



The German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES)

Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck

CSES Conference

WZB Berlin, 09-11 October, 2014

Academic national election studies in Germany

1961	Cologne election study (Scheuch, Wildenmann): multi-method design (quanti, also quali)
1965 - 1994	Cologne-Mannheim election studies (Wildenmann, Kaase, Klingemann, Pappi, coop. with FGW): pre and post cross-section f2f surveys, occasionally pre-post panels
1990 - 2002	Election studies of Falter, Gabriel, Rattinger (pre and post cross-section f2f surveys, short-term and long-term panels)
1998 - 2005	CSES (CATI), run by Weißels
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Election study of Kühnel, Niedermayer, Westle: post-election cross-section f2f• Election study of Schmitt-Beck, Faas: pre-post RCS/panel, CATI

German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES), 2009 – 2017

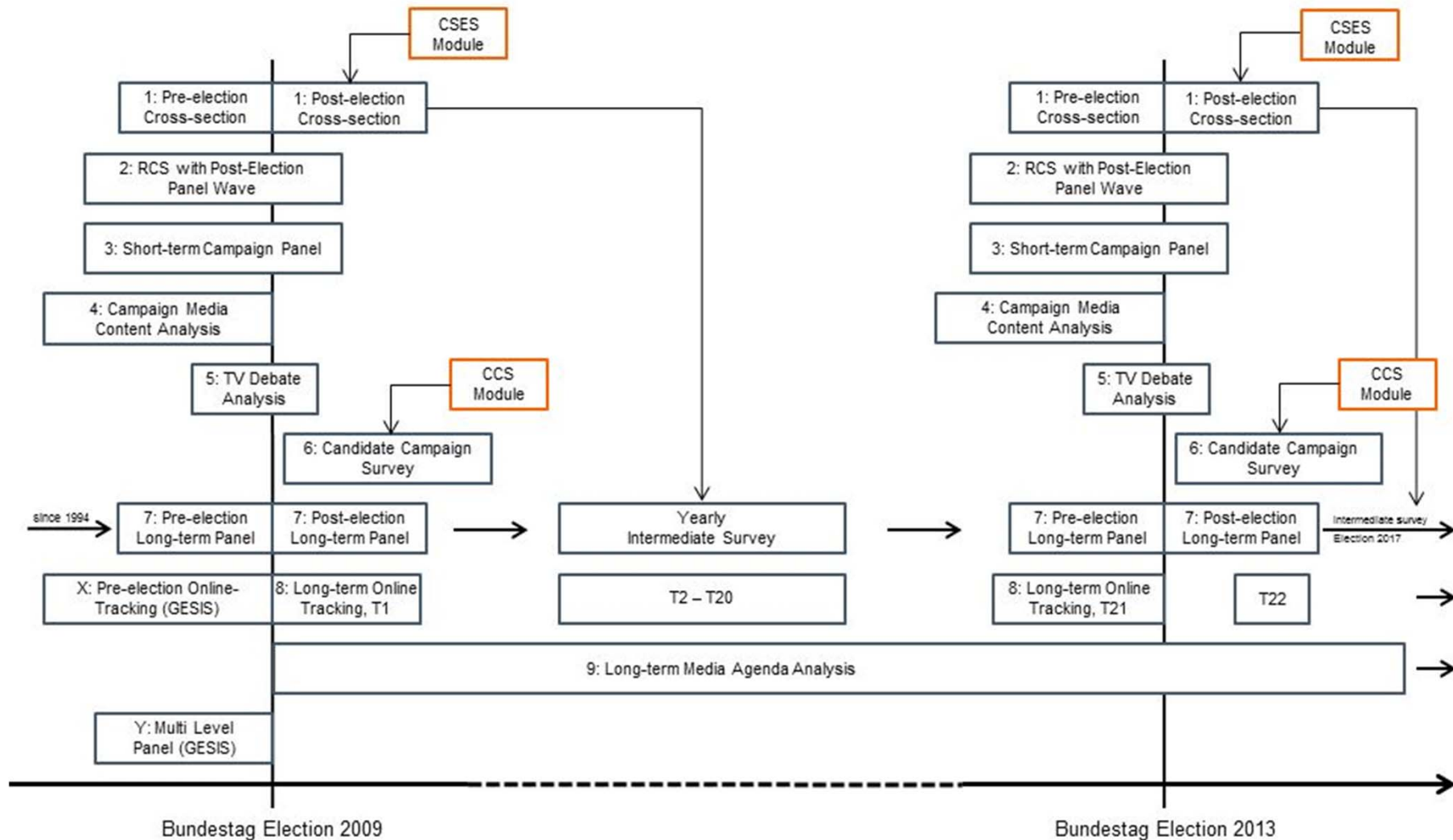
- Pilot study for institutionalized German NES
- PIs = chairpersons German Society for Electoral Research DGfW (Rattinger/Schoen, Roßteutscher, Schmitt-Beck, Weißels) & Wolf (GESIS)
- Funding: DFG (German NSF) long-term programme
- Speedy and unrestricted data access:
<http://www.gesis.org/en/elections-home/gles/>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