

# CSES Module V

## Core & Demographics Subcommittee Report

Final report for the Planning Committee meeting  
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### Charges

The Core/Demographics Subcommittee has two charges: 1) To evaluate the demographics questions used in CSES Module 4 and make recommendations for any additions, changes, clarifications, or deletions related to them. Demographic questions are those labelled beginning with “D” (i.e. question D1, D2, D3...).<sup>1</sup> 2) To update (add, delete, and confirm) the list of questions which are “core” to the CSES project as of CSES Module 5. By “core” we refer to questions from the main module (questions labelled beginning with “Q” – i.e. question Q1, Q2, Q3, etc.) which should be considered to be repeated for every module of the CSES.

Our recommendations are based on analyses of the actual use of core and demographic variables in publications based on previous rounds of the CSES, as well as the discussions with members of the other subcommittees at meetings with the planning committee in Taiwan, Berlin, and Seattle.

## 1. CSES Demographic Questions

We took part of a preliminary presentation of a content analysis of 195 CSES publications in the period 1999-2015 show what demographic and core variables have actually come to use in previous rounds of CSES. The analysis mainly built on data stemming from modules I-III (see tables 1-3). We conclude that many of the demographic variables have proven to be rarely used by the CSES analysts in the past. This does not necessarily mean that they should be removed from the CSES, but we think they deserve some attention for reconsidering in the light of the overall theme of the CSES V as proposed in the stimulus paper.

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<sup>1</sup> The Module 4 questionnaire can be found here:  
[http://www.cses.org/collabs/CSES\\_Module4\\_Questionnaire\\_2011July15.txt](http://www.cses.org/collabs/CSES_Module4_Questionnaire_2011July15.txt)

Moreover, as was pointed out at the Taipei meeting, many of the demographic variables included in CSES IV was accompanying the overall theme of respective round, and this means that many of them may potentially be dropped. This needs certainly to be done in order to shorten the CSES module 5. It is generally better to keep the module short and get all variables from all countries, rather than having a too long module from which some variables are dropped by NES-teams because of length.

**Table 1. Most Frequently Used CSES Demographic Variables in Published Research (percentage, # of publications).**

Variables	% (#)
Age	49% (95)
Education	49% (96)
Gender	45% (88)
Household income	31% (61)
(Union) Membership	15% (30)
Current employment status/employment type	14% (28)
Rural/urban & region of residency	10% (19)
Religious services attendance/religiosity/religious denomination	10% (19)
Marital status	7% (13)
Main occupation	4% (7)
Race	4% (7)
Ethnicity	3% (5)

*Comment on religion: attendance/religiosity/denomination:* As for the attendance vs. religiosity, although this varies by module, there are some modules (2, for example) where neither was systematically included in all questionnaires: sometimes one, sometimes the other. Although we know that different things are being measured, it might make sense to exchange the possibility of having both D22 and D23 by having just one but increasing the likelihood it is always used in all surveys. Local teams could then decide whether they need the other. *Suggested recommendation:* Drop the question of level of religiosity (D23).

*Comment on membership in unions, farmer organisations, business/professional organization and the like.* *Suggested recommendation:* We propose to keep union membership but let go of the other follow up-questions of organizational membership in order to save space in the CSES V questionnaire.

**Table 2. Rarely used CSES Demographic Variables.**

Variables	% (#)
Socio-economic status	1.5% (3)
Industrial sector	1% (2)
Number in household in total	1% (2)
Spouse employment status/employment type	0.5% (1)
Spouse occupation	0.5% (1)
Spouse socio-economic status	0.5% (1)
Language spoken at home	0.5% (1)

*Suggested recommendation:* Drop the set of questions (employment status, type, occupation, SES) about respondents' spouses. One pragmatic justification for this is that many local teams have already dropped this set of questions about spouses. Detailed codes (three-digit ISCO codes) for spouses seem to have been especially important to the CSES Module IV theme, but we argue that they are not as central for the main themes of

Module V. Dropping them will save some time in the interview and also in the coding of occupation. The main drawback is that there may be harder in some countries to construct reliable measures of social class for some respondents.

Note that the variables country of birth and year arrived in current country were new to module 4 so the actual use of these variables cannot be effectively determined at this time because of the publications lag.

Below is a summary of our proposed changes of the CSES demographic variables. Red colored entries are proposed to be dropped from the demographic variables.

D1a.	>>> DATE OF BIRTH OF RESPONDENT - MONTH
D1b.	>>> DATE OF BIRTH OF RESPONDENT - YEAR
D2.	>>> GENDER
D3.	>>> EDUCATION
D4.	>>> MARITAL OR CIVIL UNION STATUS
D5.	>>> UNION MEMBERSHIP
D6.	>>> UNION MEMBERSHIP OF OTHERS IN HOUSEHOLD
D7.	>>> BUSINESS OR EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP
D8.	>>> FARMERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP
D9.	>>> PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP
D10.	>>> CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS
D11.	>>> MAIN OCCUPATION
D12.	>>> SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS
D13.	>>> EMPLOYMENT TYPE - PUBLIC OR PRIVATE
D14.	>>> INDUSTRIAL SECTOR
D15.	>>> SPOUSE/PARTNER: CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS
D16.	>>> SPOUSE/PARTNER: OCCUPATION
D17.	>>> SPOUSE: SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS
D18.	>>> SPOUSE: EMPLOYMENT TYPE - PUBLIC OR PRIVATE
D19.	>>> SPOUSE: INDUSTRIAL SECTOR
D20.	>>> HOUSEHOLD INCOME
D21a.	>>> NUMBER IN HOUSEHOLD
D21b.	>>> NUMBER IN HOUSEHOLD UNDER AGE 18
D21c.	>>> NUMBER IN HOUSEHOLD UNDER AGE 6
D22.	>>> RELIGIOUS SERVICES ATTENDANCE
D23.	>>> RELIGIOSITY
D24.	>>> RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION
D25.	>>> LANGUAGE USUALLY SPOKEN AT HOME
D26.	>>> REGION OF RESIDENCE
D27.	>>> RACE
D28.	>>> ETHNICITY
D29.	>>> RURAL OR URBAN RESIDENCE
D30.	>>> PRIMARY ELECTORAL DISTRICT
D31.	>>> COUNTRY OF BIRTH
NEW	>>> MOTHER/FATHER BORN OUTSIDE COUNTRY
D32.	>>> YEAR ARRIVED IN CURRENT COUNTRY

## Immigrant and Citizen Status

At the Taiwan meeting, the planning committee discussed possible inclusion of several questions that would allow us to identify respondent's immigrant and citizenship status. A number of alternative ways to ask for immigrant and citizen status was discussed (listed below).

### *Immigrant status*

A related issue is whether we should ask a question about multiple citizenships that respondents may hold (to see, for example, if those with multiple citizenships exhibit different patterns of electoral behavior than those with a single citizenship). This could potentially be done with the use of a single question: "What citizenship or citizenships do you hold?"

### *1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants*

Module 4 already includes two questions that enable us to capture 1st generation immigrants: 1) “In which country were you born?” and 2) “What year did you first come to live in [country]?” But there was also some debate in Berlin whether we should add several questions to identify 2nd generation immigrants (that is, native-born individuals whose one or both parents are foreign born).

The European Social Survey (ESS) asks the following set of questions to identify 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants:

- Was your father born in [country]?
- Yes
- No ▶ In which country was your father born?
  
- Was your mother born in [country]?
- Yes
- No ▶ In which country was your mother born?

The discussions ended up in a proposition to add a simple question of whether respondents' parents are born outside of country, as a follow up to the questions of respondents' country of birth. This will allow for identification of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants, which is useful for identifying whether respondents potentially belong to in-groups or out-groups in a given society.

Was either or both of your parents born outside of [COUNTRY]?

## 2. CSES Core Questions

The Core & Demographics subcommittee was also tasked to propose changes to the core questions of CSES, i.e. the set of questions that potentially should be part of all CSES modules in the future. The decisions on what questions should be regarded as core questions was heavily guided by parallel processes in the other subcommittees, as parts of the contents of the core questions were deemed imperative to the substantive themes in

CSES V. We also based decisions on the actual use of core variables in published research (see below).

**Table 4. The Use of other CSES (both Core and Other) Variables in Published Research**

Variables	% (#)
Respondent's left-right position	33% (64)
Party ID	32% (62)
Electoral structure & particulars about the election (e.g. did any electoral alliances form?)	29% (57)
Party left-right position	23% (45)
Vote share/seat share of the parties in the said election (for all elections be it lower house, upper house or presidential)	20% (40)
Political efficacy	16% (32)
Vote choice in either lower house/upper house/presidential elections &/or previous elections	15% (30)
Political parties: ideological families/left-right/orientation of the experts	14% (28)
Economic and issue voting	13% (25)
Political knowledge and information	12% (24)
Democracy satisfaction	12% (23)
Government structure	12% (23)
Voting turnout	10% (19)
Electoral integrity	8% (15)
Political leaders' left-right	6% (11)
Effective number of parties (either electoral or parliamentary)	6% (11)
Other political participation	5% (9)
Political parties: other (for e.g. European Parliament grouping; Year of party foundation)	4% (8)
Democratic ratings of the country / age of democracy	3% (6)
Political mobilization and campaign involvement	3% (5)
Most important issue in the election	2% (4)
GDP/Inflation/Government debt	1% (2)
Electoral integrity/corruption index	0.5% (1)
Distributional politics/Social protection	0%
Human Development Index	0%
Country population	0%
Unemployment	0%
Government expenditure	0%
Prevalence of communications	0%

### Political interest

Since political knowledge measures was suggested to be dropped from CSES V (by the Political Knowledge subcommittee), we supported a joint proposition to include a standard measure of political interest as part of the new core questions. This does not mean that we consider political interest to be a substitute for political knowledge measures. The thinking is that including political interest in the CSES core will guarantee that at least one item taps into basic motivations. The question of political interest also serve as a good starting question for the CSES module as a whole.

The question of general political interest has been part of many NES for a long time, so it is quite unproblematic for most teams.

How interested would you say you are in politics?  
 Are you very interested, fairly interested, not very interested, or not at all interested?

## **Efficacy Measures**

The Core & Demographics subcommittee have discussed whether we should go with the old CSES questions on political efficacy that have been included in previous rounds of CSES *or* change into ANES questions?

### ***Pros of using ANES measures of political efficacy***

The ANES items are designed to capture people's internal and external political efficacy – the two key aspects of political efficacy identified in existing research. In contrast, the CSES project includes two items measuring external efficacy more narrowly focused on electoral process and government responsiveness.

The ANES items reflect the long-established distinction between internal and external political efficacy. Internal efficacy refers to individual beliefs about one's own competence to understand and participate effectively in politics, whereas external efficacy refers to beliefs about the responsiveness of the political system, institutions, and political actors to the participation of individuals (e.g. Balch 1974; Craig and Maggiotto 1982; Niemi et al. 1991). The ANES items capturing these two concepts and developed by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center have been used continuously in their surveys since the 1950s. Subsequent research confirmed that distinction between internal and external efficacy and their measures apply in other liberal democracies as well (e.g., Acock, Clarke, and Stewart 1985). Including the ANES items in the CSES data would enable scholars to measure political efficacy in a way that reflects the theoretically and empirically relevant distinction between internal and external efficacy long established in existing research.

The CSES project relies on two items of political efficacy – “who is in power makes a difference” and “who people vote for makes a difference”. Both measure external efficacy (Karp and Banducci 2008) and are narrow in scope in that they focus on electoral process and government responsiveness to those who vote. At the same time, the two items have been argued to be distinct in that “voting is about agency on the part of the voter or respondent”, whereas “who is in power makes a difference” is about agency on the part of representatives (see Jack Vowles' submission to the CSES Module 5 Planning Committee).<sup>2</sup>

The narrow scope of the CSES items in measuring political efficacy, however, may be justified. The initial report for the CSES Planning Committee (prepared in 1995-6) states that “Given the project's general concern with electoral choice and participation, it makes sense to focus on evaluations of the electoral process and on perceptions of the performance of political parties and representatives as institutions that link citizens to government.” It then suggests the question “who people for makes a difference” as one of the items measuring people's evaluations of electoral processes, while “who is in power makes a difference” is listed as one of the questions measuring people's evaluations of the responsiveness of representatives.

Another advantage of using ANES items is that the formulation of its external efficacy item – “How much do government officials care what people like you think? A great deal,

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<sup>2</sup> In discussing the question “who people vote for makes a difference, Karp and Banducci (2008) note that “In terms of face validity, this question asks respondents to evaluate the meaningfulness of voting, a component of elections as an accountability mechanism, and, therefore, should be the most direct measure of the feelings of efficacy that can be attributed to the act of voting” (Karp and Banducci 2008: 319). They further note that the item loaded most strongly with other items measuring external efficacy and conclude that “the CSES item measures an aspect of external efficacy” (Karp and Banducci 2008: 319, fn.34).

a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or not at all? / Not at all, a little, a moderate amount, a lot, or a great deal?” is almost identical as the one proposed in the Stimulus Paper of the current Planning Committee: “**Q1** To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree? a. Politicians in [COUNTRY] do not care about the people.” (p.6). Hence, including the ANES question would enable us tap one of the dimensions that the Committee finds relevant in gauging populist attitudes in the mass publics.

The internal efficacy item (available in ANES but not in the CSES) is by definition designed to measure a sense of one’s competence to understand and participate effectively in politics (e.g. Balch 1974; Craig and Maggionto 1982; Niemi et al. 1991). If the primary purpose of political knowledge questions that the current Planning Committee is considering dropping from the new Module is to measure respondent’s political competence, then the ANES internal efficacy question may be a good alternative (in addition to political interest).

***Cons of replacing the CSES efficacy items with the ANES items.***

Replacing the CSES efficacy items with ANES items disrupts continuity in using the CSES efficacy items and building time-series data. Note, however, there have been some differences in the wording of the CSES questions across countries and over time. Specifically, in Module I, the question “who is in power makes a difference” was formulated in the following way: “Some people say it makes a (big) difference who is in power. Others say that it doesn't make a (or ‘any’) difference who is in power. Using the scale on this card, (where ONE means that it makes a (big) difference who is in power and FIVE means that it doesn't make a (or ‘any’) difference who is in power), where would you place yourself?” In Module II, an initial version of the questionnaire added words ‘big’ and ‘any’ before ‘difference’ in the question wording and its response categories (shown in brackets above). However, about halfway throughout the period in which the fieldwork was being carried out, the text of the module provided to collaborators was changed back to the form of Module I (Vowles 2008: 66). In Modules III and IV, words ‘big’ and ‘any’ were kept in the formulation. The same applies to the second CSES survey item designed to measure political efficacy - “Who people vote for make a difference”

Our suggestion here is a compromise. We complement the CORE with a 5-point measure of internal efficacy that is inspired by the ANES questions.

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements: You feel you understand the most important political issues of this country.

To be able to do this we need to cut one of the external efficacy measures that have been included in the CSES. To compensate for the extra question, one of the old measures of external efficacy (Q7: Who is in power can make a difference) was dropped from the core.

Below you find a summary of our proposed changes of the CSES Core questions. Blue background marks the new questions and red letters marks the dropped questions.

NEW	POLITICAL INTEREST
NEW	POLITICS IN THE MEDIA
Q3.	>>> STATE OF ECONOMY
Q3a.	>>> STATE OF ECONOMY - BETTER
Q3b.	>>> STATE OF ECONOMY - WORSE
Q5P1-a.	>>> CURRENT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION [FIRST ROUND]: DID RESPONDENT CAST A BALLOT [IF APPLICABLE]
Q5P1-b.	>>> CURRENT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION [FIRST ROUND]: VOTE CHOICE [IF APPLICABLE]
Q6a.	>>> PREVIOUS ELECTION: DID RESPONDENT CAST A BALLOT
Q6b.	>>> PREVIOUS ELECTION: VOTE CHOICE - PARTY LIST
Q6c.	>>> PREVIOUS ELECTION: VOTE CHOICE - DISTRICT CANDIDATE
DROPPED	>>> WHO IS IN POWER CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE
Q8.	>>> WHO PEOPLE VOTE FOR MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE
NEW	INTERNAL EFFICACY-ITEM
Q9a-i.	>>> LIKE-DISLIKE - PARTY A-I
Q10a-i.	>>> LIKE-DISLIKE - LEADER A-I
Q11a.	>>> LEFT-RIGHT - PARTY A-I
Q12.	>>> LEFT-RIGHT - SELF
Q14.	>>> OPTIONAL ALTERNATIVE SCALE - SELF
Q15.	>>> SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
Q16.	>>> ARE YOU CLOSE TO ANY POLITICAL PARTY
Q16a.	>>> DO YOU FEEL CLOSER TO ONE PARTY
Q16b.	>>> WHICH PARTY DO YOU FEEL CLOSEST TO
Q16c.	>>> DEGREE OF CLOSENESS TO THIS PARTY
NEW	>>> GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE: GENERAL

### Media exposure

Picking up on past discussions on the lack of media items in the CSES, we propose to include a media exposure question which has not been part of CSES in previous modules. Since the fieldwork starts right after an often intense election campaign, asking about media exposure in the past week may prove to be difficult. Because of that we may instead use 'regular week' to capture more lasting habits of media exposure to politics from TV, newspapers and social media. In many parts of the world, radio is still a major source of political information to electorates (<http://www.amazon.com/Voting-Old-Democracies-Richard-Gunther/dp/1138913324>).

Q: How many days in a regular week do you ...  
[rotate, answer scale 0-6/7 depending on country outlet]

Watch TV news...0-7 (incl online)  
Read a newspaper 0-7 (incl online)  
Use social media to be informed about politics 0-7  
OPTIONAL Listen to radio 0-7 (incl podcasts).

Note that some media use may be more frequent than daily for the most intense consumers of political matters, especially on social media.

A more general way of tapping exposure for political news in the media is to ask a composite question. This way of asking about media exposure to political news may be



regarded unidimensional, but at the same time also very space consuming. Given the time constraints, this is also the question that was finally suggested to be part of the CSES core questions:

I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU how closely you follow political news, whether on TV, radio, newspapers or internet. Please tell me if you follow this news very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

### **General retrospective government evaluation**

An inventory of the core questions in the previous rounds of the CSES shows that many of the key theories of electoral research/determinants of political behavior have been represented, at least in some rudimentary version. Also the CSES V will include measures of party identification/party attachment, judgments of the state of the economy, ideological left-right perceptions and orientations, occupational status, and so on. Still, however, measures of general retrospective government evaluations have not been permanent part of the CSES core. We believe a measure of retrospective government evaluation is generally very useful in analyses of policy output, incumbency effects, cost of ruling and electoral accountability. We therefore propose that retrospective evaluations of government performance is included as part of the CSES core.

Now thinking about the performance of the [government in [CAPITAL]/president] in general, how good or bad a job do you think the [government/president in [CAPITAL]] has done over the past [NUMBER OF YEARS SINCE LAST GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE, BEFORE THE CURRENT ELECTION] years? Has [it/he/she] done a very good job? A good job? A bad job? A very bad job?

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