

## Question in Project:

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

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## Question Topic:

Politics/ Political behavior

## Construct:

Media use for the purpose of political information

## General Information:

**\*Note: The item was tested in German. This is an English translation of the original German wording. The translation does not correspond exactly to the wording in the English ISSP source questionnaire.\***

## Question Text:

How often do you use the media, i.e. television, newspapers, radio and Internet, to obtain political information?

*[Wie oft nutzen Sie die Medien, d.h. Fernsehen, Zeitungen, Radio und Internet, um sich politisch zu informieren?]*

## Answer Categories:

Several times a day *[Mehrere Male am Tag]*

Once a day *[Einmal am Tag]*

5 to 6 days a week *[An 5-6 Tagen pro Woche]*

3 to 4 days a week *[An 3-4 Tagen pro Woche]*

1 to 2 days a week *[An 1-2 Tagen pro Woche]*

Less than 1 day per week *[An weniger als 1 Tag pro Woche]*

Never *[Nie]*

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

## Cognitive Techniques:

Think Aloud, General Probing, Specific Probing

## **Findings for Answer Categories:**

Three test subjects point out that it is difficult for them to find themselves in the answer choices. Test person 07 states that the answer categories are not mutually exclusive and that it is entirely conceivable that the media are used "several times a day" on "5-6 days a week" to obtain political information. The same difficulties with the answer scale arise also for test person 16. test person 17 forms an average value: "So the days are not equal. On some days I use these media several times a day and on other days less. Therefore I would say "once a day", that would probably correspond to that.

Overall, however, the difficulties expressed seem rather insignificant, since the three test persons can be located on the response scale.

## **Recommendations for Answer Categories:**

No changes recommended.

## **Findings for Question:**

The majority of the test persons stated that they use the various media "several times a day" or "once a day" to obtain political information. The answer categories "never" and "I cannot say" were not chosen.

The test subjects associate three different ways of informing themselves politically with the term "informing themselves politically": seeing/reading/listening to news, informing themselves about general political events (e.g. via a local newspaper) and informing themselves specifically about certain topics (e.g. the German federal elections). Watching/reading/listening to the news and informing yourself about general political events were mentioned 14 times. Three times, explicit reference was made to the upcoming Bundestag elections. In general, the test persons have a broad concept of "informing themselves politically", ranging from simply "listening" to news to regularly following political broad-casts. According to their objective, the question therefore works very well in this form.

One difference between the test subjects is the way they inform themselves politically: active versus passive. Ten respondents state that they inform themselves consciously or specifically about politics, while the other ten respondents, when answering the question, also consider situations in which they are informed unconsciously and incidentally.

Test person 10, for example, informs himself several times a day and does this consciously and specifically: *"I have now taken into account the conscious process for me here, where I really want to learn something and inform myself. Not so this subtle, the radio is on and you pick up something and you didn't have the need for information at all."*

Test person 08 also informs himself several times a day, but when answering the question, he also takes into account that he is also informed unconsciously and incidentally: *"Even the unconscious, I always listen to the radio in the morning and that is not aimed at informing me politically, but since news does come, you also hear events that you would not have thought of in this way."*

In general, the answers of the test subjects show that there is no connection between the way of informing (active versus passive) and the intensity of media use for the purpose of political information. In other words: Those who consciously and specifically obtain information do not use the media for this purpose to a greater or lesser extent than those who have also taken passive information into account.

Three test persons point out that it is difficult for them to find themselves in the answers. Test person 07 states that the answer categories are not mutually exclusive and that it is entirely conceivable that the media are used "several times a day" on "5-6 days a week" to obtain political information. The same difficulties with the answer scale arise for test person 16, while test person 17 forms an average value: *"Well, the days are not the same. On some days I use these media several times a day and on other days less. So, I would say "once a day", that would probably correspond to this. All in all, however the difficulties expressed seem rather insignificant, since the three test subjects can be located on the response scale."*

## **Recommendations:**

No changes recommended.