

Multi-Item Scale for Project:

International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2013/2014 (English Version)

Introduction:

There are different opinions about people's rights in a democracy. Please use the scale from 1 to 7 for the following questions. 1 does not mean important at all, 7 is very important. With the values in between you can grade your opinion.

[Es gibt unterschiedliche Meinungen über die Rechte der Menschen in einer Demokratie. Benutzen Sie bitte für die folgenden Fragen die Skala von 1 bis 7. Der Wert 1 bedeutet überhaupt nicht wichtig, der Wert 7 sehr wichtig. Mit den Werten dazwischen können Sie Ihre Meinung abstimmen.]

Findings for Introduction:

When asked, 13 test persons state that they had primarily thought of the rights of people in Germany and not generally of the rights of people in democracies (regardless of individual countries) when answering Question 2 as a whole. However, the interviews do not provide any evidence that the subjects' answers apply only to Germany. Rather, they give the impression that Germany automatically serves as a frame of reference, since people live in this country and primarily deal with democracy in Germany.

Recommendations for Introduction:

No changes recommended.

Question Text:

How important is it for you...

[Wie wichtig ist es für Sie,...]

Instruction:

(Please check one box on each line.) *[Bitte machen Sie in JEDER Zeile ein Kreuz!]*

Answer Categories:

1 Not important at all *[Überhaupt nicht wichtig]*

2

3

4

5

6

7 Very important [*Sehr wichtig*]

Don't know [*Kann ich nicht sagen*]

Cognitive Techniques:

Comprehension Probing, General Probing, Specific Probing

All Items for Question(Question Text):

How important is it for you...

[*Wie wichtig ist es für Sie,...*]

-> Tested Items:

Item Text:

a.) that all citizens have an adequate standard of living [*dass alle Bürger einen ausreichenden Lebensstandard haben*]

Recommendations:

No changes recommended.

Findings:

A respondent claims not to be able to answer item a) ("Can't say") and justifies his answer by saying that it is unclear to him what is meant by a "sufficient" standard of living. Her answer would be different depending on whether a sufficient standard of living meant that one "receives Hartz IV" or that everyone "has their own apartment or house".

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Attitudes towards democratic rights

Item Text:

d.) that citizens may engage in acts of civil disobedience when they oppose government actions [*dass Bürger die Möglichkeit des zivilen Ungehorsams haben, um ihre deutliche Ablehnung gegenüber Regierungsentscheidungen zum Ausdruck zu bringen*]

Recommendations:

Rephrase in:

"that citizens have the possibility of non-violent protest to express their clear opposition to government decisions."

[*"dass Bürger die Möglichkeit des gewaltlosen Protests haben, um ihre deutliche Ablehnung gegenüber Regierungsentscheidungen zum Ausdruck zu bringen."*]

Or shorter and easier to understand for the respondents:

"that citizens have the possibility of non-violent protest against government decisions."

[*"dass Bürger die Möglichkeit des gewaltlosen Protests gegenüber Regierungsentscheidungen haben."*]

Findings:

This item is predominantly classified as important or very important (n=16). Three test persons give the average value and one test person classifies the item as "rather not important".

When answering statement d), four test persons spontaneously express difficulties in understanding the concept of civil disobedience:

■ *"It's a bit complicated. What does that mean? You know what 'civil' and 'disobedient' is, but now in this context? What does it mean?"* (TP 01)

■ *"What is meant by 'civil disobedience'?"* (TP 07)

■ *"I would now understand that they will be allowed to demonstrate. Is that what you mean?"* (TP 11)

■ *"How is civil disobedience defined?"* (TP 12)

The probing question of what the test subjects understand by the term 'civil disobedience' revealed that four other test subjects had difficulties in understanding the item.

The main reason for this was that it was not clear to the test persons whether the term refers only to violent protest or also includes violent protests:

- *"It's really hard. I've been thinking about demonstrations or maybe collecting signatures in general. But I wonder if that's civil disobedience already? I wouldn't know if civil disobedience means that something is forbidden or if it's just a legal rebellion against a political decision."* (TP 06)
- *"I've become attached to the term. I found it difficult to formulate, because I thought, what is hidden behind it or what would I understand by it? What I had in mind was the right of assembly, demonstrations. That one should demonstrate in a civilian setting, i.e. peacefully and without violence, for example."* (TP 08)
- *"Civil disobedience ranges from destruction to house occupation. Destruction: no, squatting and protest rallies: yes. Maybe I am naive, but I would like it to be so that others are not harmed and that no property is destroyed. Randal is not one of them for me, so the answer is very difficult for me. Where is the border?"* (TP 12)

Test person 12 notes that your answer ("important", scale value 6) is only valid if the statement is about non-violent protest.

- *"I think of Stuttgart 21, of demonstrations. There are different kinds of 'civil disobedience'. For example, one can take part in non-violent demonstrations or in those where there is serious rioting. That's why I'm lying in the middle. I am already in favour of the citizens being able to, or should, exercise the right to demonstrate, which is a fundamental right. But I reject violent demonstrations on principle."* (TP 15)

Two test persons clearly misinterpret the term:

- *"That you might be a criminal? Not doing your job?"* (TP 03)
- *"Sounds to me like this isn't about demonstration. Civil disobedience, that's something you do against the law. And I don't think that's so okay now. Smashing windows or something or demolishing cars, in anger or in protest."* (TP 13)

Due to this misinterpretation, these two test persons state that this right is rather not important for people in a democracy (scale values 3 and 4). The remaining ten test persons interpret the term civil disobedience mainly as non-violent protest and understand it to mean forms of protest such as strikes and demonstrations.

The difficulties that arise in answering statement d) due to the concept of "civil disobedience" are also illustrated by the fact that half of the test persons (n=10) state that they found it "rather difficult" or "very difficult" to answer the statement due to the concept of "rather difficult" or "very difficult".

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Attitudes towards democratic rights

Item Text:

f.) that people convicted of serious crimes lose their citizen rights [*dass Menschen, die wegen schwerer Verbrechen verurteilt wurden, ihre Bürgerrechte verlieren*]

Recommendations:

The term "civil rights" should be specified by using several items each dealing with one civil right, for example:

1. "that people convicted of serious crimes lose the right to vote." [*dass Menschen, die wegen schwerer Verbrechen verurteilt wurden, das Wahlrecht verlieren.*"]
2. "that people convicted of serious crimes lose the right to petition." [*dass Menschen, die wegen schwerer Verbrechen verurteilt wurden, das Petitionsrecht verlieren.*"]
3. "... " etc.

Findings:

Four subjects (TP 05, TP 07, TP 10, TP 13) indicate that they have difficulty finding the correct scale value to express that they do not want "people to lose their civil rights":

■ *"How important is it to me that they lose? It's not important to me. You know, it's a little weird to ask. You somehow have the feeling that you have to do it the other way [on the scale], but I understand it now, every citizen has civil rights, even if he has committed crimes, so I don't want him to lose them."* (TP 07)

■ *"There I have a little problem with the scale, so 'not important at all'. I don't think it's important that people say stop, that they lose it, or I think it's very important that they lose it. [...] I also think it is important that they don't lose them. I have a problem to find the right answer immediately, because for me it is very important that they don't lose them. For me, there is an unrecognizable negation built into this. So then it's actually not important at all, because they shouldn't lose it."* (TP 10)

Four other test persons (TP 03, TP 08, TP 09, TP 17), three of whom replied "I can't tell", make the spontaneous comment that they do not know whether this statement corresponds to reality or not. Furthermore, they claim that they are not clear which rights are meant by "civil rights":

■ *"I think that if you have committed serious crimes, you should be convicted, but I am not sure that you should lose civil rights as a result. I can't find - There might be an example to be given."* (TP 08)

■ *"Do I understand correctly that people convicted of serious crimes lose their civil rights? I'm not really that informed. Do they lose all their rights? I can't tell you that, I don't have enough information. I think he will certainly retain some of his rights. But here it says 'lose their civil rights' and that sounds like everyone. But he doesn't lose them all. I don't know, I can't say."* (TP 17)

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Attitudes towards democratic rights

Item Text:

g.) that long-term residents of a country, who are not citizens, have the right to vote in that country's national elections [*dass Menschen, die schon lange in einem Land leben, aber dort nicht eingebürgert sind, das Recht haben, bei nationalen Wahlen abzustimmen*]

Recommendations:

Rephrase in:

"that people who have lived in a country for a long time but are not naturalized there have the right to vote in nationwide elections.

[*"dass Menschen, die schon lange in einem Land leben, aber dort nicht eingebürgert sind, das Recht haben, bei landesweiten Wahlen abzustimmen."*]

Findings:

The test persons use the entire scale width. Only one test person (TP 03) answers with "Can't say" and justifies his answer by saying that he wants to abstain from this statement.

The term "national elections" is not interpreted by the test persons in the intended sense (national elections in different countries), but in the sense of "elections within Germany". The test persons think of very different elections (or combinations of elections). They are called the Bundestag elections (4 nominations), Bundestag and local elections (4 nominations), Bundestag and state elections (4 nominations), Bundestag and European elections (1 nomination), district or local elections (2 nominations) and all elections in Germany (5 nominations). The choices made in Germany are the frame of reference for the respondents when answering the item, although this does not necessarily mean that the answers of the test persons are only valid for Germany. The interviews do not provide any indications that the test persons have a different attitude to voting rights in other countries (see findings on the question as a whole).

Problematic, however, is the finding that three test persons explicitly think of local elections and not national (i.e. nationwide) elections when answering the item. Their answers would be quite different if they were to interpret the item in the intended sense:

- *"If the mayor is to be elected, then I think they should be allowed to participate. If you live in Mannheim for 20 years and it is an election, then you should have the right to vote. If the Federal Chancellor is elected, then one can already say that citizenship is necessary. In regional elections: yes, in national elections: no."* (TP 09, answer: "rather important", scale value 5)
- *"For example, within a city district. That people who live in that city already have a right to participate, not in all matters. That's why I didn't turn further to the right, in part you have the right. Not federal elections, but limited to a residential area."* (TP 19, answer: "moderately important", scale value 4)
- *"I have thought about elections that affect the immediate surroundings, such as the state parliament, the election of mayors. For the Bundestag elections, I don't think it's like that, you should be naturalized. For the federal elections I would have answered it differently. It was clear to me that it refers to the local environment."* (TP 20, answer: "important", scale value 6)

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Attitudes towards democratic rights

-> Not Tested Items:

Item Text:

b.) that government authorities respect and protect the rights of minorities [*dass Staat und Behörden die Rechte von Minderheiten achten und schützen*]

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Attitudes towards democratic rights

Item Text:

c.) that people be given more opportunities to participate in public decision-making [*dass man den Menschen Möglichkeiten gibt, an politischen Entscheidungen teilzuhaben*]

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Attitudes towards democratic rights

Item Text:

e.) that governments respect democratic rights whatever the circumstances [*dass Regierungen die demokratischen Rechte unter allen Umständen achten*]

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Attitudes towards democratic rights

Item Text:

h.) that citizens have the right not to vote [*dass Bürger das Recht haben, nicht zur Wahl zu gehen*]

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Attitudes towards democratic rights

Item Text:

i.) that health care be provided for everyone [*dass jeder medizinische Versorgung erhält*]

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Attitudes towards democratic rights