

**Elections with(out) Choice:
Comparative and Socio-Historic
Perspectives**

Why do elections, and why does voting, matter?

Voting is, at first sight, the supreme act of citizenship and the founding element of democracy. Yet this ideal type of elections deserves a closer look. While many theories developed in Europe and the USA are being widely used to explain electoral behavior around the world, we seldom think about the deeper significance of “exotic” and “atypical” forms of voting, nor about their possible implications for political choice. The invention of universal suffrage, its gradual extension and globalization, are complex historical processes, full of contingencies and contradictions. Beyond its pure and sanctified connotations in advanced democracies, voting is a massive and a messy social practice, with multiple purposes and meanings that vary across space and time, age and class, cultures and communities.

What drives elections, and what do they tell us about politics in the world nowadays? Which are the main principles and options for collective choice? How are votes translated into seats and what shapes party systems in old and new democracies? Why (so many) people (don't) get involved in politics? Are votes and electoral outcomes predictable? Why poor/rich citizens (don't) vote for liberal/conservative or left/right-wing parties? How history, geography, culture, psychology, economy and sociology, matter? Are all types of elections always and necessarily “democratic”?

Objectives and dynamics of the course

Drawing from theory and from empirical research, this course provides a comprehensive overview of the main approaches to study elections in comparative perspective. It discusses paradigmatic models of voting derived from consolidated democracies and tests them in diverse socio-historical settings with emphasis on Mexico and Latin America, in hybrid contexts of transition from/towards authoritarianism. To provide a practical sense of the logic of scientific methods and research designs, it also shows how different types of empirical data may be used to accept or to reject theoretically relevant hypothesis. This supplies valuable tools for a multidimensional analysis of voting, and sheds light on the various meanings of elections in new and old democracies.

The course pedagogy encourages a participative and interactive learning process. It uses a combination of brief introductory brain-storming exercises to situate the focal points of each session; synthetic lectures on the main theories, methods, data and findings; questions and answers; interactive group discussions of a selection of readings; and a synthesis of the most important lessons learned in class.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SUGGESTED READINGS

Elections with(out) Choice? – General Introduction

Session 1. *Why a Comparative Approach of Elections?*

- Evans, Jocelyn, *Voters & Voting. An Introduction*, London, Sage, 2004 (Chapters 1 and 2: pp. 1-44).
- Hermet, Guy; Rose, Richard & Rouquié, Alain, *Elections without Choice*, London, The MacMillan Press, 1978 (Preface and Chapter 1: pp. vii-xi and 1-18).
- Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lucan, "Why Democracy Needs a Level Playing Field", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 21, Number 1, January 2010, pp. 57-68.

I. The Socio-Historic Production of Elections

Session 2. *The contingent invention of Voting*

- Colomer, Joseph, *Constitutions, Elections, Governance*, Selected Works: http://works.bepress.com/josep_colomer/31, ("Election Rules", pp. 12-18).
- Przeworski, Adam, *Democracy and the limits of self-government*, New York, Cambridge University Press ("A brief history of representative institutions": pp. 44-65).
- Posada-Carbó, Eduardo (ed.), *Elections before Democracy: The History of Elections in Europe and Latin America*, London, MacMillan Press, 1996 ("Some Considerations on Electoral History from a Comparative Approach": pp. 1-17).
- Morgan, Edmund, *Inventing the People. The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America*, New York, Norton & Company, 1989 (Chapter 8: "The People's Choice. Elections and Electioneering": pp. 174-208).

Session 3. *Shaping the Electoral Arena*

- Lijphart, Arend, "Constitutional Choices for New Democracies", *Journal of Democracy* 1, Vol.2, Winter 1991, pp. 72-84.
- Sartori, Giovanni, *Parties and Party Systems. A framework for Analysis*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1976 (Chapters 1 and 9: 3-34; 243-288).
- Reynolds, Andrew; Reilly, Ben & Andrew Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, Stockholm, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2005.

II. Tracing the fingerprints of particular suffrage: Five Approaches of Electoral Behavior

Session 4. *The territorial bases of Voting [Electoral Geography]*

- Agnew, John, "Mapping politics: how context counts in electoral geography", *Political Geography* Vol. 15, No. 2, 1996, pp. 129-146.
- King, Gary, "Why Context Should Not Count." *Political Geography*, 15, 1996, pp. 159-164.
- Darmofal, David, "The political geography of macro-level turnout in American political development", *Political Geography* No. 25, 2006, pp. 123-150.

Session 5. *The People's sociological Choice [Model of Columbia]*

- Lazarsfeld, Paul; Berelson, Bernard & Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice. How The Voter Makes Up his Mind in a Presidential Campaign*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1944 (Chapters 1, 3, 5, 15 and 16: 1-10; 16-27; 40-51; 137-158)
- Lipset, Seymour M. & Rokkan, Stein, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, Londres, MacMillan, 1967 (pp. 91-138)
- Gelman, Andrew, *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State. Why Americans Vote the Way they Do*, Princeton, Princeton University Press (Chapters 1 and 10: 3-8 and 165-178).

Session 6. The power of Partisanship [Michigan Paradigm]

- Campbell, Angus, Converse, Philip, Miller, Warren & Donald Stokes, *The American Voter*, New York, Wiley, 1960 (Section I, pp. 3-37)
- Converse, Philip & Roy Pierce "Measuring Partisanship", *Political Methodology*, Vol. 11, No. 3/4 (1985), pp. 143-166.
- Fiorina, Morris, Abrams, Samuel & Pope, Jeremy, *Culture War? The myth of a Polarized America*, New York, Longman, 2004 (Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 1-32).

Session 7. The Rationality of Electoral Choice [School of Rochester]

- Fiorina, Morris, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981 (Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 3-43).
- Abrams, Samuel; Iversen, Torben & David Soskice, "Informal Social Networks and Rational Voting", *British Journal of Political Science*, 2011, Vol. 41(2), pp. 229-257.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael & Stegmaier, Mary, "Economic Determinants of Electoral Outcomes", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2000, 3, pp. 183-219.

Session 8. Voting in anthropological perspective [Ethnography and dense descriptions]

- Rus, Jan, "The Comunidad Revolucionaria Institucional: The Subversion of Native Government in Highland Chiapas, 1936-1968", in Joseph, Gilbert & Daniel Nugent (ed.), *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1994, pp. 265-300.
- Hagene, Turid, "Political Clientelism in México", *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol 57 (1), 2015, pp. 139-162.
- Sonnleitner, Willibald & Todd Eisenstadt, "Balancing Tensions between Communitarian and Individual Rights and the Challenges for Multicultural States", in Eisenstadt, Todd A.; Danielson, Michael S. & Bailon, Moisés (eds.), *Latin America's Multicultural Movements*, Cambridge, Oxford University Press, pp. 246-270.

III. The uncertain meanings of Voting in Democratic/Authoritarian situations

Session 9. The (ir-)rationality of electoral turnout: Why (so many) people (don't) vote?

- Brady, Henry; Verba, Sidney & Kay Lehman Schlozman, "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (Jun., 1995), pp. 271-294.
- Franklin, Mark, *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945*, Cambridge University Press, 2004 (Introduction, Chapter 1).

- Lijphart, Arend, "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 1 March 1997.

Session 10. The promises and the limits of Elections

- Coppedge, Michael, *Democratization and Research Methods*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012 ("Defining and Measuring Democracy", pp. 11-48).
- Norris, Pippa, *Why Electoral Integrity Matters*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2014 (pp. 3-20 and 191-206).
- Levitsky, Steven & Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism. Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010 (pp. 3-36).