Multilevel Economic Perceptions and Attributions of Responsibility

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Standard Indicators in Economic Voting

• How does the financial situation of your household now compare with what it was 12 months ago?

• How do you think the general economic situation in this country has changed over the last 12 months?

• How do you think the financial situation of your household will change over the next 12 months?

• How do you think the general economic situation in this country will develop over the next 12 months?
But there are more “economic situations”

Which information do voters receive, (accept) and sample?
How do they process economic information?
Why would this be linked to politics?

- Attributions of responsibility as a crucial element

- Important ...
  - ... from an individual’s point of view
  - ... but also from the point of view of the political system as a whole: what is government / politics responsible for?

- Studying such attributions – their determinants, but also their effects – as an important task for political science
Attributing Responsibility to Government ...

- Individual economic situation:
  - Very poor
  - Poor
  - Average
  - Good
  - Very good

- National economic situation:
  - Very poor
  - Poor
  - Average
  - Good
  - Very good

The graph shows the probability of attributing responsibility to the government based on the individual and national economic situations. The probability decreases as the economic situations improve.
... and Its Effects (German Data, 2005 election)

Feelings towards Social Democrats by Economic Perceptions, controlled for Partisanship

- Nat. Econ.
- Ind. Econ.
- Resp. Nat. Econ.
- Resp. Ind. Econ.
- Ind. Econ. X Resp.

unstand. regression coefficients

-2  -1  0  1  2
What is Needed?

- Economic Voting indicators for different layers (+ link variables to combine them with official statistics or geodata)

- Attributions of Responsibility (blame vs. control)

- What are the short-term and long-term dynamics of these?

- Comparative Research?