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Introduction

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Citizens, Context, and Choice

Russell J. Dalton and Christopher J. Anderson

We can illustrate the premise of this volume with a simple thought experiment. Imagine two people with identical characteristics, such as their age, education, social class, and gender. Also, assume that they hold identical political values. If these two individuals were deciding whether to vote in the next national elections or whom to vote for in that election, we expect they would make identical choices. But now, consider if they lived in two nations with different electoral rules, different numbers of parties, or sets of parties that offered divergent policy programs. How would these variations in political context affect their political behavior? And how would individual characteristics find expression in different political contexts?

We can imagine many differences that might occur. For instance, these two identical people might decide differently on whether to cast a ballot because of the party choices available to each. The voter who has many party choices in an election may be more likely to find a party that she believes merits her support – and thus also be more likely to vote. Previous research suggests that more party choices might improve the voter's ability to translate her policy views into voting choices. Furthermore, as the number of significant parties increases, information may become more important in shaping voters' choices, or voters may use information differently when sorting through the available options. Similarly, when incumbents and challengers can be clearly identified in an election, a voter may be more likely to hold governments accountable for economic performance. And all these effects might vary across subgroups of the population, creating additional and more complex contextual effects.

The point of our thought experiment and these various examples is simple, but fundamentally important: People make political decisions and act politically as individuals who are embedded in political contexts that can affect their choices and behaviors. Thus, the nature of democratic elections – even if electorates are identical – can be influenced by the institutional context.

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This volume focuses on macro-political contexts and how they matter for citizens' electoral choices. We concentrate on three ways in which the macro-political environment might influence electoral outcomes. First, formal political institutions shape the options voters face, and this may affect *whether they participate in the election*. Second, the political context may also affect *how voters make party and candidate choices* in an election. Third, context may shape *parties' and candidates' incentives when communicating with voters* and the kind of information voters use to make their decisions. As a result, the nature and quantity of information sometimes creates divergent sets of choices in voters' minds. These three processes can affect electoral outcomes and public images of the electoral process. This volume investigates how formal institutions and the macro-political contexts they help create may affect citizen choices and how context influences political representation in modern democracies. Put simply, we examine how the political context affects the choices that voters make.

As others have noted (Anderson 2009; Klingemann 2009), modern electoral research regularly treats voters as autonomous political actors, often ignoring the effects of the political context. In part, this is a consequence of the methodology of national election studies. Public opinion surveys select respondents from many different sampling points to produce a nationally representative sample.[1] This makes it difficult to identify the immediate social and political context of each voter. What is more, many of the potentially most important differences in context – namely, the macro-political structures that delimit choices and define behavioral incentives – do not vary in a single national study.[2] The constitutional structure and the electoral rules broadly apply to all voters in a nation, and most of the variation is across nations. Thus, when we examine electoral behavior in a single nation, contextual effects are often hidden or constant because their impact is not apparent. The nature of party choices may change in a nation over time, as new parties enter the electorate or institutional structures change, but electoral research predominately focuses on one election in one nation.

Several pathbreaking studies have explored the impact of context in a variety of local settings.[3] This research typically required new sampling frameworks and additional data collection on local conditions. There have also been several significant steps forward in developing cross-national analyses of electoral behavior (Eijk and Franklin 1996; Thomassen 2005; Brug and Eijk 2007; Brug, Eijk, and Franklin 2007; Gunther, Puhle, and Montero 2007).[4] These studies present important theoretical questions and empirical evidence, and we rely upon them in the chapters that follow. However, this previous research is based on a relatively small number of nations with limited political and institutional variation across nations. Research on the effects of institutions requires broader cross-national comparisons with a large number of countries spanning significant variation in political contexts.

Our project compares citizens' political behavior across national political contexts with data collected by the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). The CSES's primary goal is to collect standardized public opinion surveys and national macro-level data that allow researchers to study the effects of electoral systems and other cross-national variables. Because of the comparability of survey items across a large and diverse set of countries, we can examine how the political context affects the way that people make their political choices. Previous analyses of the first module of CSES illustrated the potential of this project (e.g., Klingemann 2009), and we now focus these resources on the study of contextual effects on electoral behavior. In other words, the CSES allows us to evaluate the thought experiment posed at the start of this chapter.

We believe the results of this volume can significantly expand our understanding of citizen decision making by describing and explaining how context shapes this process. The results also have broad implications for the study of democratic institutions by demonstrating how alternative institutional structures affect voter choices and electoral outcomes. Finally, our analyses can identify what is generally consistent in voting behavior regardless of context, and thereby determine the processes of choice that are common across nations.

A framework for connecting context and citizen choice

In some form or other, the political context has long been part of our theoretical understanding of how citizens make electoral choices (Huckfeldt 2009; Anderson 2009). But the impact of constitutional and electoral systems on individual behavior has not been fully investigated in previous research. To addresses this topic we need to create a framework for examining the effect of macro-level political contexts on voter behavior:

1. First, we must conceptualize how contextual factors may affect individual behavior.
2. Second, we need an empirical base for our analyses.
3. Third, we have to identify which aspects of context are important and how they can be measured.

Conceptualizing contextual influences

Contextual influences can be rooted in various social, economic, and political phenomena that structure people's political experiences. This volume focuses on the formal institutional characteristics and party systems of countries and their consequences. This definition of institutional influences implicitly excludes

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economic and social structures or informal factors (such as norms and habits). We also presume that institutions are exogenous to voter choice, at least in the short run. That is, while we know that voters' choices can affect the institutional environment, we presume that in any one election, institutions are defined and recognizable and thus shape voter behavior.

Political institutions can affect voters in three basic ways: via direct, indirect, and contingent effects.[5] *Direct contextual effects* result when formal rules directly act on citizens' decisions to vote or how to vote. For example, voting on a Tuesday in November rather than for a period of two weeks in October may mean that more people will vote during the longer October period. That is, turnout is higher with an extended voting period then than for the single Election Day. In this example, institutional features directly affect incentives to vote – that is, the costs of going to the polls. Many comparative studies of political context resemble a "direct effects" model, at least empirically. For example, several studies demonstrate how the electoral systems or seat allocations affect aggregate electoral outcomes (Grofman and Lijphart 1986; Taagepera and Shugart 1989; Lijphart 1994).

Indirect contextual effects imply that institutions affect some intervening variable, which is the proximate cause of the ultimate outcome. For example, electoral rules – such as a high electoral threshold – may affect the formation of particular parties by producing differential incentives for political elites. This influences elite behavior via the resulting formation of particular parties and thus the supply of party choices, which in turn affects voter behavior. Or a single-member district electoral system may affect the political norms of individuals, such as feelings of political efficacy or the accountability of political parties, which thereby influences their likelihood to participate.

Indirect effects can also influence citizens' voting choices. For instance, Duverger (1954) maintained that the electoral system has direct effects on voting outcomes, which he called a "mechanical effect," by decreasing representation for smaller parties that do not win districts in majoritarian electoral systems or past the representation threshold in PR systems. When voters realize these mechanical effects based on previous elections, they may be less likely to vote for a small party, even if that party is their preferred choice. This "psychological effect" in Duverger's terms is a micro-level example of the indirect effects of the electoral system.

In addition, institutions can have *contingent contextual effects*. This means that the effect of an institutional feature on voter behavior depends on the presence of some third variable. Alternatively, an institutional characteristic can affect the relative impact an individual-level predictor of behavior. For instance, people with many resources are generally more likely to vote than people with few resources. However, the strength of this relationship will vary with institutional factors that affect the costs of voting. In this example, people with few resources may be more likely to vote if they live in a country with low costs

of voting, compared to a country where the cost of voting is high. Conversely, individuals with many resources may be only slightly less likely to vote in countries where the cost of voting is high.

Our empirical base

To examine the effects of context on voter behavior requires data on individual voters across many political contexts. The CSES provides such data.[6] The CSES is a collaborative research program among election study projects and has been conducted in over fifty countries. Participating countries include a common module of survey questions in their postelection surveys. All surveys must meet certain quality and comparability standards, and all are conducted as nationally representative surveys. The resulting survey data are combined with district- and macro-level voting, demographic, and institutional variables.

The CSES conducted its first module of surveys between 1996 and 2001 in thirty-four nations (some with more than one election study). Table 1.1 lists the nations in this module and the year of the election. The survey focused on public orientations toward parties, political institutions, and the functioning of the democratic process. CSES fielded its second module between 2001 and 2006 with a thematic focus on representation and accountability. The rightmost column of Table 1.1 lists the thirty-eight Module II nations and the year of the election. Surveys from either or both of these modules are used in the chapters of this volume.[7] The CSES project also compiled ancillary data on the political systems, electoral systems, and parties in each election that we use in our analyses.

The CSES project is especially appropriate for the study of contextual effects for several reasons. It is includes a large number of nations to provide the empirical base for cross-national comparisons; previous cross-national projects were typically based on a dozen nations or less. More important, the CSES nations provide a rich variety in contextual characteristics. These nations include a mix of electoral systems and constitutional structures that were generally underrepresented in past European-based cross-national studies. The CSES nations also include a wider range of cultural zones, including North America, East Asia, and Latin America, and the ability to compare established and new democracies. Indeed, one of the core rationales of this large cross-national project was to enable the types of comparative analyses presented in this volume.

Dimensions of context

We do not presume that ordinary citizens can identify and analyze the design and consequences of various institutional features, such as the

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Table 1.1 National elections included in the CSES

Nation	CSESI	CSESII
Albania	—	2005
Australia	1996	2004
Belgium	1999	2003
Belarus*	2001	—
Brazil	—	2002
Bulgaria	—	2001
Canada	1997	2004
Chile	1999	2005
Czech Republic	1996	2002
Denmark	1998	2001
Finland	—	2003
France	—	2002
Germany	1998	2002 (2)
Hong Kong*	1998, 2000	2004
Hungary	1998	2002
Iceland	1999	2003
Ireland	—	2002
Israel	1996	2003
Italy	—	2006
Japan	1996	2004
Korea, South	2000	2004
Kyrgyzstan*	—	2005
Lithuania	1997	
Mexico	1997, 2000	2003
Netherlands	1998	2002
New Zealand	1996	2002
Norway	1997	2001
Peru	2000, 2001	2006
Philippines	1998	2004
Poland	1997	2001
Portugal	2002	2002, 2005
Romania	1996	2004
Russia	1999, 2000	2004
Slovenia	1996	2004
Spain	1996, 2000	2004
Sweden	1998	2002
Switzerland	1999	2003
Taiwan	1996	2001, 2004
Ukraine	1998	—
United Kingdom	1997	2005
United States	1996	2004

Note: The nations with an asterisk were not included in this volume because the election was not clearly free, fair, and authoritative.

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intricacies of electoral rules, the logics of coalition formation, or the dynamics of party systems. Instead, we assume that voters understand institutions in the form of recognizable outcomes that influence and constrain their electoral behavior. Viewed in this way, institutions exist in an objective form through citizens' perceptions of their choices and environments. This also implies that it is not the formal electoral system institutions, which commonly are the focus of comparative analyses of electoral politics, that affect the voter. Rather, voters may react to the more proximate and identifiable options existing in the party system that flows from these institutional structures.

We presume that the political context defined by the electoral system and party system shapes the voters' behavior in three ways: by determining the number of choices, the nature of the choices, and the predictability of choices. Each of these traits can influence both the party choices the voter faces in the election, and their images of the past and future government resulting from the elections.

The following sections discuss the general rationale for each of these contextual categories. Each of the individual analytic chapters more extensively considers the specific research literature and hypothesizes about the contextual effects directly relevant to their topic. Our goal here is to describe the broad contextual dimensions used throughout this volume, and describe how these characteristics are distributed across the CSES nations.

Party and candidate choice

Perhaps the most common contextual model presumes that the amount of choice available to voters influences their electoral behavior and election outcomes. Anthony Downs (1957) argued that multiparty systems were more likely to generate ideological or policy voting and more likely to have high turnout because more choices were available to citizens. That is, when people can identify parties with political views that are close to their own positions, they are more likely to feel that voting matters and they are more likely to choose a party on the basis of policy considerations. Reviewing this literature and the empirical findings from Module I of the CSES, Klingemann and Wessels (2009) maintain that the "supply of party choices" is a strong influence on electoral behavior. They argue that the greater the number of meaningful alternatives in an election, the greater the voter's motivation to invest and weigh such criteria in making their electoral decisions. We believe the potential effects for political choice are more varied, but the important factor is that scholars agree that the supply of electoral options should matter, and the literature offers several different dimensions of supply.

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THE NUMBER OF OPTIONS

In simple terms, the diversity of choice is a matter of numbers. Baskin-Robbins offers thirty-one flavors to give more choices of ice cream to their customers. Similarly, a person who has multiple parties or candidates to select from at election time has more choice than the voter who has only two choices (or only one).

While it may seem apparent that the amount of choice can influence electoral outcomes and the electoral calculus of voters, actually measuring this trait is more complex. A natural starting place is to examine how institutions structure the choices available to voters. Duverger's Law (1951) spelled out the basic principle that the *rules of the electoral system* influence the number of significant parties competing in elections and winning legislative representation. Certainly one of the most consistently replicated analyses of electoral research demonstrates that proportional representation electoral systems have a greater number of competitive parties than majoritarian systems (Rae 1971; Grofman and Lijphart 1986; Taagepera and Shugart 1989). Proportional representation allows political parties to compete for the support of distinct social groups – or distinct policy views – and to successfully win seats in the legislature in proportion to their popular vote. Majoritarian systems, in contrast, prompt political groups to form coalitions and consolidate to win a plurality of the vote in these winner-takes-all systems. Arend Lijphart (1984, 1999) maintains that the structure of the electoral system, the number of parties, and other institutional characteristics create different structures of consensual and majoritarian democracy. Consensual and majoritarian systems influence participation patterns, electoral behavior, decision-making processes within government, and the outputs of the political process. This is one of the strongest arguments that institutions make basic differences in the workings of the democratic process, and which specific aspects of institutional structures are most important.

Rein Taagepera and Matthew Shugart (1999: 19) showed that *district magnitude*, which measures the number of parliamentary seats filled in each district, best predicts the proportionality of an electoral system and thus the number of parties competing in elections and winning seats in parliament. They also discuss how district magnitude affects citizens' voting choices, such as through greater strategic voting in systems where district composition may produce more "wasted" votes.[8] The electoral rules (majoritarian/PR) and district magnitude are occasionally used as proxies for the amount of party choice since both are readily available and stable traits of an electoral system. These institutional variables should affect the number of meaningful parties from which voters can choose.

A more direct indicator of the diversity of choice is the number of parties that actually compete in an election. Simply counting parties, however, is imprecise because many parties compete without a significant chance of winning

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representation. Even in majoritarian systems, many parties gain a position on the ballot but then garner very few votes. To account for this, Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera thus developed a measure of the *effective number of parties* (Laakso and Taagepera 1979; Taagepera and Shugart 1999; Taagepera 2007). The effective number of parties weights the number of parties by their size, so that small parties count less than large parties.[9]

The CSES nations span a wide range of institutional contexts and the corresponding number of partisan choices (Table 1.2 and the appendix to this volume). Of the thirty-six democracies included in Module II, six have predominately majoritarian legislative elections, twenty-one are predominately proportional, and nine have mixed systems. District magnitude also widely varies across these nations.[10] Both Israel and the Netherlands use a single nationwide constituency to select members of parliament, which produces a district magnitude of 120 and 150, respectively (the number of seats in each parliament). In the Netherlands, for instance, it takes only 0.67 percent of the nationwide vote to win a seat in parliament, which should encourage even small parties to compete (and win seats). At the other extreme, the majoritarian electoral systems have district magnitudes near 1, which means that even receiving a large proportion of the vote in a district may not yield a seat in parliament if another party has a plurality.

The third data column in Table 1.2 describes the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) based on the party vote shares in the legislative election. This ranges from 2.17 effective electoral parties in the 2004 election for the U.S. House of Representatives to 8.86 parties in Belgium's highly fragmented and regionalized election to the Chamber of Representatives. The next column presents the effective number of legislative parties (ENLP), based on the party seat shares in the parliament. Fewer parties typically gain representation compared to the number of parties who compete in the election, so the effective number of legislative parties is smaller than the effective number of electoral parties. These two variables are strongly related ($r = .90$), however.

As prior research suggests, the institutional structure of the electoral system is related to the effective number of parties. Based on the nations in Table 1.2, there is a strong correlation between a majoritarian/PR electoral system and the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) and legislative parties (ENLP) ($r = .51$ and .56, respectively). In simple descriptive terms, majoritarian electoral systems average 2.4 effective legislative parties, and PR systems have 4.6 parties. Similarly, there is a positive relationship between district magnitude and the effective number of electoral parties (both are $r = .33$).

The nature of the electoral system may influence the content of electoral choice as well. The clearest example is the distinction between party-centered voting choices, such as in closed party list systems where voters choose between fixed party slates and a single transferable vote (STV) system where candidate-centered choices determine electoral outcomes. Presumably, party-based voting

Table 1.2 Diversity of choice in party systems

Country	Electoral system	District magnitude	Effective number of electoral parties	Effective number of legislative parties	Party-candidate centered	Polarization index
Albania	Mixed	11.10	2.76	2.25	3.6	4.47
Australia	Majoritarian	0.90	3.12	2.43	8.6	2.79
Belgium	PR	7.50	8.86	7.02	2.9	4.53
Brazil	PR	19.00	8.36	8.41	2.9	2.00
Bulgaria	PR	7.70	3.92	2.91	1.4	4.37
Canada	Majoritarian	1.00	3.76	3.03	4.3	2.06
Chile	PR	2.00	6.05	5.56	2.9	4.95
Czech Republic	PR	25.00	4.80	3.66	2.9	5.43
Denmark	PR	10.50	4.69	4.47	7.1	3.57
Finland	PR	13.33	5.91	4.93	7.1	2.85
France	Majoritarian	1.00	5.06	2.23	5.7	3.29
Germany	Mixed	11.20	3.86	3.37	3.6	2.70
Hungary	Mixed	1.96	2.80	2.21	5.7	5.85
Iceland	PR	7.90	3.92	3.71	1.4	4.08
Ireland	PR	4.00	3.94	3.30	10.0	2.20
Israel	PR	120.00	6.96	6.17	1.4	3.87
Italy	PR	23.70	7.73	7.70	1.4	3.89
Japan	Mixed	1.54	3.82	2.80	3.6	2.77
Korea, South	Mixed	8.60	3.36	2.35	3.6	3.55
Mexico	Mixed	16.60	3.40	2.98	3.6	2.10
Netherlands	PR	150.00	6.02	5.79	2.9	3.64
New Zealand	Mixed	24.00	4.09	3.75	3.6	3.35

Norway	PR	10.00	6.14	5.35	1.4	3.75
Peru	PR	4.80	6.36	3.72	2.9	1.71
Philippines	Majoritarian	1.00	3.19	—	3.6	0.46
Poland	PR	16.70	4.49	3.59	2.9	4.92
Portugal ('02)	PR	10.50	3.15	2.58	1.4	3.44
Romania	PR	7.80	3.79	3.31	1.4	2.43
Russia	Mixed	113.00	5.14	3.37	1.4	3.11
Slovenia	PR	11.00	5.91	4.89	2.9	3.15
Spain	PR	6.90	3.04	2.49	1.4	4.33
Sweden	PR	11.60	4.51	4.22	2.9	4.07
Switzerland	PR	9.10	5.46	4.99	7.1	4.01
Taiwan ('01)	Mixed	11.50	3.55	3.47	3.6	1.14
United Kingdom	Majoritarian	1.00	3.58	2.44	4.3	2.36
United States	Majoritarian	1.00	2.17	2.01	5.7	2.43

Source: See Appendix to this volume.

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that focuses on party ideology or the accountability of parties should be stronger in the former electoral system and candidate image should have more weight in the latter. The next column of 1.2 presents a coding of electoral systems based on a framework developed by David Farrell and Ian McAllister (2006). Ireland's STV system rates a perfect 10 on their scale, while the closed party list systems receive a score of 1.4.

THE CLARITY OF CHOICES

With all due respect to Baskin-Robbins, the diversity of choice is more than just a count of numbers. Thirty-one flavors of vanilla would not represent meaningful choice. The choice thesis implies that choices are meaningful as well as numerous. Many of the consequences attributed to the number of parties actually are based on the presumption that parties differ and that more parties means more meaningful choice. To disentangle these, we need to distinguish between the quantity and nature of choices available to voters.

We might think of party choices as a function of the number of social cleavages that exist in a society and thus the number of parties that compete because they have a distinct constituency to represent (Lijphart 1984). Or, one can measure the diversity of choice by the number of distinct party families that exist in the party system (Sigelman and Yough 1978). Having the ability to choose between a socialist, green, and left-liberal party represents greater choice than selecting between three parties of a factionalized socialist bloc.

An alternative measure of party choice is based on the ideological polarization in a party system. Aside from the number of choices, we are interested in the extent to which the party choices are differentiated along some important dimension, such as Left–Right positions. Party system polarization reflects the dispersion of political parties along an ideological or policy dimension. Giovanni Sartori (1976), for example, compared the consequences of centripetal and centrifugal party systems. Similarly, many of Anthony Downs' theoretical arguments (1957) on the consequences of party system competition are based on parties' presumed distribution along an ideological continuum. Several cross-national empirical studies have demonstrated that the polarization of political parties can strongly influence the sources of electoral choice through indirect and contingent contextual effects (Thomassen 2005; Dalton 2006; Wessels and Schmitt 2008; Klingemann and Wessels 2009).

We estimate party system polarization as the dispersion of parties along the Left–Right dimension (see Chapter 5). The use of the Left–Right scale does not imply that people possess a sophisticated conceptual framework or theoretical understanding of liberal–conservative philosophy. We simply expect that positions on this scale summarize the issues and cleavages that structure political competition in a nation. Ronald Inglehart (1990: 273), for instance, showed that people in most nations can locate themselves on the Left–Right scale and

he described the scale as representing "whatever major conflicts are present in the political system" (also see Fuchs and Klingemann 1989; Huber and Inglehart 1995; Knutsen 1999).

Russell Dalton (2008) presented a Polarization Index measuring the dispersion of parties along the Left–Right scale (the rightmost column of Table 1.2).[11] Low values indicate that the parties position themselves close together which limits ideological polarization or choice for the voters. This is the case in party systems such as in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Conversely, a system with a number of large parties including those at the political extremes is a highly polarized system that offers very diverse choices, such as Iceland, Poland, and Spain.

Previous research presumed that ideological choice was closely related to the effective number of parties in a political system. Surely, when larger numbers of parties compete because of numerous cleavages, ideological polarization was greater. Conversely, following Downs, a smaller number of parties in majoritarian systems will gravitate toward the median voter, reducing ideological polarization. As the legislative elections from CSES module II demonstrate, however, party system polarization and the effective number of electoral parties are in fact largely separate traits (Figure 1.1). Ideological polarization is not significantly related to the effective number of electoral parties (r = .13) or legislative parties (r = .07). For instance, most majoritarian systems – such as Australia, the United States, and Great Britain – have a relatively small number of effective

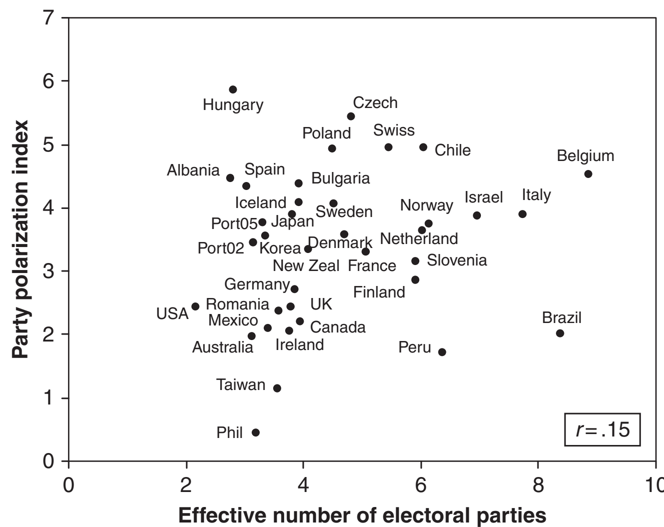

Figure 1.1 Effective numbers of parties and party system polarization
Source: Table 1.2

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electoral parties, but their party system polarization is roughly equal to some nations with two or three times as many effective parties, such as Hungary, Albania, and Spain.[12] At the same time, Brazil and Peru have a relatively large number of effective electoral parties, but only modest levels of polarization.[13]

In the chapters that follow, one of our significant findings is the contrast in the impact of the number of choices versus the polarization of choices in contemporary electoral politics. While previous research on electoral politics has focused on the amount of choice, several contributions to this volume reveal that the clarity of options is also a strong contextual influence on many aspects of electoral behavior.

THE STABILITY OF CHOICES

Another contextual factor is the stability or institutionalization of the choice set. A consolidated democracy typically provides a context in which elections are recurring contests between essentially the same group of political parties. In this situation, institutionalized political parties are better able to build political ties to a distinct constituency, and then represent these groups within the political process. Voters who face the same party choices across elections should find it easier to vote based on past political performance and future policy goals (Duch and Stevenson 2008). Elections are not slates of unknown parties, but opportunities to evaluate the past policies of the incumbents and the future prospects of parties who are known, predictable entities.

Many of these characteristics are underdeveloped in new democracies. The social and political infrastructure for free and fair elections can be more tenuous. New political parties have to develop a programmatic identity and attract a stable core of voters on that basis. The degree of organizational structure, mass member support, and a party administrative elite is typically lower, which impedes the parties' ability to educate voters, mobilize supporters, and ultimately represent these voters (Mair and van Biezen 2001; Biezen 2003). Political parties are themselves less stable as new parties form and different parties compete across successive elections. Furthermore, transitional parties often appear more pragmatic than programmatic; or they compete based on valence issues, the personal charisma of the party leader, or clientelism and district service. Volatility in party offerings makes it difficult for voters to make meaningful choices, and to reward or punish political parties on programmatic grounds. Citizens in new democracies typically display weaker party identification and lower affect for parties overall –which might depress turnout and affect the correlates of vote choice (Dalton and Weldon 2007).

The CSES nations cover a wide range on many key elements of democratic and party system development (Table 1.3). One simple indicator is the amount of democratic experience a country has had over the past half century. The first column in the table counts the number of years a nation has been democratic

Table 1.3 Development of the political and party systems

Country	Years of democracy (1955–)	Freedom House score	Rank on Voice and Accountability	Press Freedom	Age of party system
Albania	8	3.0	48.6	51	10
Australia	49	1.0	94.2	14	86
Belgium	48	1.0	96.2	9	56
Brazil	17	2.5	57.2	32	18
Bulgaria	11	2.0	60.1	29	12
Canada	49	1.0	96.6	15	77
Chile	16	1.0	88.9	24	13
Czech Republic	9	1.5	76.4	25	12
Denmark	46	1.0	96.6	9	94
Finland	48	1.0	99.0	10	81
France	47	1.0	83.2	17	47
Germany	47	1.0	94.7	15	53
Hungary	12	1.5	88.5	23	12
Iceland	48	1.0	98.6	8	55
Ireland	47	1.0	90.9	16	54
Israel	48	2.0	64.4	27	11
Italy	51	1.0	85.1	35	12
Japan	49	1.5	76.9	18	20
Korea, South	16	1.5	69.2	29	9
Mexico	6	2.0	55.3	38	26
Netherlands	47	1.0	97.6	15	45
New Zealand	47	1.0	100.0	8	56
Norway	46	1.0	96.6	9	95
Peru	26	2.5	49.0	39	13
Philippines	17	2.5	50.0	34	23
Poland	12	1.5	84.6	18	9
Portugal ('02)	26	1.0	90.9	15	28
Romania	14	2.5	58.7	47	14
Russia	14	5.5	33.2	67	7
Slovenia	13	1.0	87.5	19	14
Spain	26	1.0	89.9	19	29
Sweden	47	1.0	98.1	8	47
Switzerland	48	1.0	95.2	10	99
Taiwan ('01)	9	1.5	76.0	21	14
United Kingdom	50	1.0	93.8	18	120
United States	49	1.0	89.4	13	152

Note: The scoring of variables is as follows: Freedom House, 1 is high; Voice and Accountability, 100 is high; Press Freedom, 1 is high. See Appendix for more information on each characteristic.

Source: See Appendix to this volume.

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between 1955 and the year of the survey. Among the CSES Module II nations this ranges from six years to more than fifty years. Other indicators describe the level of democratic development in a nation. The second data column displays the widely used Freedom House scores, which ranges from 1 (highest level of democracy) to 7 (the lowest score). Most of these nations score relatively well on the Freedom House statistic, because it emphasizes the procedural framework of democracy. Only one nation (Albania) is ranked as partly free, and one nation (Russia) as not free in their rankings.[14] More refined measures of political development come from two other statistics. The World Bank's Voice and Accountability Index measures the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and free media.[15] The Freedom House also calculates a Press Freedom index that considers the legal, political, and economic constraints on freedom of the press[16] The Press Freedom index ranks seven nations as having only a partly free press, and one nation as not free (Russia). Since Press Freedom taps the quality of freedom rather than just the institutionalization of elections, it may be even more important in identifying contexts where civil society groups can flourish, and free and fair elections can occur.

While these different characteristics of democratic development are strongly interrelated, these are also theoretically separate traits[17] Nations can possess a distinct mix of characteristics. This is seen in Figure 1.2, which plots the age of the democratic party system against the level of Press Freedom (reversed in low/high values to simplify the presentation). As one might expect, the United States, Britain, and other established democracies have long-established party systems and score high on Press Freedom. The other established democracies also score highly on Press Freedom, including Spain and Portugal that underwent their democratic transitions in the 1970s. The pattern is more varied among new democracies on the left side of the figure. Some of these new democracies have relatively high levels of Press Freedom despite their recent transition, such as Poland, Slovenia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. But other transitional systems, such as Russia and Romania, score low on Press Freedom (and on the World Bank's Voice and Accountability Index). We might expect to find more structured and meaningful voting choices in the former set of postcommunist states, but inchoate party systems and voter choice in the latter.

Government choice

In addition to the menu of party choice available to voters, political institutions also structure the choice of governments. These two aspects of the institutional environment are related, but not coterminous. Partisan voting is choosing the political party that best represents one's ideological issue or group preferences in the parliament and possibly the government – this is *voting as an instrument of*

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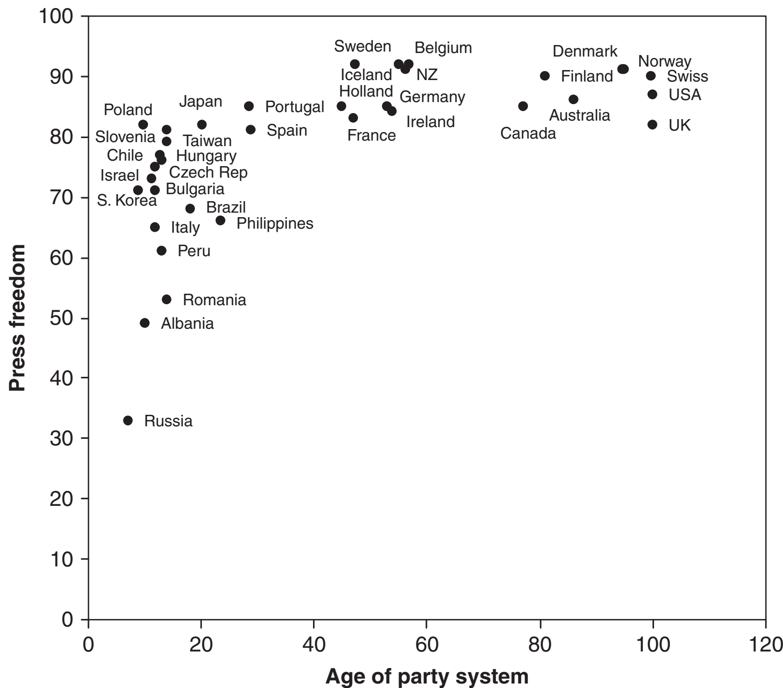

Figure 1.2 Party system age and press freedom

Source: Table 1.3

Note: The values for press freedom have been transposed so that higher values indicate more freedom.

partisan representation (cf. McDonald and Budge 2005). In addition, voting can be viewed as evaluating and influencing the composition of the government rather than simply a partisan choice, making *voting as a mechanism of democratic accountability*. In this latter case, people might choose parties with a goal of influencing the future government – prospectively selecting governors with the greatest future promise – or retrospectively rewarding and punishing (sanctioning) past holders of office. This shifts the logic of voting away from choosing the party that is most consistent with one's interests to evaluating parties or blocs of parties with a goal of assessing the performance of current government and influencing future ones.

Retrospective judgments are typically based on the so-called reward–punishment (or sanctioning) model, which lies at the heart of accountability evaluations (see Downs 1957; Anderson 2007*b*). The reward–punishment model often focuses on the government's performance in handling the economy (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000). But economic voting is an example of a broader category of performance voting that follows a principal–agent logic, where voters are the principals and

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governors act as their agents. Representation via accountability – rooted in performance voting – thus is an alternative vision of democracy that enables electorates to exert control because of their ability to "throw the rascals out."[18] In our framework, political institutions can structure government choice in ways that are analogous to party choice by influencing the number, clarity, and predictability of choices over alternative governments.

THE NUMBER AND CLARITY OF OPTIONS

The complexity of political institutions affects the ease with which voters can figure out which officeholders or parties are responsible for government policy performance. Fewer parties in the government produce a simplified choice. Britain has been the classic example of a country with simple governing choices. It has previously had a well-defined incumbent with a single party holding legislative and executive power. A simple reward–punishment mechanism should function most smoothly in such two-party, single-party incumbent executive systems. If British voters are satisfied, they can vote for the incumbent; if they are dissatisfied, they vote for an opposition party. Currently, however, this is not the case as the UK is being ruled by a two-party coalition.

As the number of parties within the government increases, parties may be better able to escape voters' attention or perhaps diffuse the blame for government policy outcomes. Coalition government in parliamentary democracies, or divided government (cohabitation) in presidential systems, makes the assignment of responsibility more difficult, even when government officials do not try to obfuscate responsibility. Thus, the simplest measure of the number of government options is the number of parties that form the governing coalition. As Table 1.4 shows, although most legislatures have a coalition of parties in the majority, the number of governing parties is typically small. Most legislatures in the CSES nations have only a single-party majority holding cabinet seats. Even if we exclude the nations with majoritarian electoral systems, a number of countries with proportional electoral systems had single-party government. At the other end of the distribution, Italy's six and Belgium and Finland's five governing parties represent a distribution of cabinet power unlike most others.

In reality, the definition of incumbency and alternative choices of governments is more complex than simply counting the number of parties in the cabinet. As a measure of the clarity of government responsibility, the CSES project collected data on the number (and percentage) of cabinet portfolios held by each governing party. These data can be used to calculate the *effective number of governing parties*, similar to the effective number of electoral parties described above. These data on parties' shares of cabinet responsibility also can show whether individual parties with greater governing responsibility are more likely to be singled out by voters for reward and punishment.

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As Table 1.4 shows, there can be a significant difference between simply counting the number of governing parties and calculating their effective number. Japan's and Ireland's two governing parties, when weighted by their share of cabinet seats, really reflect a coalition of one large and one small party, resulting in an effective number of governing parties of 1.14. In contrast, the effective number of governing parties in the Netherlands (2.78) is quite close to the simple number of governing parties (3.0), reflecting a coalition of similarly sized, and thus similarly responsible governing parties.

Beyond the number of governing parties, a related approach investigates how formal institutional design and political contexts affect the assignment of credit and blame to incumbent governments, and how this shapes the choices voters have over alternative governments (Powell and Whitten 1993; Anderson 1995a; Powell 2000). This approach emphasizes the concept of "clarity of responsibility." There are two parts to clarity: First, does the government have the power to implement its policies? Second, is the government responsible for the outcomes that voters see? Some systems vest significantly more responsibility in the executive branch, relative to the legislative branch. When a unified national government is clearly responsible for performance outcomes, voters' choices should be simplified.

The nations in this volume display significant variation with regard to the clarity of (formal) government responsibility. The CSES project collected information on the type of executive authority spelled out in a country's constitution.[19] Executives whose formal powers make them dominant vis-à-vis the cabinet and legislature bear greater responsibility for political outcomes.

Table 1.4 reveals that the Anglo-American democracies like Australia, Canada, or the United Kingdom have a very powerful executive vis-à-vis the legislature. In contrast, the Netherlands, Denmark, the Philippines, and Sweden have relatively weak executives. Conversely, the parliaments in these nations are quite strong, thus sharing policymaking powers more equally among these different branches of government.

This is related to but not synonymous with the distinction between presidential and parliamentary systems. Presidential systems provide a particularly interesting group of elections because they ask voters to choose a single incumbent who, if not in reality, is at least perceived as being in charge of the government. Table 1.4 shows that the executive in some parliamentary systems (scored 2) have significant powers vis-à-vis the legislature (e.g., Australia), while others do not (e.g., Ireland).

Duch and Stevenson (2008) have recently proposed a summary measure for the distribution of responsibility, a variant of which we use for this volume. Our measure compares the actual distribution of cabinet portfolios among parties in a given legislature to the hypothetical case where portfolios are distributed evenly across all parties in the legislature (see Chapter 7 and the appendix to this volume). This measure is highly correlated with the effective number of

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Table 1.4 Government characteristics affecting electoral supply

Country	# Parties pre-election government	Effective no. of governing parties	Type of executive	Power of executive vis-à-vis legislative branch	Concentration of responsibility	Government stability (months)	Government stability (percent)
Albania	2	1.11	2		0.88	67	47
Australia	2	1.41	2	4	0.60	103	95
Belgium	5	4.81	2		0.31	134	93
Brazil	4	2.94	0	1	0.45	118	82
Bulgaria	1	1.00	1	1	0.89	78	54
Canada	1	1.00	2	4	0.89	84	47
Chile	3		0		0.48	144	100
Czech Rep.	1	1.00	2	2	0.89	114	79
Denmark	2	1.22	2	0	0.76	86	60
Finland	5	3.12	2	1	0.38	98	68
France	2	1.49	1	4	0.63	85	47
Germany	2	1.56	2	1	0.72	141	98
Hungary	2	1.56	2	4	0.64	101	70
Iceland	2	1.80	2	0	0.55	143	99
Ireland	2	1.14	2	1	0.87	102	57
Israel	3		2	1	0.48	13	9
Italy	6		2		0.51	72	40
Japan	2	1.14	2	1	0.80	39	27
Korea, South	1	1.00	0	1	0.82	144	100
Mexico	1	1.00	0	1	0.82	216	100
Netherlands	3	2.78	2	0	0.48	141	98
New Zealand	2	1.39	2	2	0.87	57	53
Norway	1	1.00	2	2	0.94	60	42

Peru	1	1.00	0			120	67
Philippines	1	1.00	0	0	0.86	—	—
Poland	1	1.00	1	0	0.71	68	47
Portugal '02	2	1.00	1	1	0.73	105	73
Romania	1	1.00	1		0.89	73	51
Russia	1	1.00	0			—	—
Slovenia	3	1.85	1		0.65	46	32
Spain	1	1.00	2	1	0.95	108	75
Sweden	1	1.00	2	0	0.93	96	67
Switzerland	4	3.93	2	2	0.43	36	25
Taiwan '01	1	1.00	1	3		54	50
UK	1	1.00	2	4	0.94	157	87
United States	1	1.00	0	1	0.71	144	100

Source: See Appendix to this volume.

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legislative parties, but it is derived from a different theoretical intuition. Table 1.4 shows that the concentration of responsibility can be quite low, both in presidential and parliamentary systems, as the scores for Chile and Israel demonstrate, or high as in countries as different as Norway, Spain, or Romania.

When parties have clearly delineated policies and identities, assessing responsibility for past policies is relatively straightforward. In other instances, the coalition party responsible for a specific policy is more difficult to identify. In simple numerical terms, presidential systems provide clear choices for and against a single incumbent executive, while parliamentary systems typically diffuse the focus on several parties. In addition, if voters seek to select governments prospectively rather than retrospectively, this increases the complexity voters' calculus because it implies that voters are choosing between alternative governments that might form after the election. In countries with coalition government, several alternative governing coalitions are usually plausible and the actual composition of the government occurs after the election, thereby decreasing the voters' ability to define the government by their votes.

STABILITY OF OPTIONS

The extent of performance voting should be a function of the predictability of the government choices. The stability of democratic institutions – and in particular the institutionalization of elections as part of this – should also affect voters' faith that elections matter and their ability to hold government accountable in the future. In this way, stability could have a similar effect: when citizens have not yet learned electoral politics, their motivation and ability to hold governments to account may be lower. How are voters to judge governments retrospectively when democracy has functioned for only a short while?

Even in countries with long histories of elections, stability can matter. Frequent government alternation and frequent elections should make it more difficult for voters to assign responsibility, as it becomes more difficult to connect government action and policy outcomes. This should diminish the likelihood that voters will turn out the incumbent government even when policy conditions are bad. And this, in turn, exacerbates any potential moral hazard problem inherent in the voter–government relationship (cf. Fearon 1999).

The measurement of government stability is complicated by the different length of electoral cycles, differences between presidential and parliamentary systems, and the complexity of defining when there is a significant change in government between elections (Conrad and Golder 2010). We define stability in two ways. First, we simply counted the number of months the three governments leading up to the CSES election had held office. This is presented on the right side of Table 1.4.[20] Because the length of the electoral cycle varies from three to five years, the total possible length of three governments varies widely.

Therefore, we also calculated the length of the last three governments as a percentage of three full electoral cycles, which is displayed in the next column in the table.

These two dimensions of government stability show considerable variation across the set of CSES nations. In addition, there is only a weak relationship between both measures, because the effect of differential electoral cycles greatly affects the simple count of months in a manner that distorts the results. Our analyses suggest that the percentage measure of stability is a more robust indicator of the stability of recent governments. This varies from full electoral cycles in several nations with constitutionally fixed electoral cycles, often coupled with presidential systems, such as the United States, Mexico, and Chile. At the other extreme are a set of highly fragmented parliamentary systems where governments are very transitory – on average lasting for less than a quarter of an electoral cycle (e.g., Israel and Italy). Lower stability means that voters may be frequently asked to evaluate the parties in frequent elections, or experience elections where control of the government has change in the interelection period. This greater instability may make it more difficult for voters to judge governments retrospectively when they have been in power only a short while, or when they can reasonably assume that the government they select will not celebrate an anniversary. Volatility blurs the responsibility of parties in government.

The various chapters in this volume use different subsets of the variables described in this section because certain contextual features are more relevant for certain aspects of electoral behavior. Information on the contextual variables described above are presented in this volume's appendix.

A note on methodology

To analyze contextual effects, most of the chapters rely on multilevel estimation techniques. These estimation models account for the multilevel nature of the data and remedy the statistical problems associated with traditional estimation techniques (clustering, nonconstant variance, underestimation of standard errors, etc.) (cf. Snijders and Bosker 1999). Because most chapters examine data at the individual level and the country level, they have a hierarchical structure, with one level (individual respondents) nested within the other (countries). The most complex multilevel models are presented in Chapter 6 by Yuliya Tverdova, who studies vote choice at three levels of analysis: individual-level, party-level, and nation-level effects.

In addition, identifying indirect and contingent contextual effects requires an examination of individual level behavior nested in a variety of political contexts. Using advanced multilevel modeling techniques allows us to examine the interaction of variables from both levels. For instance, we earlier discussed

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how the electoral system may affect the level of strategic voting in the electorate; who casts strategic votes is also likely to interact with the level of voter sophistication. Multilevel models can estimate such interactive effects, and each chapter details the specific methodological choices the authors have made.

The plan of the volume

This volume is part of a developing research program based on the CSES (Kedar and Shively 2005; Klingemann 2009). We assembled an international team of scholars, partly from the CSES principal investigators and partly from academic specialists on comparative electoral behavior. We developed a research plan for this project, and then met to discuss and compare our initial findings.[21] These findings led a revised and expanded research plan and ultimately to this volume.

We have organized our presentation around three themes. In the first part, individuals face an initial question of whether to become politically engaged, and whether the political context shapes that decision. Miki Caul Kittilson and Christopher Anderson examine how the range and diversity of choices available to voters affect voter engagement. They find that the electoral supply does not have a direct effect on turnout. Instead, it has a contingent effect by conditioning the effects of civic orientations and mobilization on people's decision to vote. Jeffrey Karp and Susan Banducci analyze citizen participation in election campaigns beyond vote turnout. They find that a nation's level of democratic experience, the polarization of the party system, and other contextual variables significantly influence campaign participation, as well as the individual level correlates of participation.

The second part of the volume looks at the correlates of voting choices and the impact of the institutional context. Robin Best and Michael McDonald introduce this part with a conceptual discussion of the principles required for individuals to be policy-directed voters. The long debate on the nature of mass belief systems makes presumptions about the public's political abilities, which Best and McDonald evaluate using the CSES. They conclude that the majority of electorates consistently vote with their broad policy orientations, but other factors also shape electoral choices. Russell Dalton extends this discussion by examining the influence of Left–Right orientations on voting choice. He finds that Left–Right attitudes are significantly related to voting in most nations, but with substantial cross-national variance. The diversity of choice, rather than the number of choices, most clearly enables voters to identify a party that shares their political preferences.

Yuliya Tverdova examines how the impact of party and candidate images on voting is shaped by contextual factors. She focuses in particular on contextual

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characteristics that highlight the importance of both predictors, such as presidential elections and type of elections (party-centered or candidate-centered). She shows that party images play a substantial role in determining vote choice, but candidate-centered voting is also significant. The strength of both party and leader effects are only weakly linked to context factors. Chapter 7 examines whether citizens hold government's accountable for their performance when they vote, and whether contextual factors influence this relationship. Hellwig finds that performance assessments matter more for the vote when responsibility is concentrated and when the party system provides for a wide range of policy choice. This second part closes with André Blais and Thomas Gschwend's study of partisan defections in voting and the ways in which contextual features – electoral rules and the nature of the electoral supply – affect defection rates. They find that formal electoral rules do not affect defection directly. Instead, the only significant contextual effect is a conditional one in which desertion occurs almost exclusively at the expense of weak parties in the most disproportional systems.

The third part of our volume considers the potential consequences of context for political representation and sources of democratic legitimacy. G. Bingham Powell addresses the question of democratic representation at the macro-level by investigating the fit between citizens' Left-Right positions and those of their government. He finds a high level of correspondence in the CSES nations, and other evidence suggests that voter–government agreement has increased in recent decades. Moreover, he shows that the Left–Right polarization of the party system increases the distance between the overall public and their elected governments. Finally, Christopher Anderson analyzes the impact of voter–party congruence at the level of individual voters. It shows that countries' macro-level electoral institutions and supply of choices together with individuals' predispositions interactively shape citizens' sense that their views are represented. While voters who locate themselves in the political middle generally have more negative views about democratic representation, the gap in feelings of representation between voters located in the middle of the political spectrum and away from it is larger in systems that provide polarized partisan choices and smaller in countries with proportional electoral systems.

Returning to the two "identical" individuals we described at the outset of this chapter, this volume's findings demonstrate that institutional context does matter in fundamental ways for the choices they make and, by implication, for the working of the electoral process in contemporary democracies. Many of the basic causal processes of electoral behavior are common across the diverse nations in the CSES. For instance, political skills and resources are strong predictors of participation in virtually all nations, and Left–Right orientations and evaluations of governmental performance are also strong predictors of vote choice across nations. At the same time, contextual factors shape the strength of these relationships and the efficacy of representative government in several

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ways. The characteristics of political choices and the structure of the institutional context affect whether and how individuals participate in elections. They shape the partisan choices voters make. And, the context for choice shapes the representativeness of government and popular images of the party system and electoral process.

Our empirical findings have important implications for students of political behavior, but also for political scientists interested in political institutions. They reveal that formal institutions – such as electoral systems or constitutional provision for allocating power – matter less for the choices voters make than the political contexts that flow from formal institutions as well as the dynamic interactions of political elites and voters. In particular, the nature and polarization of partisan offerings, rather than the mechanical properties of institutions or the count of parties, is often what voters perceive and respond to most clearly at the ballot box. This suggests that understanding the connection between institutions and political behavior requires a clear focus on the connecting tissue of political supply that flows from institutions and that voters react to.

These findings also have important implications for the quality of representative democracy, if the goal is to allow people to express their political preferences through elections. The findings also show which aspects of the political context are relevant for these processes, and the results often conflict with current assumptions in the literature on political institutions. Thus, rather than tinkering only with the formal rules, institutional designers of the electoral process should consider how to strengthen democratic representation and accountability through the diversity of the choices they produce.

Notes

1. Collecting contextual data on a large number of sampling points is somewhat difficult. However, a larger problem is that typical area-probability samples do not produce random, representative samples at the level of primary sampling units. So even if contextual data for a small geographic area (a zip code or a city) were available, it would not be linked to a representative public opinion sample for that area.
2. We do not mean that there is no subnational variation or that differences across subnational units are inconsequential, only that electoral rules and other institutional structures are generally uniform within a nation. Local contextual effects tend to involve other characteristics that are difficult to study in national surveys (see Huckfeldt 2009).
3. There are several important local studies of contextual effects (see the literature reviewed in Huckfeldt 2009). However, the generalizability of findings is often limited because these analyses are based on a smaller geographic area and typically one election. One example of a clustered national survey studying contextual effects is Beck et al. (2004).

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4. *The European Voter* project (Thomassen 2005) compared voting patterns across six West European democracies. The European Election Study project described voting in European Parliament elections for the member states of the European Union, which were exclusively West European and a relatively small number of countries until the recent expansions of the European Union (Eijk and Franklin 1996; Brug and Eijk 2007). The Cross National Election Project is based on less than a dozen nations (Gunther, Puhle, and Montero 2007). Moreover, most of the research presented in these books does not focus on contextual effects explicitly.
5. For introductions to the politics of context, see Huckfeldt (1986, 2009) and Anderson (2007*a*).
6. We want to thank the principal investigators of the CSES member research groups for their efforts to collect these data and share with the international research community. The datasets used in this volume are available for free from the project website (www.cses.org).
7. We exclude Belarus, Hong Kong, and Kyrgyzstan because these were not free, fair, and effective elections. In addition, there are two surveys for the 2002 German Bundestagswahl, and we rely on the telephone survey as it is more representative of the population.
8. Other party systems' characteristics are potentially relevant to the number of parties that run in election and their likelihood of winning parliamentary representation. However, factors such as the formula used in calculating the PR distribution of seats or the threshold for sharing in the PR distribution of seats should have a minor influence compared to the two factors discussed above.
9. The volume's appendix presents the formula for both the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) and the effective number of legislative parties (ENLP).
10. This is the weighted mean district magnitude of the Lower House. This variable averages the number of representatives elected by each constituency size.
11. The calculation of the index is described in the volume's appendix. It has a value of 0 when all parties occupy the same position on the Left/Right scale, and 10 when all the parties are split between the two extremes of the scale. The index is comparable to the standard deviation of parties distributed along the dimension. We also examined several alternative measures of party dispersion and diversity, such as weighting or not weighting parties by their vote shares or measuring only the major parties (e.g., Kim and McDonald 2009). The initial polarization index appeared more robust in comparing these variables to various validity checks, and is more comparable to the ENEP measure, which also weights parties by their vote share. Thus, we use the initial index in this volume while recognizing that other aspects of party differentiation are worthy of consideration.
12. The form of the electoral system, majoritarian versus PR, is strongly related to the level of polarization in a party system ($r = .44$), but district magnitude is not significantly correlated with polarization ($r = .11$).
13. This does not mean, of course, that there are other lines of political division that are not captured by the left–right ideological polarization score.
14. The Freedom House treats nations between 1 and 2.5 as free, between 3.0–5.0 as partly free, and between 5.5 and 7.0 as not free. These scores are for the year in which the CSES survey was conducted.

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15. The voice and accountability scale runs from 0 at the lowest level to 100 at the highest level.
16. The Freedom House treats nations between 0 and 20 as having a free press, 31–60 as a partly free press, and 61–100 as not free. These scores are for the year in which the CSES survey was conducted.
17. The following are the correlations between these items:

Freedom House	.58			
Voice	.66	.89		
Free press	.65	.89	.91	
Party age	.69	.46	.46	.58
	Years	Free H.	Voice	Press

18. This view of accountability is not uncontested. In fact, the concern over individuals and institutions as the sources as well as cures of democracy's imperfections is central to long-standing debates among political theorists. For a review of this literature in the context of economic performance voting, see Anderson (2007*b*).
19. These include powers the head of government has over the selection and dismissal of cabinet officers, as well as the executive's powers over policy in the form of setting the agenda and powers to dissolve the legislature and call for votes of confidence.
20. Our definition of a change in government is primarily derived from McDonald and Mendes (2002), with additional data collected by the authors for more recent election and nations not covered in their database. Also see Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge (2000). In a few presidential systems, such as Mexico and the United States, we calculated presidential governments rather than legislative majorities. Since presidential terms are typically fixed, this produces high stability scores compared to more fluid parliamentary systems, even if the parliamentary majority in a presidential system is equally (in)stable.
21. The initial findings were presented at a conference hosted at Cornell University in June 2009. We greatly appreciate the support of The Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies and the Cornell Institute for European Studies (CIES) at Cornell University and the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) at the University of California, Irvine for this conference.