CSES Module 6 Core Questions Subcommittee Report

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Summary

By definition, changes in a core part of a questionnaire should be as limited as possible. Further, given the creation of the Integrated Module Dataset (IMD), preserving the time-series for as many variables as feasible is a sensible strategy for the future development of CSES. Taking this into account, the subcommittee recommends only two changes to the core questionnaire for Module 6:

- There are currently three efficacy questions (two external and one internal), and there are strong arguments in favour of dropping one of the external efficacy questions as they are highly correlated to one another. Among which to drop, we recommend: "Who is in power makes a difference", which received majority support from the October 2021 Plenary Session.
- Questions measuring media attention should become part of the core questionnaire. The Subcommittee worked together with both the Content Subcommittee and the broader Planning Committee to refine existing module theme questions. As a result, seven questions are proposed for inclusion in the core questionnaire commencing with Module 6.

Charges

The CSES Module 6 Core Questions Subcommittee is charged with 1) reviewing and helping to define the "core" questionnaire items for CSES for Module 6; 2) determining a specific course of action for the review; 3) considering any potential revisions to the core items once the theme for Module 6 is selected; and 4) recommending revisions, deletions or additions and considering ways to maximize the benefit of the existence of the core module to the CSES (and broader) community.

In reviewing the core questions, the following guiding principles were applied:

- Core questions are by definition questions that are indispensable in an (election) study because they cover main concepts essential in models of voting behaviour.
- Also, almost by definition, such questions have a longitudinal dimension because they allow studying variation on some critical aspects of an election over time. Therefore, also minor changes to the question wording or response categories should be evaluated very carefully. The longitudinal aspect has further been strengthened through the creation of the CSES Integrated Module Dataset (IMD).
- Most of these questions are already asked in almost every national election study.

Justification for deleting or changing questions include:

● Concepts and questions get outdated, or they lose relevance compared to other concepts. For example, many studies do not include the postmaterialism scales that were once part of many election studies.

● Questions show to be problematic in a comparative context, either because they do not show enough variation in many countries or cannot be implemented in a cross-cultural equivalent way. This was for example the key reason to drop the knowledge question in Module 5.

● Some question wordings may not work anymore because the context has changed. The same is true for some response categories that may become outdated as well while others may need to be added. For example, this is the case in relation to party choices if the party system changes and the party needs to be adapted or some socio-demographic indicators such as education if an education system changes.

The following table summarizes the core questions and their usage in previous modules and in the CSES Integrated Module Dataset (CSES IMD). Besides, the proposal of the Lausanne Planning committee meeting 2020 and the subcommittee recommendation are all visible in this table.

Table 1 Summary of Core Questions recommendations

Variable name (including Q-Number in M5, IMD number at the end)	Previous inclusion	Lausanne proposal	Sub-Committee recommendation
Q01. Political Interest	New M5	Retain	Retain
Q02. Politics in the Media	New M5	Evaluate	Retain (amended)
Q03. Internal Efficacy	New M5	Evaluate	Retain
Q09. Government Performance: General (IMD3014)	M1, 2, 5	Retain	Retain
Q11. State of Economy (IMD3013_1)	M1, 4, 5	Retain	Retain
Q12P1-a. Current Presidential Election (First Round): Did Respondent Cast a Ballot? (IMD3001)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q12P1-b. Current Presidential Election (First Round): Vote Choice (IMD3002)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q12LH-a. Current Lower House Election: Did Respondent Cast a Ballot? (IMD3001)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q12LH-b. Current Lower House Election: Vote Choice – Party List (IMD3002)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q12LH-d. Current Lower House Election: Did Respondent Cast Candidate Preference Vote? (IMD3002)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q13a. Previous Election: Did Respondent Cast a Ballot? (IMD3003)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q13b. Previous Election: Vote Choice – Party List (IMD3004)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q13c. Previous Election: Vote Choice – District Candidate (IMD3004)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q14a. Who is in Power Can Make a Big Difference (IMD3011)	M1-5	Evaluate	Drop

Q14b. Who People Vote for Makes a Big Difference (IMD3012)	M1-5	Evaluate	Retain
Q15a. Like-Dislike – Party A – G (IMD3008)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q16a. Like-Dislike – Leader A – G (IMD3009)	M1-5	Evaluate	Retain
Q17a. Left-Right – Party A – G (IMD3007)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q18. Left-Right – Self (IMD3006)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q19a. Optional Alternative Scale – Party A	M1-5	Evaluate	Retain
Q20. Optional Alternative Scale – Self	M1-5	Evaluate	Retain
Q21. Satisfaction with Democratic Process (IMD3010)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q22a. Are You Close to any Political Party? (IMD3005)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q22b. Do You Feel Closer to One Party? (IMD3005)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q22c. Which Party do You Feel Closer to? (IMD3005)	M1-5	Retain	Retain
Q22d. Degree of Closeness to this Party (IMD3005)	M1-5	Retain	Retain

The CSES IMD is also important because it highlights the CSES' longitudinal aspects. CSES IMD was born in 2018 with the first release of the data product, with the Secretariat mandated by the CSES Planning Committee to create the product at a PC Meeting in Seattle in 2015. In 2017, the Blueprint of the product was presented to the M5 PC Committee by the Secretariat and endorsed unanimously. In 2019 the second phase of the dataset was released, and the third phase is due for release by spring 2021. By the time of the release of Phase 3 of CSES IMD, the data will include over 350 harmonized variables encompassing a wide range of micro and macro data, as well as an extensive suite of derivative variables to facilitate analysis (e.g., vote for incumbent government pre-coded, vote for left-center-right precoded etc.…).

The unifying principle of the CSES IMD is the *"3 and 1 Rule."* The 3 applies to the variable level and stipulates that variables that have appeared three or more times in CSES modules 1-5 are eligible for inclusion in CSES IMD. The 1 refers to the country level and proposes that all countries that have appeared in CSES are eligible for inclusion in the CSES IMD. In sum, all election studies are eligible for inclusion in the CSES IMD, while variables must have appeared in three separate Modules. More details of the CSES IMD are available in the Stimulus Paper (available **here**).

Key concepts

The Subcommittee reviews 'what the core questions are' based on two evaluation criteria: *essential concepts of election studies* and *drivers of voting behaviour*. The Subcommittee assesses them on the basis of their usage in published research and across CSES modules and polities. The Subcommittee also relies on the CSES Module 5 Core & Demographics Subcommittee Report, which is based on 195 CSES publications in the period 1999-2015.

1. *Essential concepts of election studies.* The first criterion the Subcommittee used to review and help to define the core is by looking whether the questionnaire items are essential of election studies – that is, what the CSES community wants mainly to explain. There are two CSES questionnaire items that are essential concepts of election studies, namely: *Voter turnout* and *vote choice* (see below).

Voter turnout

> **Q12P1-a.** Current Presidential Election (First Round): Did Respondent Cast a Ballot?
>
> **Q12LH-a.** Current Lower House Election: Did Respondent Cast a Ballot?
>
> **Q12LH-d.** Current Lower House Election: Did Respondent Cast Candidate Preference Vote?
>
> **Q13a.** Previous Election: Did Respondent Cast a Ballot?

Vote choice

> **Q12P1-b.** Current Presidential Election (First Round): Vote Choice
>
> **Q12LH-b.** Current Lower House Election: Vote Choice – Party List
>
> **Q13b.** Previous Election: Vote Choice – Party List
>
> **Q13c.** Previous Election: Vote Choice – District Candidate

Recommendation: The Subcommittee recommends to keep *current voter turnout* and *vote choice* questions. Both are essential concepts in electoral behaviour and, by definition, often also dependent variables of interest. Also, the questions on *previous voter turnout and vote choice* are part of most national election studies. While there are some doubts about the reliability of these answers for some voters, they are (for most election studies) the only available indicator of shifts in voter turnout or mobilization between two consecutive elections. They have been used across all CSES modules (1-5) and polities, and according to the CSES Module 5 Core & Demographics Subcommittee Report, they have been significantly used in published research (25 percent).

2. ***Main drivers of voting behaviour.*** The second criterion has to do with the drivers of *voter turnout* and *vote choice*. Based on election studies, these are at least the long and short-term factors of voting behaviour. The Subcommittee identified *party identification* items as long-term factors and *political and economic performance* items as short-term factors.

Long-term factors

Party identification

> **Q22a.** Are You Close to any Political Party?
>
> **Q22b.** Do You Feel Closer to One Party?
>
> **Q22c.** Which Party do You Feel Closest to?
>
> **Q22d.** Degree of Closeness to this Party

Party identification is one of the key concepts explaining stability in voting behaviour and is included in almost all national election studies.

Besides *party identification*, long-term determinants of voting behaviour also include voters' *social characteristics*. The current and future subcommittee dealing with socio-demographic indicators should consider that also many of the socio-demographic indicators are important to the study of long-term stability in electoral behaviour, and are also used as control variables in short-term models of voting behaviour. The social environment is seen as a significant stabilizing factor in voting behaviour since the very early studies on voting behaviour.

Among these, according to the CSES Module 5 Core & Demographics Subcommittee Report, *age, education, gender, household income, union membership, employment status, main occupation, rural/urban residential location, religious denomination and religion service attendance,* and *marital status* have been used significantly/very significantly in published research (7-49 percent).

Recommendation: To keep *party identification* items. They have been used across all modules (1-5) and polities and, according to the CSES Module 5 Core & Demographics Subcommittee Report, they have been used very significantly in published research (32 percent). With respect to other long-term factors, as the subcommittee recommends that the Module 6 Demographics Subcommittee retains all demographic measures that help to explain long-term stability of vote choice.

Short-term factors

Political performance

    Q21.   Satisfaction with Democratic Process

Satisfaction with the democratic process has been widely used across CSES modules (1-5) and polities and, according to the CSES Module 5 Core & Demographics Subcommittee Report, has been used significantly in published research (12 percent).

Economic performance

    Q09.   Government Performance: General
    Q11.   State of Economy

The question on *government performance in general* has been used in Modules 2 and 3; and state of economy in Modules 1 and 4.

Recommendation: Among political performance items, the Subcommittee suggests to keep *satisfaction with the democratic process;* and among economic performance aspects, to keep *government performance in general* and *state of the economy,* as agreed at the Lausanne PC meeting in February 2020.

Apart from the above criteria, there are other questions that the CSES community has generally viewed as core measures: *political interest, like-dislike, left-right,* and *political efficacy.*

Political interest

The Lausanne PC meeting in February 2020 decided to keep political interest as part of the core questions. Yet keeping political interest was supported when the CSES Module 5 Political Knowledge Subcommittee suggested dropping political knowledge measures (see page 5 of the CSES Module 5 Core & Demographic Subcommittee Report). It is also a very widely used concept in many national election studies.

Like-dislike and left-right

The February 2020 PC meeting also decided to keep *like-dislike for parties* and *left-right for parties* and *self.*

> **Q15a.** Like-Dislike – Party A
> **Q16a.** Like-Dislike – Leader A
> **Q17a.** Left-Right – Party A
> **Q18** Left-Right – Self
> **Q19a.** Optional Alternative Scale - Party A
> **Q20** Optional Alternative Scale – Self

Like-dislike for parties has been used across all modules (1-5) and polities, and it gives an affective score to each major party as well as allows to construct measures of distance, polarization, negative preferences, and cross-pressure of voters. Therefore we recommend to keep this core.

Like-dislike leaders have been used across all modules but not across all polities. However, they are included in the Integrated Module Dataset and so we recommend that it is retained in Module 6 to build the consolidated time series data further.

Left-right for parties and *self* measures are used in various ways, as a "super issue" position as well as constructing policy distance and studying representation. They have been used in all modules (1-5) but the scale has been missing in some countries. *Left-right for parties and self* have been used very significantly in published research (23 percent and 33 percent, respectively).

Optional scales:

However, the *optional scale* has not been widely used. Such a scale is offered for two reasons: in some countries, especially in the Asian region, left-right is not a widely used concept to define ideological positions, and many voters are not able to place themselves on a left-right scale. For those countries, the idea was to use an alternative scale that describes the main policy dimension in this specific context. It is not required that all studies ask for an alternative scale, and the vast majority of CSES countries do not use an alternative scale. Hence, this alternative

does not seem to impose a significant burden and allows for potentially useful variety to the CSES data.

As of Module 5 Advance Release 2 (released summer 2020 and consisting of 20 election studies thus far, only three election studies (~15 percent of studies) have made use of the alternative scale, namely: Montenegro (2016) – a pro-Montenegrin/pro-Serbian scale; Hong-Kong (2016) – a pro-Hong Kong or pro-Beijing scale; and Taiwan (2016) – a pro-independence versus pro-China reunification scale. In Module 4, the following states gave us optional scales: Hong Kong, Latvia, Mexico, Philippines, and Taiwan (~13 percent of cases). It should be noted because these scales are optional (and therefore lack harmonization) that they are not eligible for inclusion in CSES IMD.

Countries with large numbers of effective parties:

Another means of potentially reducing the collaborator burden might be to cut the requirement for collaborators to ask about a certain number of parties for the relational data component of CSES. Currently, CSES collaborators provide information on 9-parties, although it is usually advised that only six are required. In countries where there are not six parties, our data includes only the number of parties that the collaborator supplies us with. An easy example is the USA's case, where we only get relational data on two parties.

Below, Table 2 shows how our data looks like for modules one through four. About 70 to 75 percent of our cases report only up to three parties. An additional fourth party is obtained for 8 to 10 Percent of the cases. The other fifth and sixth parties are collected in declining order for 4-5 percent. Table 3 shows that, on average, our collaborators report about five parties. However, we do have many parties in excess of ten in total being reported for a few cases. However, given the lack of complaints from CSES members, we can safely assume that in those large party systems, our collaborators regularly include a thorough questioning of a large number of parties, and the CSES module is not additionally imposing a burden for these cases. In fact, not having as many parties in CSES is likely to be seen as problematic in the coverage of all relevant political players for these cases. We also see that our IMD does not contain many missing values for party or leader like-dislikes. Except for Module 2, where leaders dislike scores were not obtained.

The critical question is whether it is necessary to ask collaborators to continue collecting data on six parties (and potentially leaders) or whether there is scope to reduce the requirement and ask for a small number. We propose to hold on to these questions and maintain continuity for both parties' and leaders' like-dislike evaluations for all CSES countries.

Table 2 Average Vote Share in Lower House Elections by Parties assigned a Relational Data Identifier in CSES IMD and CSES Modules 1-4

	IMD	M1	M2	M3	M4
Party A	34.14	34.91	33.58	33.05	35.24
Party B	25.75	27.07	25.80	25.08	25.42
Party C	13.11	13.25	13.00	12.89	13.19
Party D	9.15	8.55	9.13	10.84	7.81
Party E	6.06	4.99	6.34	7.23	5.43
Party F	5.04	3.59	7.49	5.01	4.26
Total Party A-D	82.15	83.78	81.51	81.86	81.66
Total Party E-F	11.10	8.58	13.83	12.24	9.69
Total Party A-F	93.25	92.36	95.34	94.10	91.35
N election studies	*160*	*33*	*34*	*50*	*43*

Source of data: CSES IMD variable 5001 (2020).

Note: Missing values for variable excluded.

Table 3 Effective Number of Electoral Parties (ENEP) CSES IMD and CSES Modules 1-4

	IMD	M1	M2	M3	M4
Mean	4.901	5.022	4.908	4.720	4.971
S/d	2.176	2.255	1.983	1.869	2.523
Minimum	1.32	2.18	2.18	1.32	2.19
Maximum	14.10	11.24	10.46	11.21	14.10
N	*256,824*	*52,376*	*53,156*	*80,163*	*72,432*
N election studies	*160*	*33*	*34*	*50*	*43*

Source of data: CSES IMD variable 5058(2020).

Note: Missing values for variable excluded.

Recommendation: to keep political interest, like-dislike for parties, left-right for parties and for self and like-dislike for leaders. Countries may continue to use the optional alternative scales as appropriate.

Political efficacy

The two CSES items measuring political efficacy ("*Who is in power makes a difference*" and "*Who people vote for makes a difference*") have been used systematically across all CSES modules without any interruption. Both tap into external political efficacy. In the Module 5 Planning Committee a discussion took place whether these two items should be kept arguing that they are very similar and highly correlated. The CSES Module V Core & Demographic Subcommittee Report suggested to drop of one of the two items of external political efficacy (*Who is in power can make difference*) by replacing it with internal political efficacy measure: "*You feel you understand the most important political issues of this country*"). However, the

Module 5 plenary decided to keep all three measures of political efficacy and as a consequence three efficacy measures were included in the Module 5 questionnaire.

> **Q03.** Understand the Most Important Political Issue (internal Efficacy)
> **Q14a.** Who is in Power can Make a Difference (external efficacy)
> **Q14b.** Who People Vote for Makes a Difference (external efficacy)

The question of the current subcommittee has now been to assess whether for the Module 6 core we should reconsider this decision. Removing all three questions was not considered as an option. However, the subcommittee evaluated whether it makes sense to drop one or two of the efficacy questions.

There are several reasons why a question could be dropped. The first reason would be that there are *a lot of missing values.* This is not the case:

- Almost all countries included the two efficacy questions in M1-M5, all countries included the internal efficacy question in Module 5
- Item non-response also very low, around 5 percent overall, but driven also by some outliers with high levels of item non-response

In sum, missing values do not allow for the conclusion to discard any of the questions.

A second reason to exclude a question would be that responses *are heavily skewed or that there is a lack of variation*. If this would be the case, a measure would be difficult to include in an empirical analysis. Table 4 shows the mean value of the three efficacy measures for each module separately.

- Both external efficacy measures are rather skewed towards higher political efficacy. The mean value is between 3.67 and 3.97 on the five-point scale. There is, however, not a clear trend overtime on those measures.
- The internal efficacy question is less skewed, the mean is 2.57 on a five-point scale.
- All measures have a standard deviation of above 1.2 (with the exception of the internal efficacy, which is slightly below 1.2)

Overall, while being slightly skewed for the two external efficacy measures, the distribution of all three measures is not alarming and within the range of many other survey questions. Therefore, it does not constitute an argument to exclude any of the measures.

Table 4 Summary statistics of efficacy measures in CSES Modules 1-5

	Who is in power makes a big difference			*Who people vote for makes a big difference*			*You feel you understand the most important political issues of this country.*		
	N	Mean	S/d	N	Mean	S/d	N	Mean	S/d
M1	58,195	3.94	1.265	58,189	3.86	1.289			
M2	61,951	3.67	1.339	60,406	3.76	1.308			
M3	70,711	3.80	1.284	69,775	3.90	1.225			
M4	63,822	3.81	1.280	65,679	3.88	1.243			
M5	29,815	3.93	1.201	34,442	3.97	1.217	34,211	2.57	1.164

Source of data: CSES IMD variable 3011 and 3012 (2020), CSES M5 data set, variables E3016_1, E3016_2 and E3003 (internal efficacy). Missing values for all variables excluded.

The next test is correlation between measures. If two measures are highly correlated, they are likely measuring the same or closely related concepts and one can be removed. However, if two measures are not correlated, it raises the question of whether the underlying concepts are still relevant. The following tables and figures show several indicators on how the measures are correlated.

Table 5 Respondents who assigned the same score and different scores to both External Efficacy measures in CSES Modules 1-5

	Total	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Same score on both measures	57.6	51.9	53.8	59.8	62.4	61.5
One point difference	24.4	24.9	24.2	24.6	23.4	25.0
Two point difference	10.2	12.1	11.7	9.4	8.4	8.7
Three point difference	3.1	4.5	3.7	2.6	2.4	2.1
Four point difference	4.7	6.6	6.6	3.6	3.3	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N respondents	27,5612	57,350	59,588	65,794	63,254	29,626
N election studies	168	38	40	46	44	17

Source of data: CSES IMD variable 3011 and 3012 (2020), CSES M5 data set, variables E3016_1, E3016_2. Missing values for all variables excluded.

Table 6 Respondents who assigned the same score and different scores between internal efficacy measure and external efficacy measures

You feel you understand the most important political issues of this country… and	Who is in power makes a big difference	Who people vote for makes a big difference
Same score on both measures	13.9	14.2
One point difference	25.4	24.9
Two point difference	25.7	24.0
Three point difference	23.5	24.8
Four point difference	11.5	12.1
Total	100.0	100.0
N respondents	29193	29193
N election studies	*17*	*17*

Source of data: CSES M5 data set, variables E3016_1, E3016_2 (internal efficacy) and E3003 (internal efficacy). Missing values for all variables excluded.
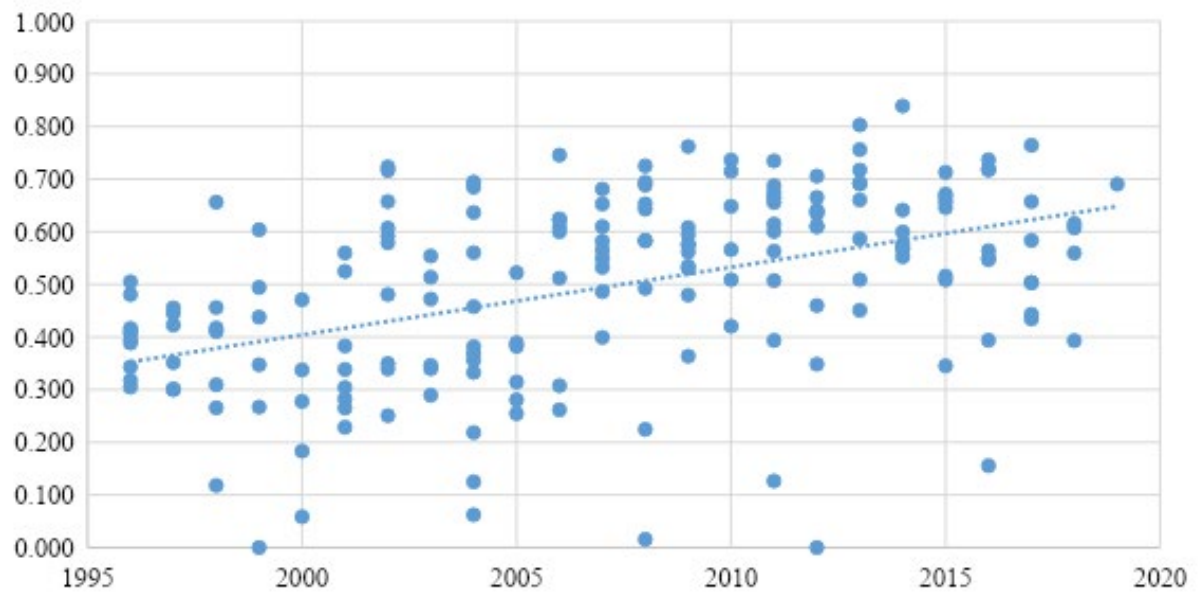

Figure 1: Spearman rho between two external efficacy measures over time M1-M5 for each election
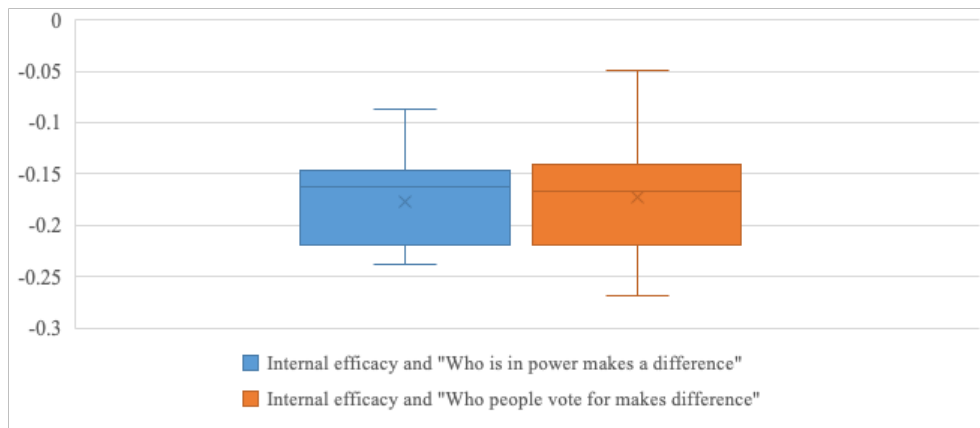
Figure 2: Boxplot Spearman rho between internal efficacy and the two external efficacy measures M5

From the analysis, the following conclusion can be drawn:

- The two external efficacy measures are highly correlated; overall 57,6 percent of respondents in all waves position themselves on the same value of the scale, 82 percent on the same position or with one-point difference (table x2).
- However, there is also substantial variation between election studies on how strongly the two measures correlate. In some countries, the correlation is close to perfect; in other countries it is barely significant (figure 1).
- The correlation between the two external efficacy measures is increasing over time (figure 1).
- The correlation between the two external efficacy measures and internal efficacy is way less correlated and, in all cases, negative as it would to be expected.

Overall, should one measure be dropped a lot speaks in favour of dropping one of the external efficacy measures, because they tend to measure the same things. Internal efficacy, however, seems to measure indeed a slightly different concept.

The last question is what the different *efficacy indicators predict?* We expect from the literature, that there should be a correlation between efficacy and a number of different variables.

- *Participation*: political efficacy should influence turnout; the more you feel that it matters who is in power, the more you think what people vote for makes a difference, and the more you feel that you understand politics, the higher should be the probability that you turn out to vote.
- *Vote choice*: due to the requirements of coding all parties, we use left-right ideology as a proxy here
- *Right-wing ideology*, efficacy negatively related to right-wing ideology
- *Polarization*: more you feel disempowered, the more likely you hold extremist views.
- *Populist items*: feeling empowered should lead to a decrease in populist attitudes

Table 7 presents the outcome of the models that estimate the effect of efficacy on various dependent variables, mentioned above. Only t-values are displayed, because they allow a comparison of the relative importance of the different efficacy measures. In addition to the three efficacy measures, in all models age, gender, education, income, and political interest were included as control variables. The following statements can be made.

- Most efficacy measures have an influence on many of the attitudes modelled here, and often they are all relevant predictors of the dependent variables (with the exception of some of the populist items).
- Among the two external efficacy items, the item "who people vote for makes a difference" tends to be more important on some dependent variables (participation, all populist items), but in other cases it is the other way around (left-right orientation, polarization, extreme right attitudes – they are all based on the left-right scale).
- Internal efficacy has an influence in the expected direction in all cases and is also significant in most cases. The influence to predict the different outcomes is mostly weaker than at least on one item.

Table 7 T-values from models regressing political attitudes on efficacy

	Who is in power makes a big difference	*Who people vote for makes a big difference*	*You feel you understand the most important political issues of this country.*
Participation	10.84	14.31	-7.73
Left-right (self)	7.58	2.49	-5.81
Polarisation	13.82	9.38	-7.77
Extreme right	12.12	6.4	-7.11
What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out on one's principles.	-3.01	7.14	-1.34
Most politicians do not care about the people.	2.99	9.05	-4.52
Most politicians are trustworthy.	*-1.05 ns*	-6.23	4.86
Politicians are the main problem	*-1.07 ns*	10.54	*-1.53 ns*
The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions.	*1.00 ns*	4.62	*1.48 ns*
Most politicians care only about the interests of the rich and powerful	*0.61 ns*	9.98	-6.43

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Recommendation: Our August 2021 Report recommended to drop one external political efficacy question ("Who is in Power Can Make a Big Difference") as it is a slightly less strong predictor of some key dependent variables. But before the October 2021 Plenary Session our Report received a submission from Jack Vowels with a theoretical argument that the two external political efficacy questions measure different things, empirically related but theoretically and conceptually quite different. For this both should be retained. 'Who is in power makes a difference' question is an estimate of perceptions of government accountability, and 'who people vote for makes a difference' an estimate of perceptions of government responsiveness. 'Who people vote for' works well as an external efficacy question (Karp and

Banducci 2008). 'Who is in power' is negatively affected by the level of government debt and positively affected by economic growth (Hellwig, Kweon, and Vowles 2020). It is about people perceiving that governments can do things that matter to them. The Report was presented to the Plenary Session acknowledging the Submission. But majority appeared to be in favour of the Report initial recommendation. We recommend to drop one external efficacy question ('Who is in power').

Politics in the media[1]

The question of politics in the media has been introduced for the first time in Module 5. Picking up on this decision and the discussion in the Module VI subcommittee, there seems to be a consensus that media attention should become part of the CSES core. However, there has been quite some discussion on how such a media question should be formulated.

Should a media question become part of the core questionnaire, and hence also potentially be included in future modules, there needs to be a very broad agreement on the question wording. This also takes into account that CSES question wordings can set a standard on how concepts are measured in many other surveys (see for example the widespread use of the CSES Party ID measure in voter surveys).

There are several reasons why such a question is relevant:
● Media attention is a proxy for political awareness and political sophistication and the overall information level, so there is expected variation depending on the individual media consumption on political behaviour such as participation and vote choice.
● There might be variation depending on the type of news sources people use. Getting news from traditional newspapers might be different from getting news mainly from television. And as has been pointed out by the Module 6 subcommittee people who consume media content mainly through social media these days risk receiving very biased messages and hence may be more likely to vote for more extreme parties.

Questions measuring respondents' media exposure are therefore of high interest for election surveys. When drafting questions about media use during election campaigns, several aspects need to be considered. In (political) communication science a sizable amount of methodological research has been undertaken in recent years on how best to construct such instruments (see references). It leads to the following recommendations:

(1) *Thematic focus:* Research has found that it is advisable to be as specific as possible with regard to the media content of interest. In the case of the CSES this is mediated campaign information about the election, and specifically about parties and candidates.

(2) *Kind of usage:* Theorists of media use distinguish conceptually between media exposure and attention, arguing that the former creates a precondition for the reception, whereas the latter is closer to the reception process itself. Hence, some studies included both, upon the idea to use interaction terms, weighing exposure by attention, and modelling media effects. However, respondents typically do not see the difference between media usage and media attention, so that surveys pursuing both measurement strategies find them very highly correlated.

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[1] Large part of this section have been written by Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck from the Module committee.

Consequently, most studies nowadays refer only to media exposure, measured by the frequency of usage. This approach is also better suited for studies that are, like the CSES, interested in distinguishing between particular media sources, whereas the notion of media attention pertains to a more generic mental orientation on the part of media users. Moreover, political interest, which is asked in the CSES, constitutes another basic measure of attention to mediated political information for researchers interested in attention effects.

(3) *Types of media:* Arguably, this is the most challenging issue for constructing media use instruments. One of the problems here is to find question wordings that elicit differences between media that are of relevance for researchers in ways that are meaningful for survey respondents, which, as a rule, do not reflect their media use in social science categories. Moreover, thorny issues are raised concerning the trade-off between measurement quality and survey efficiency. Recent American research recommends a list-based measurement strategy of high granularity, where respondents are queried about their usage of a wide variety of, for instance, TV information programs. For CSES this strategy is not feasible for two reasons: It requires a lot of questionnaire space, and it cannot be adapted to comparative research guided by the maxim of identical measurement in all countries, due to the unique character of news sources in each country. The opposite strategy, up until Module 5 pursued by the CSES, consists of asking only for the generic category of „media" without distinguishing between different kinds of outlets. This has the advantage of brevity, as it requires just one item. However, this brevity comes at the heavy price of a highly dubious utility of this instrument. Its massive disadvantage is that inevitably all media outlets (and thus all kinds of media content) are lumped together, thus mixing apples and pears. And this, in turn, seriously hampers research into media effects because of the high risk of mutual cancellation of the potentially countervailing effects of different outlets as they are averaged into one regression coefficient. Hence, such measures almost by definition underestimate media effects very substantially. As a practical application of Sartori's „ladder of abstraction" a study like the CSES must develop a media categorization somewhere between these polar strategies: useful from a conceptual-theoretical and empirical point of view, but still efficient. Our recommendation is to use the following categories. It is guided by considerations of whether professional journalists produce media and follow a "media logic" (TV and radio news, newspapers) or not (for online sources and social media this may be the case, but is not necessarily so; hence, they represent rather mixed categories), and results of extant research on „differences that make a difference" with regard to media effects:

> * *TV news*, differentiated by whether the type of broadcasting organization is *public* or *private* (since research consistently shows that the former exert mobilizing and enlightening effects on voters, whereas the latter appear either ineffective or even detrimental for turnout, political knowledge, and even cynicism)
> * *Radio news*
> * *Newspaper:* while it is preferable to distinguish between broadsheets and tabloids (the newspaper equivalent, in terms of effects, between public and commercial TV), we refrain from recommending this since it would mean one item more; the distinction is also difficult to draw in a comparative survey question
> * *Online news sites*: asking for this after the other media should "purge" responses from references to online usage of traditional news sources like TV news and newspapers; still this category inevitably is a mixed bag of different kinds of sources, including ones where parties, candidates and other kinds of partisan actors communicate directly, as well as political 'amateurs' like Facebook friends' own statements
> * *Social media*, with the possibility of national adaptation for most important platforms, as well as adaptation over time as platforms become more or less important

*G*lobal news networks are not included for three reasons: research suggests that usage of these channels is an elite phenomenon in most countries; they are so diverse that comparison is problematic; and, above all, they do not typically report on national elections, so their relevance for electoral behavior is not clear.

(4) *Response scale*: Methodological research has converged on the "days per week" logic for response scales, and they are used by many surveys (such as the GLES and the German GSS). Although no survey measure will ever generate measures as precise as Nielsen ratings, the days-per-week logic has apparent face validity, which distinguishes it from scales using arbitrary quantifiers. Using a day-by-day granularity instead of collapsing response scales into a smaller number of categories encompassing several days provides necessary flexibility to compare media exposure both over time and over space. It also renders the data comparable to many other surveys. As a specific add-on for social media, we suggest adding a follow-up question – asked only of respondents who use social media every day – measuring the (self-reported) hours and minutes they spend online each day.

Taking these issues into account, the following questions are proposed:[2]

Q02a.   >>> MEDIA USAGE: WATCH NEWS ON A PUBLIC TELEVISION BROADCASTER

TEXT: I now would like to ask you about the media that you followed during the recent election campaign to obtain news about politics and the parties [*Note to collaborators: for Presidential elections change to „the candidates"*].

Let us begin with news programs of the public TV broadcaster[s] NAME[s]. On how many days per week on average did you watch news programs of public TV (regardless of whether you watched them on a TV set or online)? [*Note to collaborators: Please insert name(s) of public broadcaster(s) in your country*]
....

HELP: {PROBE: IF 'every day' ASK FOR NUMBER}
....

0. NONE / ZERO DAYS
1. ONE DAY
2. TWO DAYS
3. THREE DAYS
4. FOUR DAYS
5. FIVE DAYS
6. SIX DAYS
7. SEVEN DAYS

97. VOLUNTEERED: REFUSED
98. VOLUNTEERED: DON'T KNOW

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[2] With thanks to Dave Howell for summarizing discussion during the Core Questions meeting of the Planning Committee in December 2020 and in subsequent emails among PC members.

99. MISSING

Q02b.   >>> MEDIA USAGE: WATCH NEWS ON A PRIVATE TELEVISION BROADCASTER

TEXT: And how about private TV broadcasters such as NAME(s)? On how many days per week on average did you watch news programs of private TV (regardless of whether you watched them on a TV set or online)? [*Note to collaborators: Please insert name(s) of major commercial broadcaster(s) in your country*]

HELP: At their discretion, the interviewer may use the optional
        phrase (the phrase which is in parentheses) if they perceive it
        would be helpful to the respondent in remembering the possible
        answer choices.
        ....

        0. NONE / ZERO DAYS
        1. ONE DAY
        2. TWO DAYS
        3. THREE DAYS
        4. FOUR DAYS
        5. FIVE DAYS
        6. SIX DAYS
        7. SEVEN DAYS

        97. VOLUNTEERED: REFUSED
        98. VOLUNTEERED: DON'T KNOW

        99. MISSING

Note to national collaborators:
„Public broadcasters" are broadcasters controlled by public agencies or the state. They are usually funded through licence fees or other kinds of audience contributions or from the state budget; sometimes they also generate funding by running advertisements. If the term „public broadcaster" is not common in your country and likely to be misunderstood by respondents, please use the term you consider most appropriate; often this may be the term „state television". Since in most countries only one or at best a small number of broadcasters are run as public or state broadcasters, please mention the names of all that exist in your country. Please include a brief explanation of the wording you chose for this question in the documentation of your dataset. If no such broadcaster exists in your country this question can be dropped.

„Private broadcasters" are commercial broadcasters run by private companies and funded by advertisement and/or subscription revenues. To clarify the meaning of this category to respondents, please refer to the names of those private TV broadcasters in your country that are the most important ones among private broadcasters as sources of news about national elections. If no such broadcaster exists in your country this question can be dropped.

If your media system has independent national, regional and/or local broadcasters please refer within each of the categories of public and private TV to those that are the most important ones as sources of news about national elections.

Please note that what counts for this question is the broadcaster as source of news, regardless of whether its newscasts are viewed on TV sets or online resp. via Apps.

Q02c.   >>> MEDIA USAGE: LISTEN TO THE NEWS ON RADIO

TEXT: (During the campaign, in a typical week, how many days did you:)

Listen to the news on radio?
....

HELP: At their discretion, the interviewer may use the optional
phrase (the phrase which is in parentheses) if they perceive it
would be helpful to the respondent in remembering the possible
answer choices.
....

   0. NONE / ZERO DAYS
   1. ONE DAY
   2. TWO DAYS
   3. THREE DAYS
   4. FOUR DAYS
   5. FIVE DAYS
   6. SIX DAYS
   7. SEVEN DAYS

   97. VOLUNTEERED: REFUSED
   98. VOLUNTEERED: DON'T KNOW

   99. MISSING

Q02d.   >>> MEDIA USAGE: READ NEWSPAPERS

TEXT: (During the campaign, in a typical week, how many days did you:)

Read newspapers (regardless of whether you read them in print or online)?
....
Note to national collaborators:
Please note that what counts for this question is newspapers, regardless of whether it is an online or print newspaper (but online newspapers should not be confused with other online news platforms; those are referred to by next question Q02e).

HELP: At their discretion, the interviewer may use the optional
phrase (the phrase which is in parentheses) if they perceive it

would be helpful to the respondent in remembering the possible
answer choices.
....

   0. NONE / ZERO DAYS
   1. ONE DAY
   2. TWO DAYS
   3. THREE DAYS
   4. FOUR DAYS
   5. FIVE DAYS
   6. SIX DAYS
   7. SEVEN DAYS

  97. VOLUNTEERED: REFUSED
  98. VOLUNTEERED: DON'T KNOW

  99. MISSING

Q02e. >>> MEDIA USAGE: ONLINE NEWS SITES

TEXT: (During the campaign, in a typical week, how many days did you:)

     Visit Online News Sites?

(Note to national collaborators:
This excludes online news sites of newspapers; those are included in previous question Q02d)
....

HELP: At their discretion, the interviewer may use the optional
     phrase (the phrase which is in parentheses) if they perceive it
     would be helpful to the respondent in remembering the possible
     answer choices.
....

   0. NONE / ZERO DAYS
   1. ONE DAY
   2. TWO DAYS
   3. THREE DAYS
   4. FOUR DAYS
   5. FIVE DAYS
   6. SIX DAYS
   7. SEVEN DAYS

  97. VOLUNTEERED: REFUSED
  98. VOLUNTEERED: DON'T KNOW

  99. MISSING

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--------------------------------------------------------------------------
Q02f.   >>> MEDIA USAGE: SOCIAL MEDIA - DAYS PER WEEK
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NOTE: The social media examples in the question text should be changed
         to the most common social media platforms in the country at the
         time of the election.

         Respondents who answer "0. NONE" should skip to Q03.
         ....

TEXT: During the campaign, in a typical week, how many days did you:

         Use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, or WhatsApp to follow
         news about parties and candidates?
         ....

             0. NONE / ZERO DAYS   -> GO TO QUESTION Q03
             1. ONE DAY
             2. TWO DAYS
             3. THREE DAYS
             4. FOUR DAYS
             5. FIVE DAYS
             6. SIX DAYS
             7. SEVEN DAYS

             97. VOLUNTEERED: REFUSED
             98. VOLUNTEERED: DON'T KNOW

             99. MISSING

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--------------------------------------------------------------------------
Q02g.   >>> MEDIA USAGE: SOCIAL MEDIA - MINUTES PER DAY
--------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

NOTE: The social media examples in the question text should be changed
         to the most common social media platforms in the country at the
         time of the election.
         ....

TEXT: During the campaign, how many minutes
         did you spend on an average day using social media such as Facebook,
         Twitter, or WhatsApp to follow news about parties and candidates?
         ....

         MINUTES

0-1440. MINUTES

9997.   VOLUNTEERED: REFUSED
9998.   VOLUNTEERED: DON'T KNOW

9999.   MISSING

References

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