On the substantive theme and questions of CSES Module 1

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The roots of CSES
CSES Module 1 (1996-2001)

Normative arguments
Empirical generalizations
General Theoretical Focus

„We want to make theoretical and substantive advances in our understanding of how variation in the institutional arrangements that govern the conduct of elections affect the nature and quality of electoral choice in democratic polities. Through comparative analysis, where citizens are observed in different settings, the impact of institutions can be established.”

Narrowing the focus: The main themes of the CSES Module 1

1) The impact of electoral institutions on citizens' political cognition and behavior
2) The nature of political and social cleavages and alignments;
3) The evaluation of democratic institutions and processes
„This focus makes it clear that we want to shed light on longstanding and important debates about electoral behavior which have never been answered because theoretically informed and truly comparative studies were missing.“

Source: Final Report of the 1995-96 Planning Committee
1) The impact of electoral institutions on citizens' political cognition and behavior

parliamentary versus presidential systems of government,

“[...] if accountability makes retrospective sanctions of the executive more available in presidential than in parliamentary systems, then one should find that voters in presidential systems have greater clarity about the performance of the incumbent government and are more willing to rely on retrospective evaluations in their vote choice.”
1) The impact of electoral institutions on citizens' political cognition and behavior

The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws;

“Do high district thresholds not only discourage parties from contesting seats, but do they also discourage voters from casting their ballots for small parties that hover perilously close to the threshold?”
1) The impact of electoral institutions on citizens' political cognition and behavior

Political parties.

“Do citizens in fact have more trouble assigning blame under a multi-party system than two-party system, making accountability lower? “
2. The nature of political and social cleavages and alignments;

“How do institutional structures affect the nature and intensity of social and political cleavages?”
3) The evaluation of democratic institutions and processes

evaluation of the electoral process;
perceptions of the performance of political parties and representatives as institutions that link citizens to government

Compare established and 'new' democracies and comparisons across time

How differences in the institutional arrangements that govern the electoral process affect the way that citizens' evaluate democracy?

Does citizen satisfaction with the performance of political parties increase with the number and ideological diversity of the political choices that citizens are offered?
I. Traditional Analysis of Micro-Micro Interdependencies
II. Macro-Correlates of Cross Country Variation in the Distribution of Independent Micro Level Variables
III. Macro-Correlates of Cross Country Variation in the Distribution of Dependent Micro Level Variables
IV. Macro-Correlates of Cross Country Variation in the Strength of Micro-Micro Interrelationships
Method

The theoretical problem implies the method - parallel collection of comparative data about:

- system-level characteristics (Macro)
- Survey data about individual attitudes, preferences, political behavior

Operationalization: Theoretical problems into empirical constructs, measurement, survey design
System-level or “Macro-level” topics

Part 1. Data on political parties and party systems

Information about main parties (A-F)

Year founded
Ideological family (The collaborator's own, expert judgment)
International organization
Left-right position (The collaborator's own, expert judgment)

Election results: Votes and seats
System-level or “Macro-level” topics

Part 2. Data pertinent to the election at which the module was administered

   Turnout
   Alliances
   The most salient factors/issues
System-level or “Macro-level” topics

Part 3. Data on electoral institutions

  Election method – Head of State/Government
  Electoral structure of the legislature
  Voting procedures
    Compulsory voting
    Electoral formula
    Thresholds
  Types of electoral alliances
System-level or “Macro-level” topics

Part 4. Data on regime type
   a. Powers of the head of state
   b. Powers of the head of government
   c. Dissolution of the legislature
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A5034 Electoral Formula</th>
<th>A5034_1 Electoral Formula-Lower-1st Segment</th>
<th>A5034_2 Electoral Formula-Lower-2nd Segment</th>
<th>A5034_3 Electoral Formula-Upper-1st Segment</th>
<th>A5034_4 Electoral Formula-Upper-2nd Segment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. MAJORITY - ALTERNATIVE</td>
<td>AUSTRALIA 1996</td>
<td></td>
<td>AUSTRALIA 1996</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
District-level data

electoral returns,
turnout,
the number of candidates, lists, seats.
CSES public opinion survey – the main areas

Voter turnout and vote choice (current and previous election)

Candidate and party evaluations
  PID & sympathy scores
  Candidate recognition and interaction with representatives

Current and retrospective economic evaluations,
Evaluation of the electoral system itself,
Standardized socio-demographic measures (including political information items!)
Public opinion questionnaire – example questions

Evaluations of the system responsiveness and of the representatives

Q13. Some people say it makes a difference who is in power. Others say that it doesn’t make a difference who is in power. Using the scale on the card (...), where would you place yourself?

Q11. Some people say that members of [Congress / Parliament] know what ordinary people think. Others say that members of [Congress / Parliament] don't know much about what ordinary people think. Using the scale on the card (...), where would you place yourself?
Q1. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?
Respondents' satisfaction with democracy...

Norway 1997 (1.8)
Denmark 1998 (1.9)
Spain 2000 (1.9)
Australia 1996 (2.0)
United States 1996 (2.0)
Netherlands 1998 (2.0)
Thailand 2001 (2.0)
Iceland 1999 (2.1)
Norway 2001 (2.1)
Great Britain 1997 (2.1)
Canada 1997 (2.1)
Switzerland 1999 (2.2)
New Zealand 1996 (2.2)
Taiwan 1996 (2.2)
Mexico 2000 (2.2)
Sweden 1998 (2.3)
Hong Kong 1998 (2.3)
Spain 1996 (2.3)
Germany 1998 (2.3)
Taiwan 2001 (2.3)
Israel 1996 (2.3)
Japan 1996 (2.4)
Poland 1997 (2.4)
Czech Repub 1996 (2.4)
Belgium-Wal 1999 (2.4)
Belgium-Fla 1999 (2.4)
Romania 1996 (2.5)
Belarus 2001 (2.6)
Lithuania 1997 (2.6)
South Korea 2000 (2.6)
Mexico 1997 (2.7)
Hungary 1998 (2.7)

Percent of Respondents Providing Each Answer
Left-Right self-placement and Age in some West European Countries

Average age

BELGIUM-FLANDERS 1999
BELGIUM-WALLOON 1999
SWITZERLAND 1999
DENMARK 1998
SPAIN 1996
SPAIN 2000
GERMANY 1998
GREAT BRITAIN 1997
Left-Right self-placement and Age in some Eastern European Countries

- BELARUS 2001
- CZECH REPUBLIC 1996
- HUNGARY 1998
- POLAND 1997
- RUSSIA 1999
- UKRAINE 1998

The graph shows the average age on the y-axis and the left-right self-placement on the x-axis for different Eastern European countries. The data points are marked with different symbols and colors for each country.
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www.cses.org

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