

A voting experiment on the input and output of electoral systems and voter satisfaction

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Our Voting System Isn't Just Unfair - it's Tearing Our Country Apart

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Will Hutton

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By Andrew Prokop | andrew@huffpost.com | Updated Dec 26, 2016, 10:05am EST

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Hillary Clinton won more votes than Donald Trump in last year's election, but she lost the White House due to the magic of the Electoral College. Donald Trump will be the 45th President of the United States.

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Wien braucht ein gerechtes Wahlsystem

The impact of the electoral rules on voter satisfaction: the story thus far

Voter satisfaction with elections = satisfaction with democracy

- More votes my party \Rightarrow higher satisfaction with democracy
- More proportional the system \Rightarrow higher satisfaction with democracy
- Many (un-)answered questions:
 - More parties, more satisfaction?
 - More proportional the system or more proportional the outcome?
 - ...

Aims of our project

- ① Disentangle the effect of the *inputs* and *outputs* of electoral rules on voter satisfaction.
 - ① Inputs: party supply and type of vote.
 - ② Outputs: (own) party performance and proportionality.
- ② Examine voter satisfaction with specific aspects of electoral systems:
 - ① party supply
 - ② voting rules
 - ③ election outcomes
 - ④ vote-to-seat conversion
 - ⑤ (overall) electoral system.

The research design of our project using PUMA data

Vignette experiment with two segments (mimic the stages of elections)

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Vignette experiment with two segments (mimic the stages of elections)

- First segment: respondents vote: 4 (2x2) voting scenarios

	Type of vote choice	
Party supply	Categorical	Ordinal
Low	3; vote for one party only	3; ranking all parties
High	5; vote for one party only	5; ranking all parties

The research design of our project using PUMA data

Vignette experiment with two segments (mimic the stages of elections)

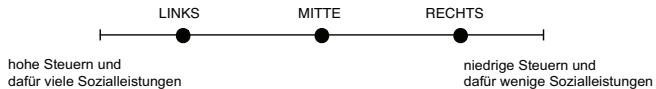
- First segment: respondents vote: 4 (2x2) voting scenarios

	Type of vote choice	
Party supply	Categorical	Ordinal
Low	3; vote for one party only	3; ranking all parties
High	5; vote for one party only	5; ranking all parties

- Second segment: results announced: 4 (2x2) result scenarios

	Proportionality	
Party vote share	Low	High
Low	14%; disproportional	14%; proportional
High	44%; disproportional	44%; proportional

Example of voting scenario

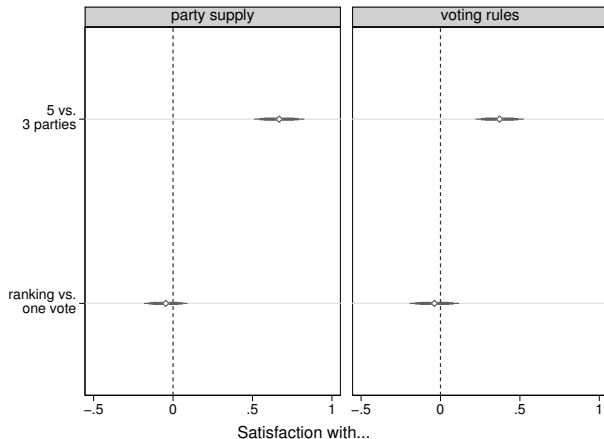


Bei dieser **Abstimmungsregel** können Sie **nur eine Partei** auswählen, indem Sie das zugehörige Kästchen **ankreuzen**.

LINKS	<input type="checkbox"/>
MITTE	<input type="checkbox"/>
RECHTS	<input type="checkbox"/>

First segment

Satisfaction with party supply & voting rules

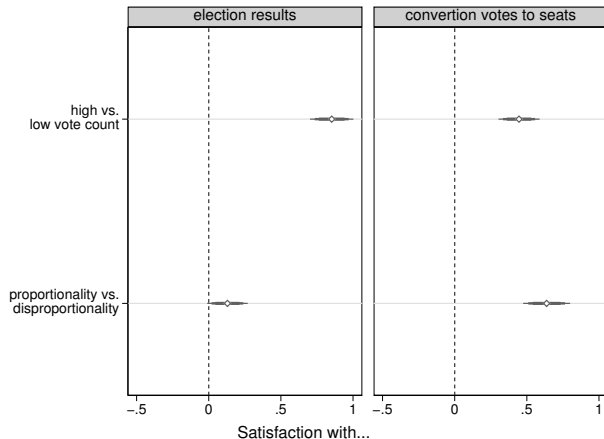


Example of result scenario

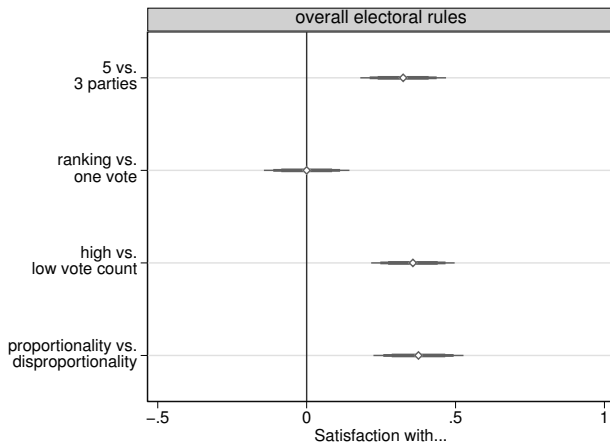
PARTEI	STIMMEN %	SITZE %
LINKS	14%	14%
MITTE	41%	41%
RECHTS	45%	45%
<i>Summe</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>

Second segment

Satisfaction with the electoral results & proportionality of the rules



Satisfaction with the electoral system



Summary

- More parties \Rightarrow more satisfaction.
- More choice \Rightarrow no more satisfaction.
- Higher party performance \Rightarrow more satisfaction.
- Higher proportionality \Rightarrow more satisfaction.
- More generally, the findings indicate that citizens can distinguish between different aspects of the voting rules.

Extension: going comparative

- Results specific to Austria?
- No, same results in Sweden (similar electoral system used in Austria) (work conducted with Högström John)
- Results specific to (Austrian and Swedish) proportional system?
- Data collection currently under way in UK (majoritarian system) and Ireland (STV system)