

## Multi-Item Scale for Project:

German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) 2021 (English Version)

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### Question Text:

The following questions are about the federal election campaign in 2017 and the activities of the parties as well as the candidates. Please ignore all other elections that took place in the mentioned year.

*[Nun folgen Fragen zum Bundestagswahlkampf im Jahr 2017 und den Aktivitäten der Parteien sowie den Kandidatinnen und Kandidaten. Lassen Sie bitte alle anderen Wahlen, die im genannten Jahr stattgefunden haben, außer Acht.]*

### Instruction:

Please make a cross in EACH line! *[Bitte machen Sie in JEDER Zeile ein Kreuz!]*

### Answer Categories:

Yes *[Ja]*

No *[Nein]*

Don't know *[Weiß nicht]*

### Findings for Multi-Item Scale:

The items in question 8 deal with the federal election in 2017. More specifically, they ask in what form the test persons had contact with political parties and their representatives during the election campaign.

Spontaneously, three test persons (TP 04, 05, 08) expressed their astonishment about the questions about 2017 ("What? 2017?", TP 08). From their point of view, the period of time that has passed since then seems very distant. Of these persons, however, only subject 04 chose the "don't know" category for item c). The initial surprise did not cause any discernible problems for the remaining persons. Since the year for the GLES surveys will be adjusted before and after the 2021 federal election, no further revision of the question is needed at this point.

#### 1. Should the question use the term "[female and male] candidates" ("Kandidatinnen und Kandidaten") or "persons running for election" ("kandidierende Personen")?

When asked how the formulation "[female and male] candidates" affected the test persons, the overwhelming majority ( $n = 7$ ) expressed a positive opinion. It became clear

that corresponding formulations were part of everyday life for most of the test persons:

- *"[It] is quite normal that male and female are mentioned."* (TP 01)
- *"I am very familiar with this gender-appropriate naming."* (TP 05)

However, three of these respondents (TP 02, 04, 05) expressed that adjusted wording, such as a gender asterisk, would shorten and simplify the question:

- *"I am a fan of the gender asterisk because I find it easier to read."* (TP 04)
- *"If anything, it would still need [an] asterisk to unify all the sentiments there."* (TP 05)

Three other test persons were rather critical of the wording "[female and male] candidates" and would prefer the wording "candidates":

- *"If it had just said candidates, I would have understood [men and women] too, because I know that women also run and, if they're lucky, get elected."* (TP 08)
- *"Even if it says candidates, I always see male/female. Divers is a little hard for me, but I always see male/female."* (TP 09)

Subsequently, the persons were presented with the alternative phrase "person running for election" and asked about its effect. Half of the persons ( $n = 5$ ) expressed a positive opinion about the alternative formulation and would prefer it to the formulation "[female and male] candidates". This attitude was justified with an extended inclusion of all people and an easier reading flow:

- *"From that point of view, person running for election would be better for me for the reading flow."* (TP 06)
- *"Because that includes everything: male, female, and other-gender."* (TP 08)

In contrast, there was one test person (TP 07) who liked the wording "[female and male] candidates" better because it sounded more fluid and read better.

Another test person, on the other hand, criticized the implementation of gender-equal language: *"We [...] don't have to overdo it,"* she said. *"If they wrote 'person running for election', they would also have to write 'voting person'. That's where they have to keep it consistent and then it becomes illegible. Write on the front of the first page, 'the masculine form means both female and male applicants' and that's fine."* (TP 09)

Finally, two other test persons (TP 01 and 02) were neutral towards both formulations.

## Recommendations for Multi-Item Scale:

Question: No changes recommended with one exception: the word "to" should be added before "the parties' activities."

Response format: No changes recommended.

## Cognitive Techniques:

Specific Probing, Comprehension Probing

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## All Items for Question(Question Text):

The following questions are about the federal election campaign in 2017 and the activities of the parties as well as the candidates. Please ignore all other elections that took place in the mentioned year.

*[Nun folgen Fragen zum Bundestagswahlkampf im Jahr 2017 und den Aktivitäten der Parteien sowie den Kandidatinnen und Kandidaten. Lassen Sie bitte alle anderen Wahlen, die im genannten Jahr stattgefunden haben, außer Acht.]*

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-> Tested Items:

## Item Text:

h. Have you been approached directly by a person, for example, on the street or at your apartment or front door? *[Wurden Sie direkt von einer Person angesprochen, z. B. auf der Straße oder an Ihrer Wohnungs- bzw. Haustür?]*

## Recommendations:

No changes recommended.

## Findings:

**"Have you been approached directly by a person, for example, on the street or at your apartment door or front door?" - Which people do respondents think of?**

When the persons were asked to explain which people they had thought of in item h), all mentioned politicians, political candidates, or campaign workers:

- *"I almost thought of politicians now, but it could just as easily have been campaign workers directly promoting themselves or their party." (TP 06)*
- *"To candidates doing rallies or coming to doorsteps." (TP 07)*
- *"I do think that if someone is running for office here in town, if they were to meet me on the street, that they might approach me and ask if I would vote for them, what my wishes [are] and what I expect from the election. [...] Or someone from the party, an election worker." (TP 08)*

## Question Topic:

Politics/ Political behavior

## Construct:

Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017

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## Item Text:

i. Were you contacted by parties through an online social network, such as Facebook?  
*[Wurden Sie über ein soziales Netzwerk im Internet, wie z. B. Facebook, von Parteien kontaktiert?]*

## Recommendations:

Since most of the tested questions contain the term "social media," we recommend this term also for item i), instead of using "social networks." Since the phrase "be contacted" made most test persons think of direct messaging, item i) can capture other contact options with a rewording if desired:

"Have you seen posts from or received direct messages from parties via an online social network, such as Facebook?"

## Findings:

**"Have you been contacted by parties via an online social network, such as Facebook?" - Does "being contacted" also cover seeing posts from parties that have been shared by other users or have appeared as advertisements?**

For item i), persons were asked what they understood by "being contacted via a social network." In addition to the social medium Facebook, which served as an example for item i), five test persons named other ways of being contacted. Among them were two

persons each who addressed Instagram or Twitter. Subject 01 also referenced email contacts in her response.

"Being contacted" for all ten test persons meant a private message addressed directly to them:

- *"That's when I first thought of being contacted by email from the parties or being contacted directly on Facebook."* (TP 01)
- *"Being contacted via Facebook or Instagram, so, sort of [getting] a message sent to me."* (TP 02)
- *"If someone would write to me directly, the SPD or the CDU, whether I would like to vote for a candidate or why not."* (TP 08)

Overall, most of the test persons thought of direct contacts and not of other ways of contacting them when answering item i). Depending on the intent of the question developers, item i) might need to be reworded to capture shared posts or advertisements.

## **Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

## **Construct:**

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-> Not Tested Items:

## **Item Text:**

Did you attend any party election events or rallies? [*Haben Sie Wahlveranstaltungen oder Kundgebungen von Parteien besucht?*]

## **Recommendations:**

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## **Findings for Item:**

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**Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

**Construct:**

Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017

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**Item Text:**

b. Have you received emails or text messages from political parties? [*Haben Sie E-Mails oder SMS von Parteien erhalten?*]

**Recommendations:**

-

**Findings for Item:**

-

**Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

**Construct:**

Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017

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**Item Text:**

c. Have you read any informational materials from parties, such as flyers, handbills, brochures, or mailers? [*Haben Sie Informationsmaterial von Parteien, wie z. B. Flugblätter, Handzettel, Broschüren oder Postwurfsendungen, gelesen?* ]

**Recommendations:**

-

**Findings for Item:**

-

**Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

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Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017

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**Item Text:**

d. Have you read election ads from political parties in newspapers or magazines? [*Haben Sie Wahlanzeigen von Parteien in Zeitungen oder Zeitschriften gelesen?*]

**Recommendations:**

-

**Findings for Item:**

-

**Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

**Construct:**

Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017

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**Item Text:**

e. Have you seen election posters of parties or candidates? [*Haben Sie Wahlplakate von Parteien oder Kandidatinnen und Kandidaten gesehen?*]

**Recommendations:**

-

**Findings for Item:**

-

**Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

**Construct:**

Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017

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**Item Text:**

f. Have you visited one or more campaign booths here in town? [*Haben Sie einen oder mehrere Wahlkampfstände hier im Ort besucht?*]

**Recommendations:**

-

**Findings for Item:**

-

**Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

**Construct:**

Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017

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**Item Text:**

g. Have you seen any party commercials on television? *[Haben Sie Werbesendungen von Parteien im Fernsehen gesehen?]*

**Recommendations:**

-

**Findings for Item:**

-

**Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

**Construct:**

Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017

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**Item Text:**

j. Have you visited a party or candidate's website? *Haben Sie die Website einer Partei oder einer Kandidatin bzw. eines Kandidaten besucht?]*

**Recommendations:**

-

**Findings for Item:**

-

**Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

**Construct:**

Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017

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**Item Text:**

k. Have you heard any election ads on the radio? [*Haben Sie Wahlwerbung im Radio gehört?*]

**Recommendations:**

-

**Findings for Item:**

-

**Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

**Construct:**

Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017

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**Item Text:**

l. Have you donated money to a political candidate or party? [*Haben Sie Geld für eine politische Kandidatin oder einen politischen Kandidaten oder eine Partei gespendet?* ]

**Recommendations:**

-

**Findings for Item:**

-

**Question Topic:**

Politics/ Political behavior

**Construct:**

Party contacts during the federal election campaign 2017