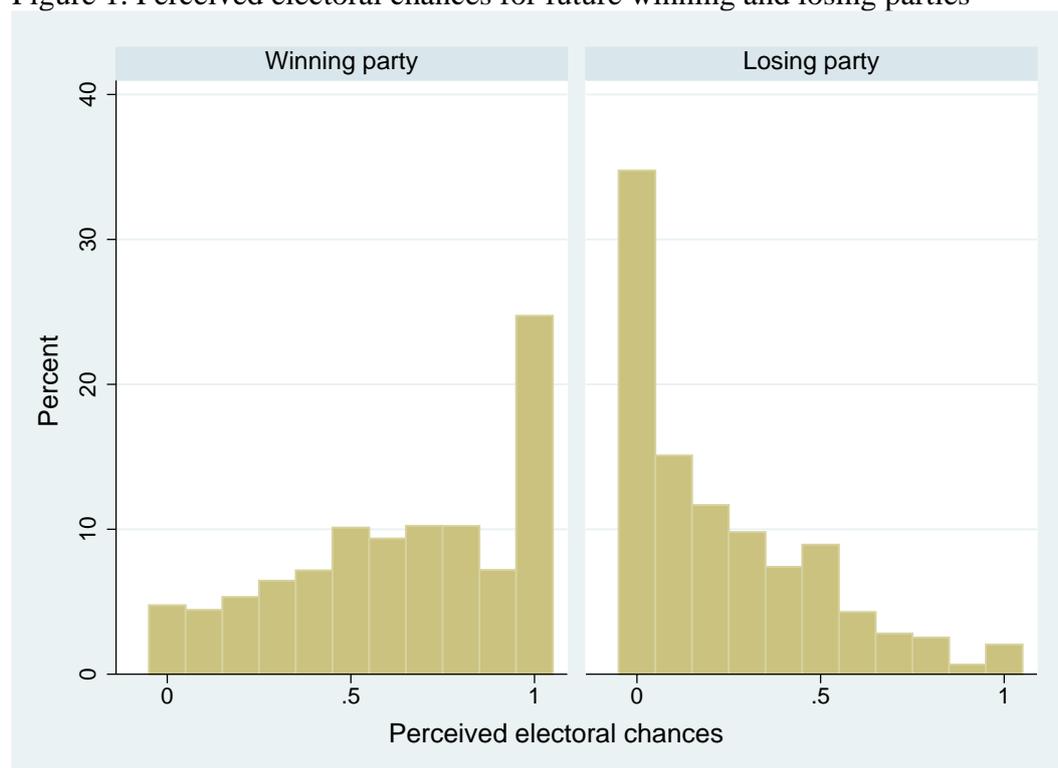Figure 1. Perceived electoral chances for future winning and losing parties

Table 2. Models of the accuracy of voters' predictions.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Party strength 2007	0.43***	0.44***	0.43***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Party won seats in 2007	0.09***	0.09***	0.09***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Preferred party	0.16***	0.16***	0.16***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Ideological distance	-0.12***	-0.13***	-0.11***
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Sophistication		-0.08*	
		(0.03)	
Soph. × party strength 2007		0.21**	
		(0.08)	
Soph. × won seats in 2007		0.00	
		(0.05)	
Soph. × preferred party		0.01	
		(0.12)	
Soph. × ideological distance		-0.05	
		(0.06)	
Interest			-0.20***
			(0.06)
Interest × party strength 2007			0.30*
			(0.13)
Interest × won seats in 2007			0.09
			(0.09)
Interest × preferred party			0.09
			(0.18)
Interest × ideological distance			0.12
			(0.11)
Constant	0.16***	0.16***	0.15***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
R^2	0.22	0.23	0.23
N	2718	2718	2717

Note: Regression coefficients estimated with ordinary least squares. Standard errors (in parentheses) clustered by respondent. Observations are 'respondent × party' combinations.
* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001