

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