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Survey items related to the COVID-19 pandemic – a political science perspective
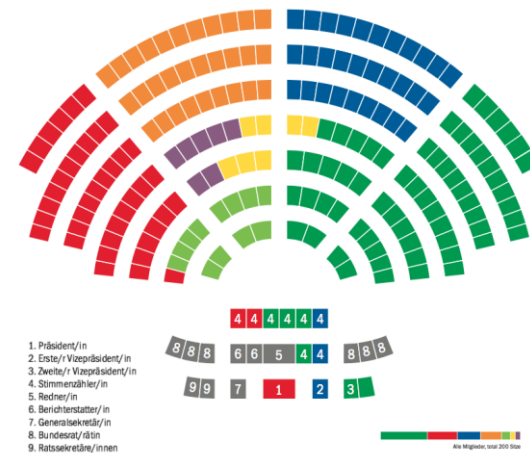
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Swiss COVID-19 Data Symposium

23 March 2021

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Presentation Outline

1. What is Selects?

2. The Selects Panel Survey

3. Survey items related to COVID-19

    – Specific COVID-19 questions

    – "Changes over time" due to pandemic?

4. Data availability

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What is Selects?

Selects Swiss Election Study

- Investigates electoral behaviour of Swiss citizens since 1995

- Main scientific goals:
  - How do citizens form their opinions in an election campaign?
  - What are the determinants of their political participation?
  - Why do they vote for a specific candidate or party?

- Funded by Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) and institutionalized at FORS since 2008
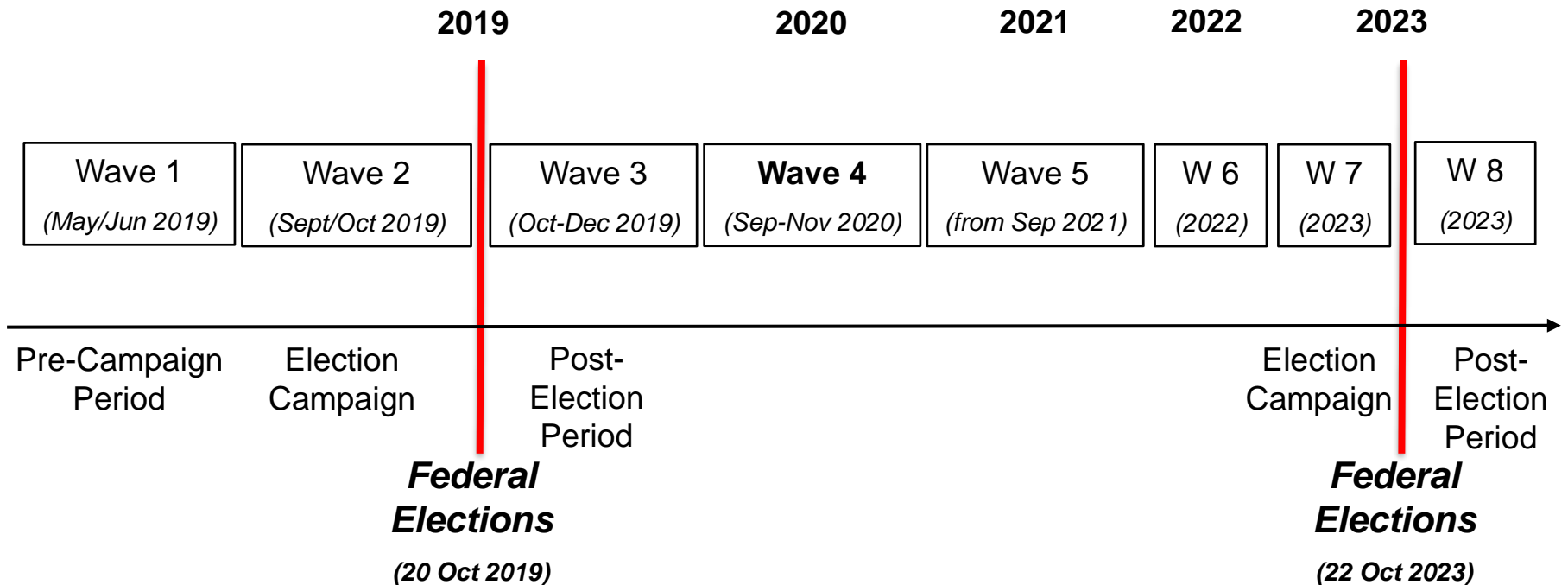
What is Selects?

Different components on different levels of analysis:

1. Post-Election Survey (citizens): participation, vote choice

2. **Panel Survey (citizens): dynamics of opinion formation, vote intention/choice during different phases of election cycle, effects of election campaign**

3. Candidate Survey (political elites): Electoral success, representation, candidates' election campaign

4. Social Media Analysis (political elites): Candidates' activities on social media

5. Media Analysis (media): Reporting about candidates, parties and election campaign in the media
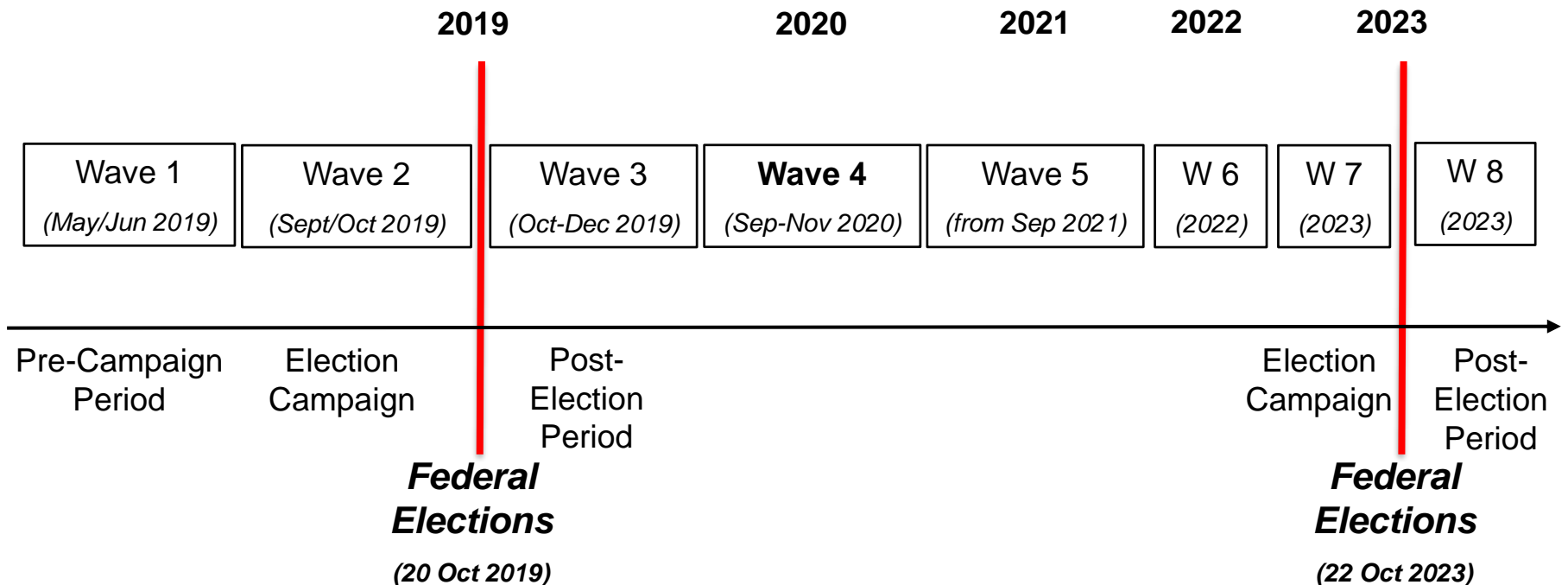
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The Selects Panel Survey

Set-up:

- Original: 3 waves (pre-campaign, election campaign, post-election)

- Innovation: panel will be continued with yearly waves until federal elections 2023

	2019		**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	

| Wave 1 *(May/Jun 2019)* | Wave 2 *(Sept/Oct 2019)* | Wave 3 *(Oct-Dec 2019)* | **Wave 4** *(Sep-Nov 2020)* | Wave 5 *(from Sep 2021)* | W 6 *(2022)* | W 7 *(2023)* | W 8 *(2023)* |

Pre-Campaign Period
Election Campaign
Post-Election Period

Election Campaign
Post-Election Period

Federal Elections
(20 Oct 2019)

Federal Elections
(22 Oct 2023)

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The Selects Panel Survey

Design and Sampling:

- Random sample drawn from sampling register of Swiss Federal Statistical Office (only Swiss citizens living in CH aged 18+)

- Self-administered online survey (DE, FR, IT)

2019   **2020**   **2021**   **2022**   **2023**

| Wave 1 *(May/Jun 2019)* | Wave 2 *(Sept/Oct 2019)* | Wave 3 *(Oct-Dec 2019)* | **Wave 4** *(Sep-Nov 2020)* | Wave 5 *(from Sep 2021)* | W 6 *(2022)* | W 7 *(2023)* | W 8 *(2023)* |

Pre-Campaign Period   Election Campaign   Post-Election Period   Election Campaign   Post-Election Period

Federal Elections (20 Oct 2019)

Federal Elections (22 Oct 2023)

The Selects Panel Survey

Wave 1 (pre-campaign):

- Initial sample size: 25'575

- Response rate: 31% (n=7939)

Wave 2 (election campaign):

- Response rate: 68% (n=5577)

Wave 3 (post-election period):

- Response rate: 65% (n=5125)

Wave 4 (2020 – one year after the federal elections):

- 3030 respondents of W3 gave consent for future waves

- Response rate: 85% (n=2499)

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Survey items related to COVID-19

Block of **specific COVID-19 questions**

- Evaluation of government performance in handling coronavirus pandemic

- To what degree shall civil rights and privacy be restricted?

- Attitudes regarding political decision-making in a democracy in times of a crisis, for example:

  • "Important political decisions should be taken by experts rather than politicians or the people."

  • "Public health always comes first, even if this entails economic costs."

  • "Having a strong leader in government is good, even if she/he bends the rules to get things done."

- Measures to meet climate targets vs. fight economic crisis

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Survey items related to COVID-19

Block of **specific COVID-19 questions**

- Most competent party in handling coronavirus pandemic

- Who should take the lead in handling the crisis?

  • Confederation vs. cantons (centralism vs. federalism)

  • Federal Council vs. Parliament (executive vs. legislative)

- Are changes in respondents' professional situation due to the coronavirus pandemic?

  • Working situation

  • Position at work

  • Profession

  • Household income

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Survey items related to COVID-19

Questions that are not COVID-19 specific but the coronavirus pandemic might have induced **changes over time**

- Party preference (probability to vote for different parties, vote intention/choice)

- Most and second most important problem in CH

- Trust in institutions (W3-W4), for example:

  • Federal Council

  • Parliament

  • Political parties

  • Cantonal authorities

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Survey items related to COVID-19

Questions that are not COVID-19 specific but the coronavirus pandemic might have induced **changes over time**

- Opinions/attitudes (W3-W4), for example:
  - "The people should make our most important policy decisions, not the politicians."

- Political values (W1-W4), for example:
  - State interventions in the economy vs. free market competition

- Perceived national economic conditions (last/next 12 months) (W1-W4)

Data availability

Everything is published and freely accessible on FORSbase:

- Data (Stata, SPSS)
- Questionnaires (DE, FR, IT + filters)
- Technical report
- Codebook

Swiss Election Study (Selects) 2019 | **Ref study: 13846**

| Overview | Study details | **Datasets** | Documents |

Datasets list

Show 10 entries | Search:

Ref dataset	Dataset title	Data type
1187	Selects 2019 (Social) Media Analysis	Quantitative data
1186	Selects 2019 Candidate Survey	Quantitative data
1184	Selects 2019 Panel Survey (waves 1-4)	Quantitative data
1179	Selects 2019 Post-Election Survey	Quantitative data

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https://forsbase.unil.ch/project/study-public-overview/17396/0

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Thanks for your attention!

Questions?

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