Swiss Electoral Studies (Selects)

Georg Lutz

CSES Plenary Conference
Berlin 9./10. October 2014
A short history of electoral research in Switzerland

Surveys on political behaviour developed along post-referenda surveys from 1980 on.

1995 «new start» into electoral research with Selects series.

Since 2008 integrated into a new national research centre in social science (FORS), together with other large surveys (household panel, SHARE, ESS, ISSP) and a data archive.

Funding mainly through the Swiss National Science Foundation, since 2011 «infrastructure» status.
Challenges

How to establish an election study as a long term project?
How to balance stability and innovation?

How to deal with a relatively small (Swiss) scientific community doing electoral research?

How to secure funding in the long run?
Inclusive governance and network

FORS Scientific Board

Selects Scientific Council:
Academic responsibility

Selects project management

FORS Foundation Board

FORS:
Administrative &
methodological
Responsibility, data
archive

Federal Statistical Office
Federal Chancellery
(Swiss) Universities

International co-operations

CSES
CCS
Cost Action “The true European voter”
Annual meeting Selects, GLES, AUTNES
Instruments and procedures

Core instruments:
- **Post-election survey** (mixed mode CATI/Online, ~ 3500 interviews, oversampling of small cantons)
- **RCS/Panel Survey & media analysis** (online only, around 6000 interviews in RCS wave)
- **Candidate survey** (among all about 3500 candidates)

Questionnaire development:
- Assuring **stability**: Core questionnaires
- **Openness** not just of the data, but of the study content: **Call for modules** (internationally)
- Assuring **comparability**: International modules (CSES, CCS)
The new 2015 RCS design (online interviews only)

Sample FSO

Pre-campaign interview

Summer

Participants wave I

Adresses day 1
Adresses day 2
Adresses day 3
Adresses day 4
... Adresses day x
... Adresses day 60
Adresses day 61

Pre-campaign panel wave
June 2015

RCS Campaign wave (61 days)
August-17 October 2015

Media analysis

Post-election panel wave

Post-election interview

Election day