

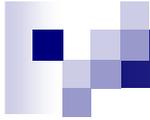
# Electoral Psychology

What do elections mean to voters?

**ICEP**  
International Centre for  
Electoral Psychology

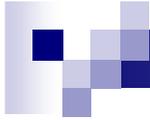
Michael Bruter  
Sarah Harrison





## Outline of Presentation

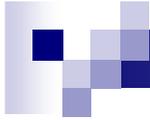
- What is electoral psychology?
- Voters' electoral memory and emotions associated with the vote
- What do voters think about when they stand in the polling booth?
- What can ICEP offer?



## What does ICEP do?

**We are an independent research-oriented organisation offering services in electoral psychology and electoral ergonomics.**

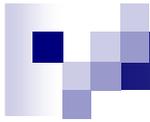
- Our aim is to help decision-makers to better understand the psychology of voters in a bid to make elections as effective, trusted, and democratically fulfilling for citizens as possible.
- We study the role of personality, memory, emotion, and electoral identity on the vote and democratic value of elections. We analyse the psychological effects associated with elections and their interaction with systemic organisation.



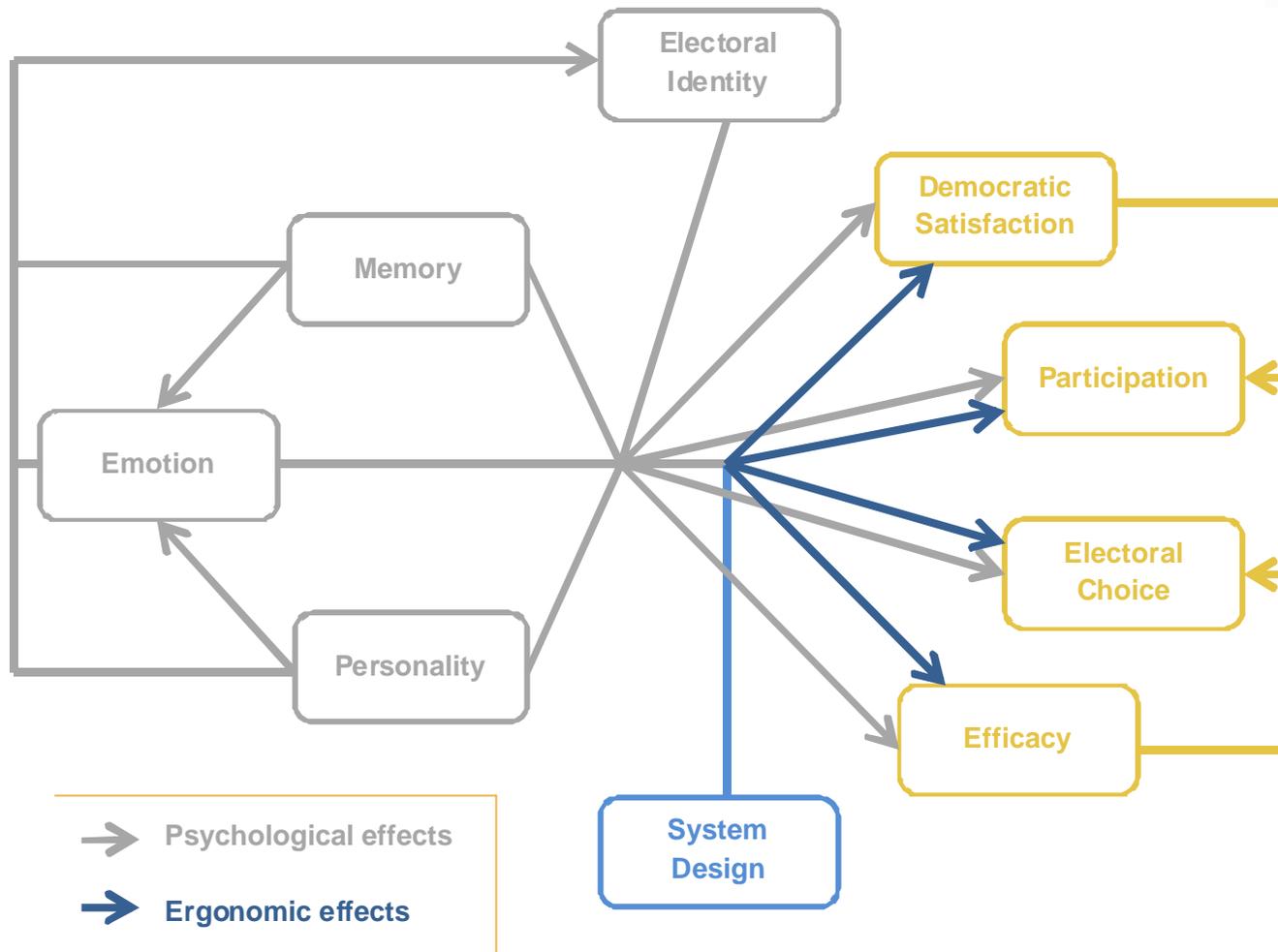
# Electoral Psychology

Aim: to better understand what citizens think and feel about elections in order to optimise electoral democracy

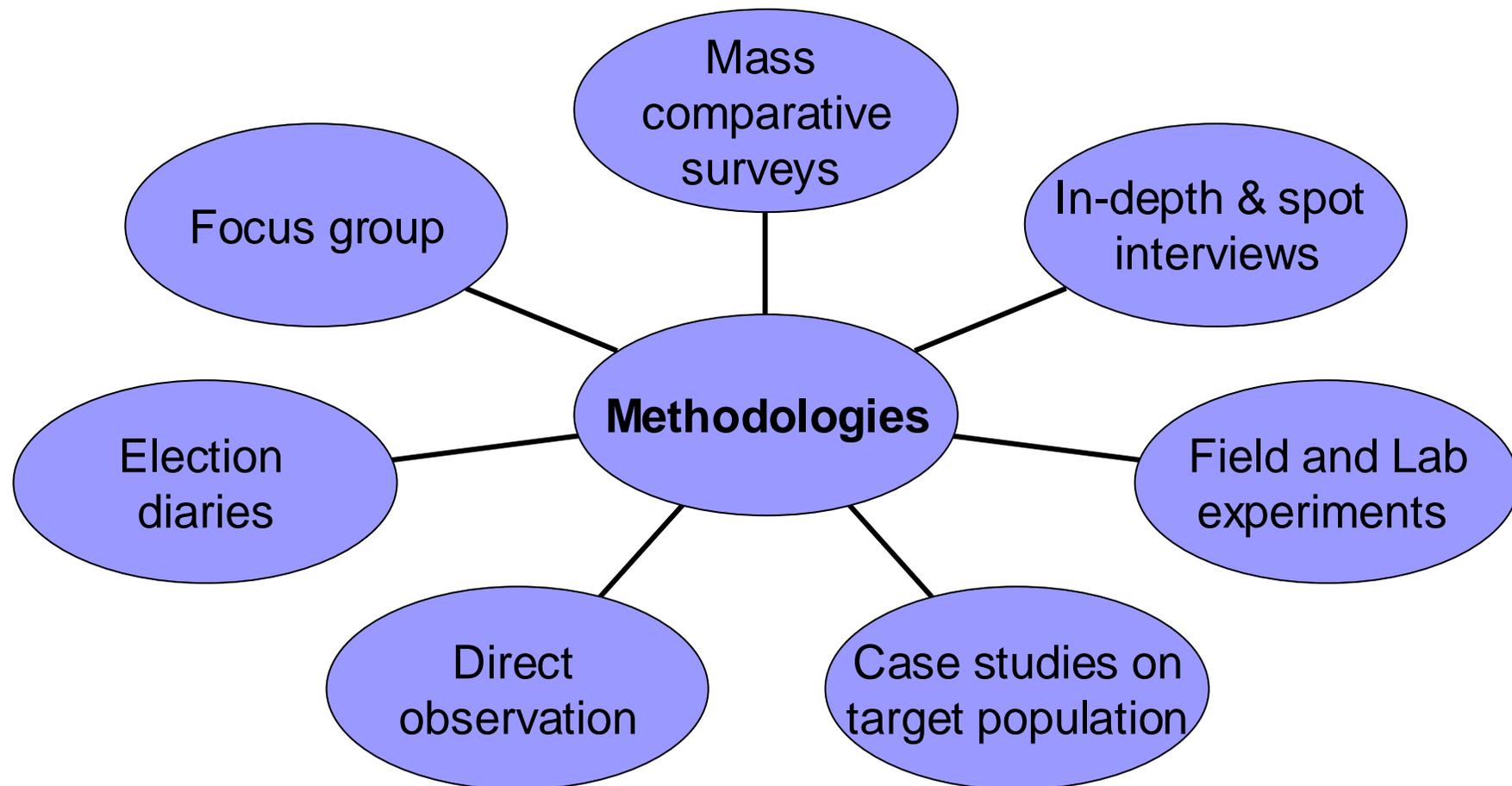
- What emotions are associated with the voting experience?
- What is the impact of electoral memory, sense responsibility, and individual-societal connection on electoral behaviour?
- What do people think about when they stand in the polling booth?

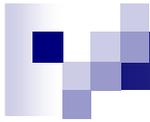


# Psychological model of the vote



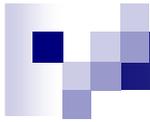
# Methodologies - A toolkit for research





## Elections – an emotional experience?

- 20-30% decide upon their vote during the final week before the vote
  - 29% of Americans & 40% of French voters have changed their mind on the very day of an election
  - $\frac{1}{4}$  of American voters have already cried because of an election. Over 60% say that election night makes them feel emotional
- 
- **EXCITEMENT:** 60% feel excited in the polling booth
  - **PRIDE:** 74% feel proud in the polling booth
  - **WORRY:** 53% also say that it makes them feel worried



# The role of memory in elections

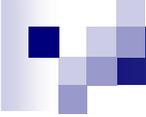


## Specific Elections

- ❑ 94% of French voters remember 2002;
- ❑ 82% of Americans recall their first election, 70% a childhood election
- ❑ Memories of electoral scandals, fraud, shock results, queues or organisational problems

## Personalisation of Elections

- ❑ 80% remember a discussion with family & friends; 60% recall a dispute they had over the election
- ❑ 79% remember images from election night
- ❑ 62% recollect whether they hesitated about electoral choice



# Impact of electoral memory – spotlight on young voters



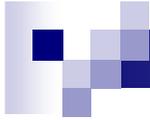
- Early experience of elections significantly increases likelihood to participate in future elections
- Propensity to vote in an election is almost double if young people experience elections (specifically going to polling stations with parents)
- Why is it important? Young people who do not go to vote in the first 2 elections - likely to become long-term habitual abstentionists
- Essential to capture their interest in participating in elections at an early age

# Elections – important civic moments for citizens



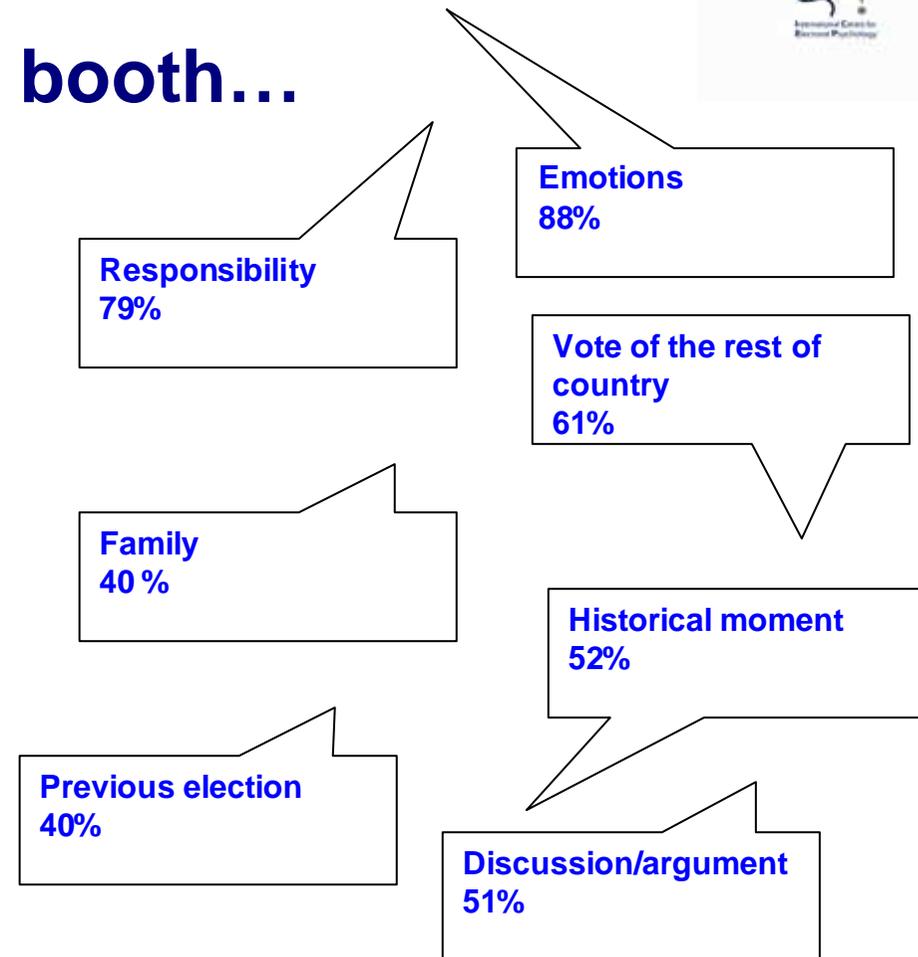
- Citizens express their sense of responsibility and their commitment to their civic duty
- Enjoyment of elections = crucial determinant of turnout & consolidation of participatory practice





## Thoughts in the polling booth...

- Socio-tropic (responsibility, vote of rest of country etc)
- Ego-centric (impact of vote on personal situation/family etc)
- Memories (past elections, previous voting behaviour etc)
- Emotions





## What services can we offer?

- Offer advice on various ways to better understand the hearts and minds of voters:
  1. Assess emotions and motivations of an electorate,
  2. Evaluate how citizens perceive elections and electoral procedures,
  3. Optimise trust, confidence, and perceptions of transparency amongst an electorate.
  
- Multi-method & dynamic approach (including surveys, sustainable panel surveys, policy evaluations, experimentation, simulation, qualitative modules) - fully integrated to produce robust & reliable data
  
- Conduct independent research on voters' psychology, perceptions of democracy, motivations, emotions, trust enhancement, systems transparency
  
- Bespoke research targeting specific groups (i.e first-time voters, ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities, young voters, elderly voters)

**Thank you!**

Contact us @

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