# The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems: Exciting possibilities for cross-national electoral research

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# 1

# Project Overview

# The CSES Project in Brief

- Ongoing collaboration of established post-election studies in the world
- The CSES element is a 10-15 minute questionnaire with a specific substantive theme that asks the same questions in different countries.
- The data from all countries are merged into a single dataset along with demographic, district, and macro variables.
- A new theme & questionnaire every 5 years

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# The Rationale for the CSES

- **Make electoral research global**

- **There is wide variation across countries of…**
  - Electoral rules
  - Systems of governance (Presidential/parliamentary/mixed)
  - Federalism vs. unitary governments
  - Lines of political conflict …and more

- *How do these variations impact individual attitudes and behaviours, especially voting and turnout?*

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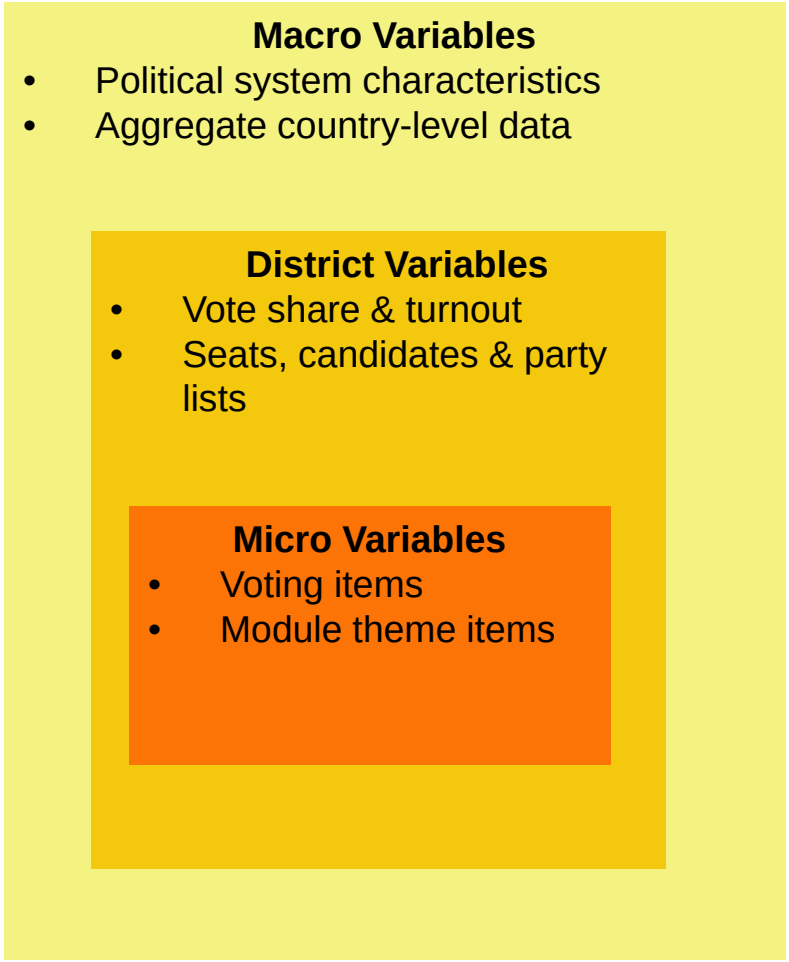
# Multi-level Data Structure

The CSES is composed of three tightly linked parts:

1. Macro-level variables
2. District-level variables
3. Themed module & demographics (micro-level variables)

➔ **allows researchers to conduct cross-national, as well as cross-level analyses.**

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# 2

# The Modules:

# CSES as a research resource

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# Common questions/variables available in all CSES releases

- Voter turnout (current and past election)
- Vote choice
- Satisfaction with democracy
- Political efficacy
- Party attachment
- Evaluations of parties (like-dislike scale)
- Ideological assessments of parties (left-right scale)
- Demographics (e.g.: age, gender, education etc.)

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# Module 1: 1996-2001

## Theme: System Performance

- Constitutional and institutional effects on democratic performance
- The social underpinnings of party systems
- Attitudes to parties, political institutions, and the democratic process
- 39 election studies in 31 countries

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# Module 1: 1996-2001 – specific variables

- Whether last election was conducted fairly?
- Whether politicians “know what ordinary people think?”
- Whether political parties care what people think?
- Whether political parties are necessary?

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**schwarhh1** Modules 1 and 4

Schwarz, Hannah, 29/05/2017

# Module 2: 2001-2006

## Theme: Accountability and Representation

- Do elections hold governments accountable?
- Are citizens' views represented?
- Citizen Engagement & political participation
- 41 elections in 38 countries

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# Module 2: 2001-2006 – specific variables

- Contacted by candidate or party during campaign?
- Political participation: persuade others, campaign activities, protest/demonstration
- How well voters' views are represented in elections?
- Government performance on most important problem/issue, performance of party voted for in previous election

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# Module 3: 2006-2011

## Theme: Electoral Choices

- Perceived variety and quality of political choices in election
- How does satisfaction vary with choices?
- Consequences of limited choices?
  - Turnout, new parties, threats to democracy
- 50 election studies in 41 countries

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# Module 3: 2006-2011 – specific variables

- During campaign, whether there were choice options (differences between parties/candidates)
- If voted, did you consider voting for others? Others you would never vote for?
- Most important problem/issue facing the country over the last legislative period
- Candidate/party competence on most important problem/issue

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# Module 4: 2011-2016

## Theme: Distributional Politics/Social Protection

- Global financial crisis:
  - Views on government expenditure and redistribution
  - Job security
  - Aspirations of upward mobility & battery of questions measuring wealth
- Secondary theme: mobilization
  - Campaign contact (including via social media)
  - Campaign participation
- So far 38 election studies in 36 countries
- **Final Release Expected for 2018**

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# Module 4: 2011-2016 – specific variables

- Attitudes to public expenditure on areas such as health, welfare, defence, pensions, business and industry etc.
- Standard of living over the next ten years
- Mobilization by a party/ candidate and the means of contact
- Mobilization by a personal contact and the means of doing so

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# Coming up - Module 5: 2016-2021

## Theme: Democracy Divided? People, Politicians and the Politics of Populism

- Attitudes towards political elites and ‘out-groups’
- Attitudes towards representative democracy and majority rule
- Attitudes towards direct involvement of citizens in decision making
- Corruption
- **First Advance Release expected for 2019**

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# Module 5: 2016-2021 – specific variables

- Political interest
- Agreement with attitudinal statements (for example):
  - Most politicians do not care about the people
  - The people, not politicians, should make most important decisions
  - Minorities should adapt to the customs and traditions of [country]
  - The will of the majority should always prevail, even over the rights of minorities
  - Immigrants are generally good for [country]'s economy
- How widespread is corruption?

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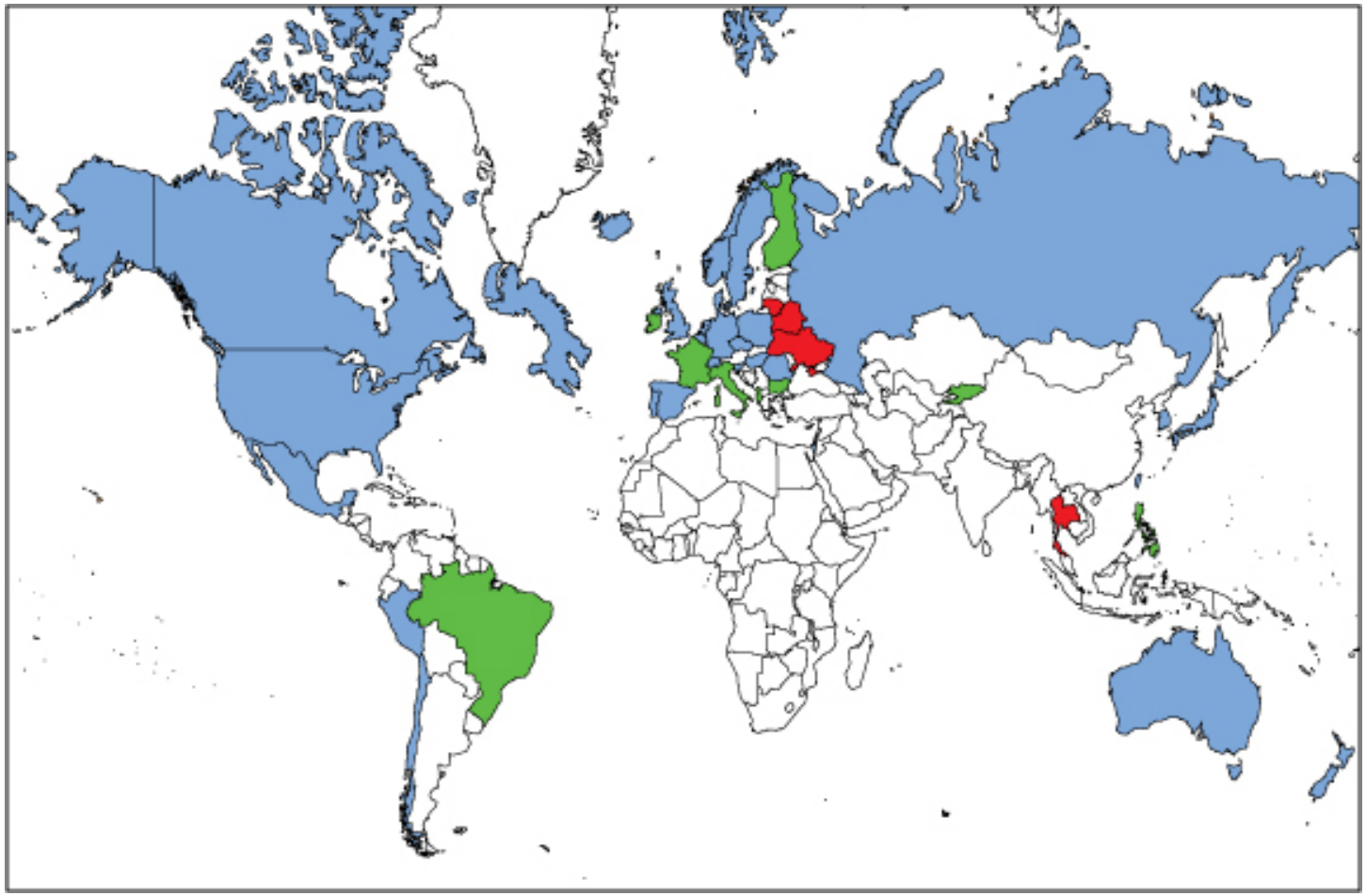
# CSES Coverage (Example: Module 2)



For comprehensive coverage overview: http://www.cses.org/electionstudies.htm

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# District-level Variables

- Available in all five modules for most countries
- Collected for each district:
  - Number of seats
  - Number of candidates
  - Number of party lists
  - Percent vote for the top six parties
  - Turnout
- Expanded to include size of electorate (or population) in district from Module 5

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# Macro-level Variables

- System-level macro data
  - Official national turnout
  - Official national election results
  - Voting rules
  - Party characteristics (party family, international organization)
  - Most salient factors in election (expert judgments)

- Aggregate macro data from public sources incl.:
  - Population Total (World Bank)
  - GDP growth for election year and t-1 and t-2 (World Bank)
  - Human Development Index for election year and t-1 and t-2 (United Nations)
  - Unemployment for election year and t-1 and t-2 (World Bank)
  - Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International)

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# Examples of scholarship using CSES I: Karp & Banducci (2008)

*RQ:* How does the election of women candidates in national legislatures influence political engagement & efficacy of women?

*Data*: CSES Module 2 – 35 countries

*Research Design:*

*y:* Political engagement, campaign activity of women

*x:* % women in parliament

- Cross-national comparison
- Multi-level analysis

*Results:* Women not mobilized by women reps, but % women in parliament correlates with positive evaluations of quality of democratic process

**Karp, Jeffrey A. and Susan A. Banducci (2008) *"When politics is not just a man's game: Women's representation and political engagement."*** Electoral Studies 27(1): 105-115.

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# Examples of scholarship using CSES II: Vowles (2008)

*RQ:* Do differences between degrees of globalization shape perceptions about whether politicians can make a difference?

*Data*: Modules 1 & 2 - 72 elections in 40 countries

*Research Design:*

*y:* Perception of responsible party government

*x:* Trade dependence, financial integration

- Cross-national comparison
- Multi-level analysis

*Results:* Appears to be no link

**Vowles, Jack (2008).** ***"Does globalization affect public perceptions of 'Who in power can make a difference?' Evidence from 40 countries, 1996-2006."*** Electoral Studies 27(1): 63-76.

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# 3

# Note on Methodology and Documentation

# Sampling Procedures & Sample Size

- National sample from all age-eligible citizens
- Random sampling procedures at all stages
- Detailed documentation of sampling procedures
- Conventionally no fewer than 1,000 interviews

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# CSES Philosophy of Documentation I

- The imperfections of a study should not be hidden, but highlighted:
  - Improves the quality of resulting analyses
  - Allows proper comparisons using the data

- Codebook notes anything we know of that has a possible impact on quality, comparability, or analytical outcomes ➔ large codebooks

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D2028 >>> REGION OF RESIDENCE

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D27. This variable reports the respondent's region of residence. Regions are usually (but not always) based upon the social, cultural, or historical differences (though some correspond to administrative regions) that manifest themselves in political cleavages

.....

01.-80. REGION CODES [SEE ELECTION STUDY NOTES]

99. MISSING

| VARIABLES NOTES: D2028
|
| Data are unavailable for HONG KONG (2012), IRELAND (2011),
| ISRAEL (2013), KENYA (2013), MEXICO (2012).

| ELECTION STUDY NOTES - AUSTRALIA (2013): D2028
|
| CSES Code Election Study Code/Category
| 01. New South Wales
| 02. Victoria
| 03. Queensland
| 04. South Australia
| 05. Western Australia
| 06. Tasmania
| 07. Northern Territory
| 08. Australian Capital Territory

| ELECTION STUDY NOTES - AUSTRIA (2013): D2028
|
| The Austrian Bundesland Vienna is not included in
| D2028, although a number of persons report a ballot cast in one
| of Vienna's electoral districts, according to D2032.
|
| CSES Code Election Study Code/Category
| 01. Burgenland
| 02. Carinthia
| 03. Lower Austria
| 04. Upper Austria
| 05. Salzburg
| 06. Styria
| 07. Tyrol
| 08. Vorarlberg

| ELECTION STUDY NOTES - BULGARIA (2014): D2028

# CSES Philosophy of Documentation II

- **More is better – let the practitioner(s) decide.**

- Original collaborator documents are made available for public download:
  - Original language questionnaire
  - English language questionnaire translations
  - Macro report
  - Sample design and data collection (methodology) report

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# Data Availability

- Public access, **free of charge**
- Download from CSES website: www.cses.org or via the GESIS data catalogue
- Archived at GESIS & ICPSR
- Full release every five years but advance releases of data every year

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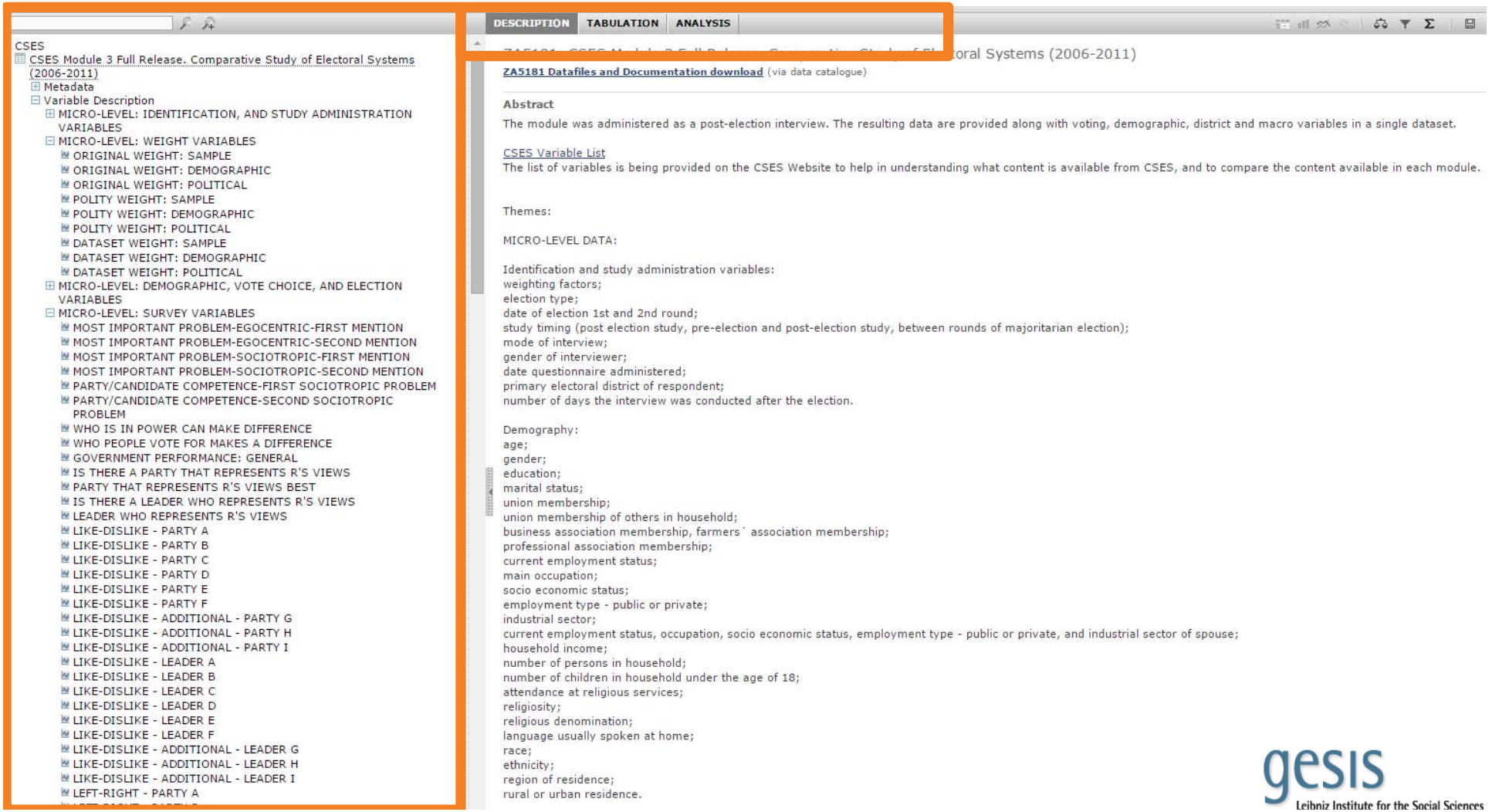
# GESIS online analysis tool

- Modules 1-4, see [www.zacat.gesis.org](http://www.zacat.gesis.org)




gesis
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To learn more about CSES, or to download data:

*www.cses.org*

...or email your questions to:

*cses@umich.edu*

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