

Relationship between perception of Political Systems and electoral Law

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1 Abstract

1.1 Why this was made

There's a massive body of literature describing the effect of electoral law on Political systems, but it's not been backed with any substantial research regarding the perception of said systems. The aim of this paper is to study said perception, and what systems best seem to fit the actual desire of the people subject to this paper's survey.

1.2 Methodology

The survey 161 answers. The data from these answers has been used to interpret a study made for the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) [1], which establishes a correlation between the amount of parties present in a political system, and its electoral law.

1.3 Results

From the data gathered, we reached the conclusion that the most suitable electoral law is a straight proportional system, as it seems that the most commonly preferred number of parties from the respondents was of 5, and according to the ODI study, proportional systems result in the most political parties being relevant. The drawback of proportional electoral systems, it's slowness, also was the lowest ranked by the respondents when asked which problem was the least important in government

2 The Survey

The survey used had the following questions:

- what's your gender?
- What's your highest education level?
- how old are you?
- Are you of voting age in your country?
- What country are you from?
- where would you put yourself on the political spectrum?
- "How many (medium-size to large) parties do you think should be present in a healthy political system?"
- (small parties such as the Libertarian party in the United States do not count for the purposes of this survey: the United States in this case would be considered to have 2 parties, even though it technically has more)"
- "How many (medium-size to large) parties do you think there are in your country's political system?"

2.1 Sample Demographics

2.1.1 Gender Distribution

The distribution across genders was heavily slanted towards men (65%), and slightly less women (29.3%), with a small component of non-binary people (3%), a small amount of people who declined to answer (1.8%).

2.1.2 Highest Education Level

Most people reported a highest education level of a High School diploma (37.2%), followed by Bachelor degree (30.5%), Masters degree (14.6%), PhD (9.1%), and finally lower (8.5%). Cross referencing with countries and age groups, I was able to determine that most of the components of "lower" are still attending high school by checking the aggregate data of the single respondents that answered

”lower” in this question. The aggregate data for each respondent will not be published, as it might be considered profiling.

2.1.3 Age

The age varies, with the most being spread from 14 (1 respondent) to 81 (1 respondent). Most of the answers are within the age group of 18-22.

The overwhelming majority (93.9%) of respondents are of voting age in their country.

2.1.4 Nationality

Responses were widely spread across different countries, with different political systems: most of the respondents are from Italy (49.7%), followed by the USA (11.8%), Canada (4.3%), Germany and the UK (3.7% each), Denmark (3.1%), Australia (2.4%), Argentina and the Philippines (1.8% each). Results came from many other countries, but with less responses.

2.1.5 Political Orientation

Using the Political Compass, which takes into account economic orientation (Left-Center-Right) and social preference (Authoritarian-Center-libertarian), placed themselves in the Center on the social preference scale, followed by the Libertarian. Across both of these, the distribution remains the same: Most people identified as left-leaning, followed by Center, and finally by right leaning. Of the people who indicated an authoritarian position, most were center, closely followed by left-leaning, and finally by right-leaning.

From this we can safely conclude that a left-wing bias is present within this survey’s respondents.

2.1.6 Priorities

When asked “What do you value least in government” between Speed(e.g. in passing legislation), Stability,(allowing for long-term goals and plans) and Representation,(properly representing a country’s constituents), most responded with Speed (50.9%), followed by Representation (25.8%), and finally Stability (23.3%).

2.1.7 Field

Most respondents work or study within a STEM field (42.8%), followed by Social Sciences (25.8%), Humanities (13.2%) and HEAL (health, education, administration, literacy) (7.5%). The remaining answered others, with an aggregation of 1.8% for ”service”, and 3.1% declined to specify.

2.2 Parties

In this section, when talking about parties we are referring to medium to large parties: therefore in systems like the USA, where smaller parties such as the Libertarian party or the socialist party do exist, only two parties would be considered.

2.2.1 Preference

Within the population of the survey, a preference was indicated for 5-party political systems (36%), followed by 3 (29.3%), 4 (23.2%), 2 (9.8%), and finally 1-party systems (1.2%)

2.2.2 Present-day Perception

When asked how many parties they thought were present in their country, most (46.3%) stated that there were 5 parties, followed by 20.7% who reported a 2-party system, most likely coming in large part from the USA respondents, followed by 15.9% for 3 party-systems, 25% for 4-party systems, and by 1.8% for 1-party systems

2.3 Perception of the Electoral System

2.3.1 Self-Assessment

The respondents were asked to grade, from 1 to 5, how well they knew their country's electoral system, and most were quite confident, grading at 4 (32.9%), followed by 3 at 26.8%, 5 at 19.5%, 2 at 15.2%, and finally 1 at 5.5%.

2.3.2 Perception

When asked "What's your opinion on your country's electoral system", most answered neutrally or negatively, with 3 coming in at 34.1%, 2 at 29.3%, 1 at 17.7%, 4 at 14.6%, and 5 at 4.3%.

References

- [1] Alina Rocha Menocal. "Why electoral systems matter: an analysis of their incentives and effects on key areas of governance". In: (2011). URL: <https://odi.org/en/publications/why-electoral-systems-matter-an-analysis-of-their-incentives-and-effects-on-key-areas-of-governance/>.