CSES Conference - Accra

Nicolas Sauger

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CSES Module 3: Political Choices

- CSES Module 3 covers 2006 to 2011 elections
- CSES keeps enlarging the number of countries included
- An assessment of democratic quality: electoral competition or meaningful elections?
- Responsiveness and accountability of governments
- Interest in the supply side and its perception by voters
Theory and concepts

- Dahl’s prerequisites of democracy: effective participation and control of the agenda
- Dahl’s (1971) distinction between inclusiveness (how integrative is the structure of competition?) and contestation (between alternatives)
- Democracy defined by actual choices and choices that should have effects
- Hence, meaningful choices: Distinctiveness of choice options and effectiveness of electoral linkage
How decidable?

- Do choice options differ in terms policy proposals / ideology / performance or competence?
- Do elections results make a difference regarding the content of public policy or who is in power (alternation?)
- Hence agenda setting, policy orientation, vulnerability of government
- How to decide? Retrospective vs. prospective evaluation; ideology and positions of actors; performance of actors
Context

- In consolidated systems: weakening of social cleavages, ideological depolarisation and professionalisation of parties
- In new democracies: weakness of party-voter alignments, fluidity of party systems, intensity of ideological conflict, changes in patronage
Hypotheses

- Institutional determinants of distinctiveness and effectiveness: openness of the electoral system (proportionality), type of government (presidential); party finance; formation of coalitions

- Determinants (2): cleavage structure, format of the party system; ideological polarization; divided government

- Decline or absence of meaning of the choice set (if any): dealignment and social change; change in linkage; modern campaigning

- Voters’ response: turnout decline, rise of anti-system parties, decline of system support
Instruments

- Policy and ideological difference among the choice set (perception of positions; perception of difference)
- Performance and competence differences among the choice set (valence; issue ownership)
Questions

Q1a. MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE - EGOCENTRIC
TEXT: What has been the most important issue to you personally in this election?

Q1b. MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE - EGOCENTRIC
TEXT: What has been the second most important issue to you personally in this election?

Q3a. PARTY/CANDIDATE COMPETENCE - FIRST
SOCIOTROPIC PROBLEM
TEXT: Thinking of the most important political problem facing [COUNTRY] which [party/presidential candidate] do you think is best in dealing with it?

Q4. WHO IS IN POWER CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Q5. WHO PEOPLE VOTE FOR MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

Q6. GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE: GENERAL
Questions

Q7. IS THERE A PARTY THAT REPRESENTS RESPONDENT’S VIEWS
Q7a. PARTY THAT REPRESENTS RESPONDENT’S VIEWS BEST

Q8. IS THERE A LEADER THAT REPRESENTS RESPONDENT’S VIEWS
Q8a. LEADER THAT REPRESENTS RESPONDENT’S VIEWS BEST

Q9a. LIKE-DISLIKE PARTY

Q10a. LIKE-DISLIKE LEADER
Questions

Q11a LEFT-RIGHT - PARTY A
Q12a LEFT-RIGHT - LEADER A
Q13. LEFT-RIGHT SELF
Q17. DIFFERENCES OF CHOICE OPTIONS
TEXT: During the election campaign, would you say that there were major differences between the [parties/ candidates], minor differences, or no differences at all?
Q18. CAMPAIGN INVOLVEMENT
Q19. SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
Q20. ARE YOU CLOSE TO ANY POLITICAL PARTY
Conclusion

- CSES 3 includes retrospective evaluations of candidates and parties.
- CSES 3 incorporates voters’ perceptions of parties and candidates (image, ideology, policies,..) for prospective evaluations.
- CSES 3 includes respondents’ perceptions of their own electoral choices.
- CSES 3 provides instrumentation to address the potential consequences of varying quality in choice setbeamertemplate.
- CSES 3 still provides opportunities to link micro and macro variables.