Multi-Item Scale for Project:

Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module 5 (English Version)

Question Text:

Some people say that the following things are important for being truly German. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is... very important, fairly important, not very important, or not important at all?
[Manche Leute sind der Ansicht, die folgenden Punkte seien wichtig, um eine richtige Deutsche/ ein richtiger Deutscher zu sein. Andere sagen, diese seien nicht wichtig. Wie wichtig schätzen Sie die folgenden Punkte ein?]

Findings for Question Text:

In total, six respondents point out problems concerning the question text. In particular, the respondents take issue with the phrase "ein richtiger Deutscher zu sein" ("being a genuine German"). Four respondents are unsure, what this is supposed to mean:

- "What is a ‚genuine' German? I do not understand that term." (ID 05)
- "I am having difficulty with the phrase ‚a genuine German'. What is genuine and what not? I would find it better if the term 'genuine' were deleted. There are also a lot of Germans who are not "true hearted" – for instance all those Pegida-people." (ID 12)
- "That's the question that immediately came up in my head. What is a ‚genuine' German?" (ID 13)
- ""Empty phrases like these make my hackles rise. What is this item about? What is legally required from someone to become German? Or what the average German is supposed to be like? Depending on the question focus, I would answer the item differently." (ID 16)

Respondent 06 states that this term holds a negative connotation to her: *"When it is said like that, "ein richtiger Deutscher", it makes me think of someone who doesn't just feel a connection to the country but full-fledged devotion. An overeager patriot. This has a negative touch."* (ID 06).

At first, respondent 10 misunderstands the question and gives her answers not according to her own opinion but rather as a non-German person holding very negative stereotypes of Germans: *"That is something negative, because we make a bad impression in many countries. A typical German has a "beer belly", lederhosen, Adidas sandals with his socks sticking out – that's what others think of Germans. A typical German, that's*

no compliment. He is stubborn and dogmatic." (ID 10).

The remaining respondents list the following criteria, that make someone "truly German": obeying the German law (5 mentions), being integrated in the German society with its values and norms (3 mentions), having a command of the German language (3 mentions), possessing German virtues such as diligence and punctuality (2 mentions), being born in Germany (1 mention), and having German parents (1 mention).

Comments of the cognitive interviewers:

An instruction for the interviewers should be inserted pointing out that while reading aloud the answer options, the interviewer should explicitly mention again, that the question is about the importance of the items *for being truly German*: "Is this very important, fairly important, not very important, or not important at all for being truly German?" Otherwise, the respondent might misunderstand and answer whether the items are important in general and not in reference to being truly German.

Recommendations for Question Text:

Question: Due to the finding that many respondents are confused by the term "ein richtiger Deutscher", we recommend to replace it with "um wirklich eine Deutsche/ein Deutscher zu sein" ("for being truly German"). This (or rather a very similar) wording was tested in an earlier Pretest (CICOM 2, dx.doi.org/10.17173/pretest7) and found to be comprehensible:
"Some people say the following things are important for being truly German. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is?"
["Manche Leute sind der Ansicht, dass die folgenden Punkte wichtig sind, um wirklich eine Deutsche/ein Deutscher zu sein. Andere sagen, diese seien nicht wichtig. Wie wichtig schätzen Sie die folgenden Punkte ein?"]
Instruction: An instruction for the interviewers should be inserted pointing out that while reading aloud the answer options, the interviewer should explicitly mention again, that the question is about the importance of the items *for being truly* German:
INT.: Read answer categories aloud as follows: "Is it very important, fairly important, not very important or not at all important *for being truly German.*"
[INT.: Antwortkategorien wie folgt vorlesen: "Ist das sehr wichtig, ziemlich wichtig, nicht sehr wichtig oder überhaupt nicht wichtig, um wirklich eine Deutsche/ein Deutscher zu sein."]
Answer categories: No changes recommended.

Answer Categories:

Very important *[Sehr wichtig]*
Fairly important *[Ziemlich wichtig]*

Not very important *[Nicht sehr wichtig]*
Not important at all *[Überhaupt nicht wichtig]*
Refused [Verweigert]
Don't know [Weiß nicht]

Cognitive Techniques:

Comprehension Probing, General Probing.

Multi-Item Scale documented in ZIS (DOI):

https://zis.gesis.org/DoiId/10.6102/zis96

All Items for Question(Question Text):

Some people say that the following things are important for being truly German. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is... very important, fairly important, not very important, or not important at all?
[Manche Leute sind der Ansicht, die folgenden Punkte seien wichtig, um eine richtige Deutsche/ ein richtiger Deutscher zu sein. Andere sagen, diese seien nicht wichtig. Wie wichtig schätzen Sie die folgenden Punkte ein?]

-> **Tested Items:**

Item Text:

a) To have been born in Germany. *[In Deutschland geboren zu sein.]*

Recommendations:

No changes recommended.

Findings:

Only three respondents think it is "very important" (ID 04, 09) or "fairly important" (ID 12) to have been born in Germany to be truly German. While respondent 09 does not further elaborate on her answer, the two other respondents stress the strong influence of one's surroundings during socialization:

- "I think it is important to grow into German customs starting from a young age to be a real German." (ID 04)
- "I think at the age of 1 to 15, the surrounding environment is very formative. [...] You can also see this in the Turks who have been born here – there are many who have been socialized entirely here and who are just as German as others, even if they have a different background." (ID 12)

Five respondents (ID 05, 06, 10, 15, 16) state that it is "not very important", eight (ID 01, 02, 03, 07, 08, 11, 13, 14), that it is "not important at all" to have been born in Germany to be truly German. These respondents instead offer a number of different characteristics that make someone "truly German", such as mastery of the German language, being respectful of German legislation and institutions or possessing German virtues.

Question Topic:

Religion & culture/ Cultural identity

Construct:

National identity

Item Text:

d) To have German ancestry. *[Deutsche Vorfahren zu haben.]*

Recommendations:

No changes recommended.

Findings:

To have German ancestry is, according to most respondents "not very important" (ID 04, 06, 09, 10, 16) or "not important at all" (ID 01, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08, 12, 13, 14) for being truly German. Respondent 15 thinks it is "fairly important", while respondent 11 thinks it is "very important". Both do not explicitly explain their answer choice, respondent 11 however had earlier stated that a true German had German parents.

The other respondents explain that having German ancestry is not an essential criterion and instead name those characteristics that they had also listed when asked to describe what made one truly German (Item a).

Question Topic:

Religion & culture/ Cultural identity

Construct:

National identity

-> Not Tested Items:

Item Text:

b) To have lived in Germany for most of one's life. *[Einen Großteil des Lebens in Deutschland gelebt zu haben.]*

Question Topic:

Religion & culture/ Cultural identity

Construct:

National identity

Item Text:

c) To respect German political institutions and laws. *[Die politischen Institutionen und Gesetze Deutschlands zu respektieren.]*

Question Topic:

Religion & culture/ Cultural identity

Construct:

National identity