Understanding and Modeling Voting Behavior

Week 3

Duration: 8 hours

Format: In person and online

Instructor: Marco Steenbergen

Course description:

This course is about the choices voters make. Those choices are of obvious importance for democracy but how do we analyse them? In a hands-on approach, this course covers the most important strategies for modelling vote choice. This includes canonical choice models (conditional logit, nested conditional logit, and multinomial probit) as well as models that capture heterogeneity amongst voters (mixed logit, multilevel conditional logit, and latent class choice models). All models are presented in a coherent theoretical framework (stochastic utility theory) and a heavy emphasis is placed on their implementation and interpretation using state-of-the-art tools.

Learning schedule:

Day 1	14.00-15.45	Stochastic utility theory; conditional logit; general methods of interpretation.
	15.45-16.00	Break
	16.00-18.00	Implementing the conditional logit model in R; multinomial probit.
Day 2	14.00-15.45	Nested conditional logit; exercises with multinomial probit and conditional logit.
	15.45-16.00	Break

	16.00-18.00	Three ways of modelling heterogeneous electorates; practical exercises.

Prerequisites:

Students should have a basic understanding of probability theory, regression analysis, and R.

Software:

Analyses will be performed using R.

Readings:

Páez, Antonio and Geneviève Boisjoly. 2022. *Discrete Choice Analysis with R.* New York: Springer. ISBN 978-3-031-20721-1.

Instructor short bio:

Prof. Marco Steenbergen is a professor of political methodology at the University of Zurich. Marco was trained as a political methodologist and a political psychologist. Much of his research concerns electoral democracy, both in terms of mass political behaviour and party ideology. His methodological research includes multilevel analysis and choice models.