ABSTRACT

A Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis of the Effects of Corruption Prevention, Education, Inequality and Government Efficacy on Voter Turnout in Portuguese Local Elections

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Voter turnout has been studied in detail since the emergence of the rational choice question - why do people vote at all? In fact, the chance of one person changing the outcome of an election is practically zero. In the cost-benefit calculus of citizens, therefore, no one should vote no matter how much he or she cares, i.e. the strength of preference as such is practically irrelevant. Given the difficulties of the rational model in explaining voter turnout, many social arguments have emerged in recent decades in an attempt to understand the determinants of voter turnout. Several studies suggest that low corruption can contribute to high voter turnout. The literature suggests that citizens in high corruption environments do not vote because they believe that they cannot change the corrupt environment. In this context, corruption has been identified as an important factor in weakening democracy. This study examines the influence of the risk of corruption, education, and social inequality on voter turnout in Portuguese local elections. Specifically, fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis is used to determine whether these factors (individually or in combination) are necessary or sufficient conditions for high or low voter turnout in the elections of Portuguese municipal governments.