The
German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES)

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## Academic national election studies in Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Cologne election study (Scheuch, Wildenmann): multi-method design (quanti, also quali)</td>
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<td>1965 - 1994</td>
<td>Cologne-Mannheim election studies (Wildenmann, Kaase, Klingemann, Pappi, coop. with FGW): pre and post cross-section f2f surveys, occasionally pre-post panels</td>
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<td>1990 - 2002</td>
<td>Election studies of Falter, Gabriel, Rattinger (pre and post cross-section f2f surveys, short-term and long-term panels)</td>
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<td>1998 - 2005</td>
<td>CSES (CATI), run by Weßels</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>• Election study of Kühnel, Niedermayer, Westle: post-election cross-section f2f</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Election study of Schmitt-Beck, Faas: pre-post RCS/panel, CATI</td>
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German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES), 2009 – 2017

- Pilot study for institutionalized German NES
- PIs = chairpersons German Society for Electoral Research DGfW (Rattinger/Schoen, Roßteutscher, Schmitt-Beck, Weßels) & Wolf (GESIS)
- Funding: DFG (German NSF) long-term programme
- Speedy and unrestricted data access: http://www.gesis.org/en/elections-home/gles/
- **Most datasets also in English**

- Open to input from scientific community in preparatory phase (Call for Modules, Calls for Questions), very limited since then
- Constant parts: comparability to previous studies, integrity of longitudinal design → very limited opportunities for change
- Variable parts (limited): theoretical, methodological innovation, responsiveness to political developments, **CSES**
The GLES design: basic philosophy

- Modular: 9 'components'
- Longitudinal:
  - Cross-sectional module indispensable, but special focus on:
  - Short-term continuity/change (during campaigns)
  - Long-term continuity/change (across elections)
  - Long-term continuity/change of short-term continuity/change (campaigns across elections)
- Multi-dimensional (voters in context):
  - Voter surveys (strong focus on information exposure)
  - Studies of information supply (mass media, candidates, local contexts)
More than 40 datasets collected thus far
Modules: cross-sectional survey

Component 1: CAPI survey → VOTERS

'Work horse': broad range of variables (about 60 min interview time) …
… many respondents (N ca. 4,200); 50% pre-election, 50% post-election; oversampling in East Germany (1/3)
Population: German citizens aged 16+
Post-election wave includes CSES
Modules: longitudinal / short-term

- **C.2**: CATI; **RCS** survey; random sample of voters; about 100 Interviews per day for 2-2.5 months before election (aggregate dynamics of campaign); post-election **panel** wave (individual-level continuity/change); speedy data access; large N ➔ **VOTERS**

- **C.3**: Online **short-term panel survey**, non-representative voter sample taken from access pool; 7 bi-weekly waves (6 pre-, 1 post), 3 control cross-sections (individual-level dynamics of campaign) ➔ **VOTERS**

- **C.4**: Manual **content analysis** of daily newspapers and TV news; parallels C.2, C.3 ➔ **INFORMATION CONTEXT**
Modules: longitudinal / short-term

- **C.5:** TV debate analysis; RTR measurement while viewing, panel survey of participants, experimental elements, content analysis of TV debate → INFORMATION CONTEXT (+ VOTERS)

- **C.6:** Candidate survey; multi-mode: postal and online questionnaires; part of CCS → INFORMATION CONTEXT + REPRESENTATION
Modules: longitudinal / long-term

C.7: Rolling three-wave long-term panel across federal elections, starting from C.1; CAPI; annual in-between interviews (CATI) → VOTERS

C.8: Online long-term tracking surveys, non-representative voter samples taken from access pool; cross-sections (N = 1,000) every 3 months during entire electoral cycle; special focus on multi-level voting (EP, states): in case of state election, regional boost (N = 500) → VOTERS

C.9: Computerized long-term event and agenda coding (dictionary-based) of selected newspapers; parallels C.8 → INFORMATION CONTEXT
Modules: links

- Regular replications of modules and measures are core of longitudinal design.
- Substantial overlap between all questionnaires.
- Synchronized timing of data collection for related longitudinal modules (C.4 with C.2, C.3; C.9 with C.8).
- Interfaces between voter surveys and measures of information context:
  - Dates and detailed media and campaign exposure measures allow linking surveys and measures of information supply.
  - „Mirror measures“ for contextual information supply and corresponding perceptions of voters.
  - Regional keys in surveys allow adding of regional information and linking of surveys (e.g. voter and candidate surveys).
Perspectives

- NSF funding for GLES ends after 2017 election
- Institutionalization sought under auspices of GESIS, starting 2021 Federal Election (but only main survey components)
Thank you very much!