

The CSES: Achievements and Future Options



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Three Goals



- How social, political, economic, institutional contexts shape belief and behaviors, affecting the nature and quality of democratic choice
- To understand the nature of political and social cleavages and alignments
- How do citizens evaluate democratic institutions and practices?

Module 1



System Performance

- Constitutional and institutional effects on democratic performance
- The social underpinnings of party systems
- Attitudes to parties, political institutions, and the democratic process
- 33 countries

Module 2



Accountability and representation

- Do elections make governments accountable, are citizens' views represented?
- Political participation and turnout
- Institutions and contexts in new democracies
- 38 countries

Module 3



Political choices: contestation and inclusiveness

- Policy questions about electoral system design
- Established democracies
 - ✦ How satisfaction varies with choices
 - ✦ How and why new parties are formed
- New democracies
 - ✦ Electoral system design and political stability

Module 3



Survey instruments on -

- Retrospective evaluation of candidates and parties
- Prospective evaluations via ideology, party image, and policy differences
- Voter perceptions of policy choices

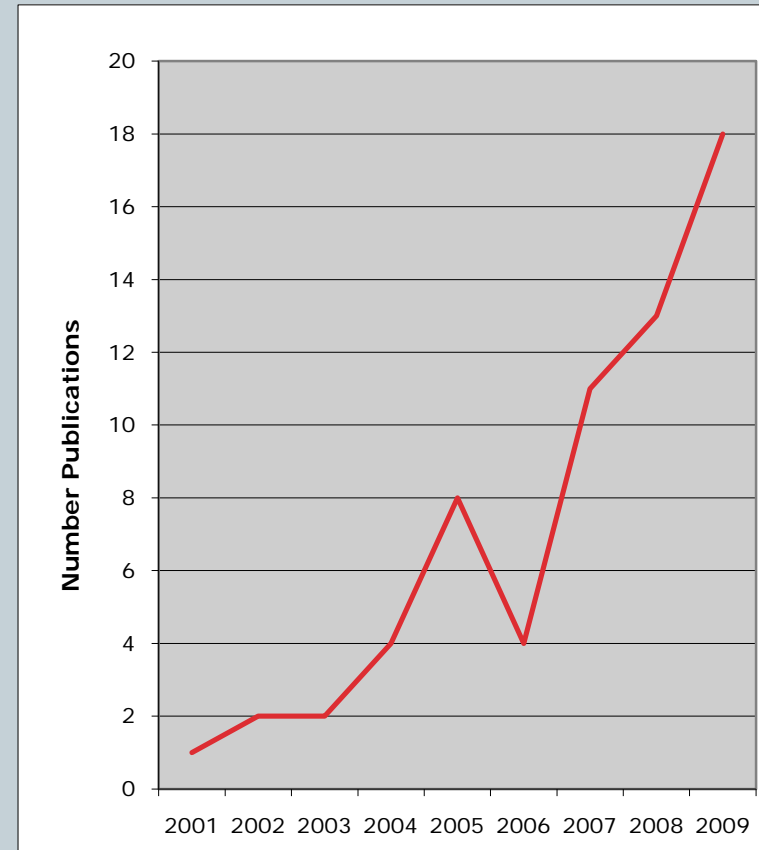
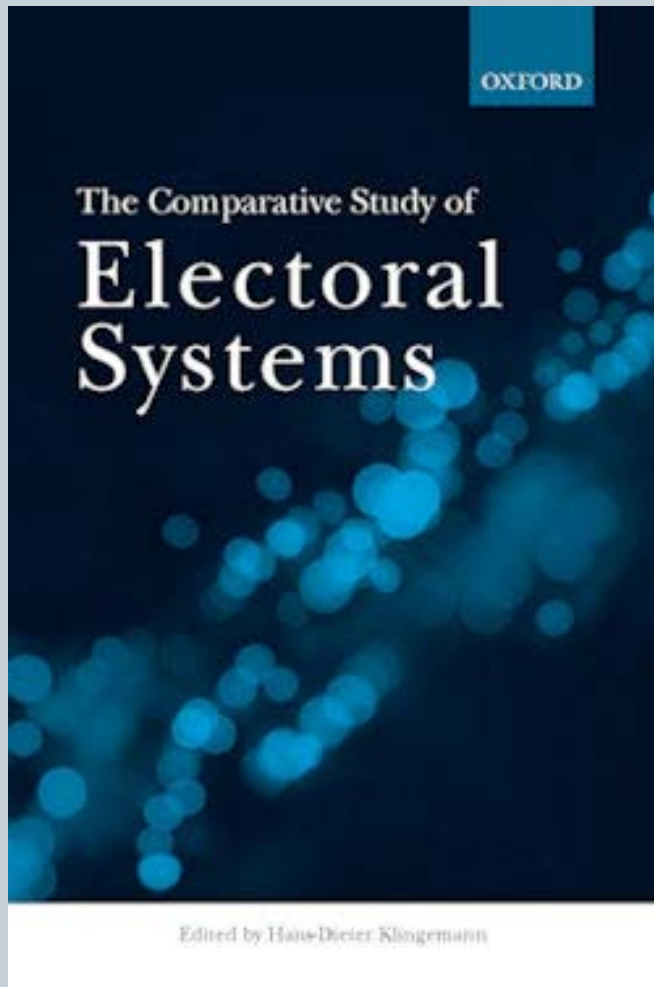
Consequences of limited choices?

- ✦ Turnout, new parties, disorder, threats to democracy?

Publications



2001-2009



Independent Variables

Electoral System	21
Old/New Democracies	10
Knowledge	4
Coalitions	4
Party Evaluations	3
Party System	3
Social Background	2
Divided Government	2

Presidential/Parliamentary	2
Globalization	2
Ballot structure	2
Win/Lose	2
Turnout	2
Gender	1
Ideological Congruence	1
Religion	1
Inequality	1

Dependent Variables

Choice Parameters	9
Accountability	9
Satisfaction with democracy	7
Turnout	7
Engagement/Efficacy	7
Cleavages	6

Ideology/Issue Voting	5
Party ID	5
Economic Voting	4
System Support	4
Mass/Elite Policy Congruence	3
Right Protest	2
Fairness	2
Knowledge	1

7 Options (N questions)



Micro-politics of social protest (11)

Interpretation of Elections (3 – 9)

Political Economy of Electoral Systems (5)

Behavioral Foundations of Social Politics (24)

Voter mobilization and the professionalization of
campaigns (11)

Elections and the formation of governments (5 - ..

Improving the measurement of political knowledge
(3-7, although 3 would replace existing questions)

Social Protest

• Key Research Questions

- Are protesters excluded?
- Individuals' distances from median voter
- Perceptions of political efficacy
- Is protest complementary or substitutive?
- What are the implications for governance of the above?

Survey Instruments

- Reinsertion of module 2 question (four protest events)
- Specific recent country protests?
- Government-organized or independent?
- Attendance alone or in group?
- Grievances and demands
- Type of event and level of violence
- Reaction of police
- Respondent a victim of human rights violation?

Election Interpretation



- **Key Research Questions**

- Content interpretation (what election about)
- Decisiveness/mandate
- Definition of winner

- **Importance**

- Normative force in public opinion
- Representation process
- Legitimacy between elections
- Policy post-election

- **Survey Instruments**

- The elections were about (1-5):
 - ✦ Leadership
 - ✦ Candidate quality
 - ✦ National security
 - ✦ The economy
 - ✦ Social differences
- Which of those most of all?
- Did the election generate a mandate?
- Who won?

Political Economy of Electoral Systems



- **Key Research Questions**

- Why are elections biased left under PR and right under SMP?
- Why are the least equal countries the least redistributive?

- **Hypotheses**

- Social protection preferences function of income and skills
- ‘Time inconsistency problem’ leads to under-provision
- Middle-income voters vote centre/PR, right/SMP
- Centre allies with left under PR

- **Survey Instruments**

- If looking, how hard/easy to find a job?
- Preferences for more or less government spending on
 - ✦ Unemployment
 - ✦ Health
 - ✦ Pensions
 - ✦ Industries in trouble

Behavioral Foundations of Social Politics



- **Key Research Question**

- Why do some governments spend more on social policies than others?

- **Two competing explanations**

- Poor seek redistribution
- Voters seek social insurance, including rich
 - ✦ Therefore countries with well-off risk-averse people exposed to labor market uncertainty will spend more

- **Questionable behavioral assumptions**

- Voters can distinguish between redistributive and insurance elements of policy
- Other identities don't matter

- **Questions**

- Batteries testing the above
- And do voters discount promises of future commitment?
- An extensive list (24)

Voter Mobilization and Campaign Professionalization



- **Research Questions**

- What drives new methods of campaigning?
- What are the effects?

- **Causal Hypotheses**

- Professional campaigns more likely where
 - ✦ Political advertising allowed
 - ✦ Fewer limits on campaign expenditure
 - ✦ Countries are richer
 - ✦ SMP/Majoritarian systems
 - ✦ Elections more frequent
 - ✦ The party system strong

- **Consequential Hypotheses**

- Professional campaigns foster
 - ✦ Voter dissatisfaction
 - ✦ Lower party identifications

- **Questions**

- 11 types of messages/contacts: yes or no, and how many -
 - ✦ Face to face, leaflet, TV, Radio, newspaper, direct mail, telephone, email, social network site, mobile phone/SMS

Elections and the Formation of Governments



• Research Questions

- Where voters choose not only among parties but among potential coalitions, do they have preferences about about the governments to be formed?
- Do those preferences influence vote choice?

• Questions

- Three coalition options: recall of pre-election preferences compared to post-election
- How likely were those options?
- On election day, how likely would preferred party have won a seat and/or get into government?
- Reasons for defection from vote for most preferred party: strategic or otherwise?

Improving Political Knowledge Questions



● Research Questions

- Is political knowledge higher or lower in some countries than others, and if so why?
- How important is political knowledge in affecting:
 - ✦ Turnout
 - ✦ Vote choice
 - ✦ And other matters

- Problem: Current CSES knowledge questions do not facilitate cross-country comparison

● Instruments

○ Core

- ✦ Party in power before the election (or got the most votes?)
- ✦ Eligibility criteria to vote (ie, citizenship)
- ✦ One of five countries with veto power on UN Security Council

○ Supplementary

- ✦ True-False: the largest right wing party is a left-wing party
- ✦ What level of government is responsible for land use?
- ✦ Knowledge of recent international meeting
- ✦ Knowledge of most important election issue(s)

Some Debating Points



- **What remains from before?**
 - What goes in, something must come out
- **The balance between dependent and independent variables?**
- **One big idea or several smaller ones?**
 - If several smaller ideas, can they be linked?
- **Continuity in themes and instruments?**
- **Consistency with CSES aims/objectives?**

Constraints



- Module to take 10-15 minutes
- Current module: minimum 35 questions, less demographics
 - More questions, the more parties in the system
 - Core questions?
 - ✦ Vote, previous vote, party identification, left-right
 - ✦ Performance, positional?
 - ✦ System perceptions
- Space for new questions?