Part II

People's underlying value orientations

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Chapter 5

Opinions about Political Issues

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5.1   Proposal by Jacques Thomassen

Introduction

Let me start this brief with a few preliminary comments.

1.   Although - if I remember correctly – I was invited as a representative of the community of electoral researchers, I have been working on this proposal on the assumption that the ESS is *not* an election study but a study that should enable us to map and explain (in this module) long term changes in citizens' political beliefs and behaviours that are relevant for the development of (democratic) political systems in Europe. Therefore, the theoretical and conceptual framework I have used in writing up this proposal is only to a limited extent derived from election studies and more from earlier large comparative and longitudinal studies like *Political Action* and *Beliefs in Government*.

Also, attempts to co-ordinate national election studies across Europe and beyond are finally becoming successful. Most national election studies in Europe have adopted a common module of questions that have been developed in the context of the *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES).* Therefore, for the purposes of comparative electoral research the ESS is hardly needed. Nevertheless, assuming that in other parts of the questionnaire questions on problems in society, political issues and values are included, the basic variables that are needed in most explanatory models of electoral behaviour will be included in the questionnaire, with the exception of evaluations of political leaders and short term political issues. The only question that I have included without any further argument is the question on party choice.

2.   Most of the questions I will propose are measuring core concepts that researchers in this field have been familiar with for quite a long time. Therefore, for each of these concepts quite a number of slightly different operationalizations are available. However, unless there would be a particular reason to decide otherwise I have chosen the operationalization as used in a limited number of large comparative projects. That makes it easier to control the background and the quality of these questions.

3.   Some of the batteries, in particular the one on (political) participation are rather long. It should be possible to shorten them, but from my experience in comparative research I have learned, and that of course is an open door, that it is better to cover a limited number of subjects well than to cover a larger number of subjects poorly. If they need to be shortened I would prefer to do that after a first discussion on exactly which dimensions (of participation) we want to measure.

Theoretical framework

The basic idea behind this proposal is that it should enable the scientific community to continue a debate that has been going on at least since the end of the 1960s but partly goes even further back. Several labels can be attached to this debate, but in a nutshell the argument started with the early work of Inglehart, and inspired both the *Political Action* and *Beliefs in Government* projects.

It would not serve any purpose of ESS to present a refined review of this debate. I will limit myself to a short overview of what I think is the main thrust of the argument in order to provide a coherent basis for the selection of variables in the second part of this brief. Also, as far as there is a scholarly dispute about the existence of certain trends or how they should be explained or interpreted, it is not really relevant here who is right or wrong. The only thing that matters is that ESS should provide the empirical basis for a continuation of this dialogue.

Having been strongly involved in the development of the conceptual framework of the volume *Citizens and the State* of the *Beliefs in Government* project, I will follow the conceptual framework of that volume which in turn is strongly based on the theoretical framework initially developed by Inglehart. Again, whether or not one completely agrees with that framework is not really relevant. What matters is whether it leads to the kind of questions that should be asked in ESS.

In a nutshell the main argument behind this theoretical framework is as follows.

As part of a broader process of modernisation in industrialised democracies a process of *individual modernization* has been going on over the past decades. This process includes both a *change in value orientations* and an *increase of the personal skills* of citizens.

According to Inglehart after the Second World War a generation has come to age in Western democracies which has experienced neither the economic crisis of the 1930s nor the atrocities and threats of World War II. Instead they grew up in a period of peace and unprecedented and growing economic prosperity. As a consequence they could take material well being and physical safety for granted and give top priority to *post materialist value orientations* related to belonging, self-expression, and the quality of life. This development has at least two consequences which are relevant for the future of politics. First, the *shift in value orientations* will lead to *new issue demands* to which traditional political parties which are based on the old cleavage structure are hardly responsive. As a consequence post-materialists will turn their back to the traditional political parties and try to effectuate their political demands by way of new political parties and in particular by organising themselves in one issue movements, such as new social movements and political action groups. This last tendency is strengthened by the second aspect of the process of individual modernisation, the process of cognitive mobilisation.

As part of a general process of modernisation, the new generation is characterised by an unprecedented high level of education. In combination with the enormous increase of

instantly available information, the *personal skills* of the new generation are hardly comparable with that of an older generation, certainly not when they were young.

Higher personal skills will be accompanied by a higher political competence or *political efficacy*. And the more politically competent people feel, the more they will be inclined to pursue their political goals on their own, or together with people who share the same views or interests. They are perfectly capable to act on their own behalf, without the interference of political parties or other intermediary organisations. This strengthens the call for more direct forms of political participation and the decrease of the importance of political parties. As a consequence we can expect an *increase of less conventional forms of political participation*, a *decrease of more traditional forms of political participation* – related to elections and political parties and also *a decrease of the attachment to political parties*.

Political support and legitimacy

So far at least the argument is pretty straightforward and leads to clear empirical questions. More complicated is the discussion on the consequences of these developments for the future of democracy. This discussion is partly speculative and also party relates to the *consequences* of people's behaviour and attitudes for the stability of the political system, rather than to measurable behaviours and attitudes.

Here I will limit myself to that part of the debate which refers to the consequences of the above mentioned developments for the *political support* of the political system and therefore can be translated in the language of survey research.

In order to come to grips with this debate it is helpful to place it in the conceptual framework as originally developed by Easton and expanded and clarified by others (a.o. Fuchs 1989; Dalton 1999)[1].

Essential for Easton's conceptual framework is the distinction between *objects* and *types* of support. Both these distinctions, as far as they are relevant for this brief are presented in figure 1[2]. A third element in this scheme is the source of support. Whereas satisfaction with the day-to–day output and trust of the authorities and the regime depend primarily on *instrumental orientations*, judgements of legitimacy are mainly based on *moral orientations*, on norms and values. Therefore, an essential difference between legitimacy and the other kinds of support distinguished in this scheme is that legitimacy is primarily rooted in the *political culture* whereas the other kinds of support depend on instrumental orientations, on perceived utility.

Figure 1: Objects, types and sources of support

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[1] This section is based on Thomassen and Van der Kolk (2000)

[2] This figure is based on the conceptual analysis by Fuchs (1989: 18 and 26). The political community as a third object of support was left out here, because it is not relevant for this paper.
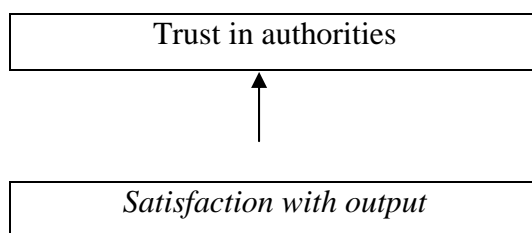
Types of support	Sources of support	Objects of support	
		Regime	*Authorities*
Diffuse	Norms and values	Legitimacy of regime	Legitimacy of authorities
	Generalized utility	Trust in regime	Trust in authorities
Specific	Short term utility		Satisfaction with day-to-day output

There is a clear hierarchy between the several objects of support, depending on how vital they are for the survival of democracy. This hierarchy is shown in figure 2[3]. The higher we move up in this hierarchy, the closer we come to the vital elements of democracy and therefore, the more a decline of support refers to objects higher up in the hierarchy, the more the chances of survival of democracy are at stake. Likewise the credibility of crisis of democracy theories depends on the plausibility of the argument that a declining support for the lower levels in the hierarchy will spill over to the upper levels.

Figure 2: Hierarchy of objects of support

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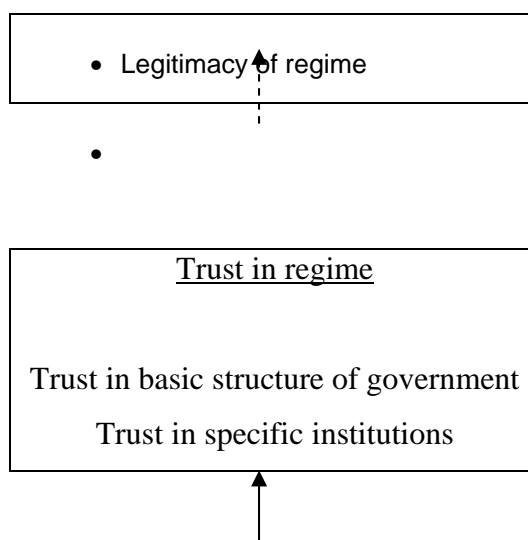
[3] I have left out the category *legitimacy of authorities* because it plays no role in my further argument.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Trust in authorities         │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   ▲
                   │
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│      *Satisfaction with output*      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Satisfaction with day-to-day output refers to the short term responses of citizens to the policy performance of the government. Of course, policy dissatisfaction in itself is not a threat to democracy. One of the essential characteristics of democracy is that people have the opportunity to express and enforce their dissatisfaction with specific policies by voting the responsible politicians and the government out of office. Dahl (1966: xvii) once called 'The system of managing the major political conflicts of a society by allowing one or more opposition parties to compete with the governing parties for votes in elections and in parliament one of the greatest and most unexpected social discoveries that man has ever stumbled upon'. It is such an important discovery because it enables the people to replace a government they don't support any longer, within the framework of the existing political institutions. The regular alternation of government and opposition only confirms the working of the democratic system. In established democracies this interplay of government and opposition has become a self evident aspect of political life. Therefore, in established democracies there is no reason whatsoever to expect that a poor performance of the incumbent government would affect the support for the objects of support higher up in the hierarchy. The continuity of established democracies is not jeopardised by a temporally poor policy performance because they can rely on a reservoir of *diffuse support*, i.e. support that by definition does not depend on people's judgement of day-to-day politics. Diffuse support forms a reservoir of favourable attitudes or good will that helps members to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed or the effect of which they see as damaging to their wants. It consists of a reserve of support that enables a system to weather the many storms when outputs cannot be balanced off against inputs of demands (Easton 1965: 273).

Diffuse support comes in two sorts, depending on its source. First there is a kind of diffuse support that is based on an assessment of the utility of political authorities and the political regime, on instrumental orientations. However, the peculiar characteristic of this assessment is that it is not conditional upon specific returns at any moment. It still depends on output satisfaction, but in contrast to specific support these assessments do not depend on the day to day performance of the authorities and the regime but on the assessment of their effectiveness over a longer period of time. It helps the political system to survive periods of poor policy performance because the knowledge that the system can do much better and has done better in the past is stored in the collective memory of the people. This form of diffuse support Easton calls *trust in the authorities* and *trust in the regime* respectively. A spill over from dissatisfaction with policy output to trust in authorities might occur because of a poorly functioning opposition structure

or because of a persistent output failure. In that case people might not just blame the politicians and party or coalition of parties in power but loose their trust in politicians as a *species*. This will almost certainly infect the trust in political institutions as well. However, one should make a distinction between *specific political institutions* and the *basic structure of democratic government* (Fuchs 1989: 6-7). A continuous output failure might be imputed to a lack of decisiveness of successive governments which in turn might be attributed, for instance to the existing multi-party system with its necessity of coalition governments which have to take so many interests into account that they are bound to be indecisive. Such an argument might lead to a plea to reduce the number of parties or even to replace the parliamentary system by a presidential system. It implies negative support for the existing political institutions and a dissatisfaction with the functioning of the democratic system, but it does not necessarily entail a rejection of the basic structure of democracy, because the debate is limited to different ways of institutionalising the idea of democracy. But if people would ascribe the ineffectiveness of the regime to the very idea of democratic government such a judgement would hit the democratic regime right in the heart.

However, it is most unlikely that people would reject democracy as an idea of government only on the basis of an instrumental orientation. Democracy is more than an arbitrary form of government, it is also the embodiment of a particular ideology. The extent to which democracy as a form of government will be supported will not only depend on the effectiveness of the regime but at least as much on the extent to which the moral orientations behind it are shared by the people, in other words on the extent to which democratic values are rooted in the political culture. This is the second type of diffuse support that Easton distinguishes, the type of support he calls legitimacy. This form of support does not depend on the effectiveness of the political regime but on the moral orientations behind it. Therefore, there is no direct logical relationship between this conception of legitimacy and effectiveness. The only possible link is the argument that an evident failure of democracy as an effective system of government from generation to generation in the long run will pervert the persuasiveness of democracy as a value system.

In the context of the crisis of democracy debate it has been argued that a decline of traditional politics, a decline of the function of politicians and political parties, might easily spill over to the higher levels of the hierarchy of political support. If people are dissatisfied, not only with *particular politicians* and *political parties*, or with the incumbent government, but with the *species* of politicians, such a dissatisfaction can no longer be dealt with by the traditional mechanism of representative democracy and will lead to a decline of the trust in politicians, and eventually to a decline of the trust in political institutions and to a dissatisfaction with the democratic system of government.

However, in the Beliefs in Government project no unequivocal evidence was found for a decline in the trust of politicians or governmental institutions in western democracies in the 1970s and 1980s. The hypothesis that support for the democratic system would have declined in the same period turned out to be simply wrong (Fuchs and Klingemann 1995a: 430). However, these conclusions from the Beliefs in Government project are based on time series that in general do not extend beyond the end of the 1980s. More

recent research in which these time series are extended into the 1990s tends to arrive to more differentiated and less positive conclusions (Dalton 1999).

Whatever the present status of this debate is, the development of political support in western democracies, in relation to the development in *values*, *political competence* and *political interest,* is a central topic in the literature, and it is of the utmost importance for our understanding of the development of western democracies.

However, the comparative study of this development is hampered by a lack of measurements which are comparable over time and across countries. As far as ESS pretends to monitor the development of (political) attitudes over time, the development of political support should be high on the agenda.

Political interest

Inglehart's theory of a silent revolution, the gradual change from a mainly materially oriented society to a post-materialist society can – from the perspective of democracy- be interpreted as a positive view. Post-materialists might be critical towards the present society and political system, but they are positively oriented towards democracy, they are not anti-democratic, but want more democracy. Their value orientations are moral orientations refer to a particular view on society. Typical post-material issues refer to collective goods that can only be produced by collective decision making (Fuchs and Klingemann 1995b:14). In order to reach their political goals post-materialists are bound to be strongly *interested in politics.*

However, an alternative view on the consequences of individual modernisation leaves little room for an overly optimistic view on the future of representative democracy. According to this view most political activities of the new, highly skilled and efficacious generation can better be understood as evidence of expressive or hedonistic orientations. This means that political actions are primarily inspired by utilitarian criteria, by cost-benefit calculations, whereas the goods to which people aspire are generally individual rather than collective goods (Fuchs and Klingemann 1995b:14-15). If political activity is mainly inspired by such an orientation, it is compatible with a total lack of political interest in any traditional meaning of the word. According to this scenario the world of unconventional political behaviour might be totally separated form the traditional world of politics. It hardly needs to be argued that such a development would not strengthen the stability of representative democracy.

It was basically this argument that led Huntington (1974) to his famous question how benign post-industrial society will be.

Kaase and Barnes in their concluding chapter of *Political Action* made a first attempt to find empirical evidence for this development. They found that in none of the countries concerned the expressive mode of political participation (i.e. the combination of being politically active and uninterested in politics) exceeded one third of the population. They also found that the expressive mode of participation was predominant among

protesters, i.e. the category of people who exclusively took part in protest behaviour and not in more conventional modes of political participation.

However, with data from only one point in time they could only speculate on future developments. A recent analysis of Dutch data spanning the period 1971-1998 clearly indicates that younger generations distinguish themselves from older generations by a higher level of *political efficacy* and a higher level of political participation (although the differences between generations are decreasing), but a lower level of *political interest*.

More detailed analysis clearly indicates that in successive generations the balance between expressive and instrumental participation gradually shifts towards the expressive mode of political participation (Aarts and Thomassen, 2000; Aarts, Thomassen and Van Wijnen, 2000; Van der Kolk, Thomassen and Aarts, 2000). These findings indicate that it is worthwhile to monitor this development on a comparative basis in western democracies. Therefore, ESS should contain the instruments needed to do so.

Policy satisfaction and system support

More or less in line with the argument in the last section is the hypothesis of a changing relationship between policy satisfaction, or specific support and system support. Although this hypothesis is not yet very prominent in the literature, it follows more or less logically from the supposition that more and more people are inclined to evaluate politics and the political system on a cost-benefit basis.

As argued above, it is almost an article of faith among political scientists that in well established democracies there is an almost watertight partition between policy evaluation and system evaluation. Well established democracies have built up a 'reservoir of goodwill' or diffuse support that protects the political system against a spill over from dissatisfaction with political performance. This theoretically watertight partition between policy satisfaction and system support is unlikely to be found in reality, and for obvious reasons: most people are not political scientists and usually do not make such a clear distinction between 'authorities' and 'regime' (Citrin and Muste, 1999: 468-9). However, and that is the essential point, empirical evidence indicates that the effect of policy dissatisfaction on satisfaction with the political system used to be less than on satisfaction with the incumbent government (a.o. Thomassen 1990:131).

However, more recently – in the context of the crisis of democracy literature – the argument has been made that the source of support for a democratic system is likely to shift away from 'ideal normative agreement' towards 'instrumental acceptance' (Held 1987:238; Fuchs and Klingemann, 1995a:441). Fuchs and Klingemann (1995a:441) observed a distinct parallel between on the one hand the decline in satisfaction with democracy and on the other hand the fall in economic growth rates and the rise in unemployment rates in Western Europe, whereas in the earlier period this parallel between developments in satisfaction with democracy and development in the economy either did not exist or was considerably less pronounced.

For the time being, this is thin evidence. However, because is fits the general hypothesis of a shift towards a cost-benefit orientation to politics, it is important to create the data base needed to test whether this hypothesis will be borne out. This is another argument that in addition to measures of system support ESS should contain measures of policy satisfaction.

5.1.1 System characteristics

One of the drawbacks of the theoretical notions about changes in Western societies is that most of them almost exclusively are based on suppositions about changes in the characteristics of individual citizens – changes in values and personal skills – and tend to neglect the importance of possible changes in the political system, at least as an independent variable.

However, there is ample evidence that some of the trends that have drawn most attention, like in political interest and turnout, do not only depend on changes among the citizenry, but also on changes in the political context, in particular on the extent to which political parties take clearly distinct positions on the main policy dimensions. (a.o. Thomassen, Aarts and Van der Kolk, 2000; Aarts, Thomassen and Van Wijnen, 2000).

One of the advantages of the ESS study design is that it will systematically collect system level information in order to facilitate multi-level analysis. Comparative data on parties' policy positions have been collected in the context of the *party manifestos* project and can be added to the ESS data files. However, as important as these data are, the classic Thomas theorem that "what people perceive to be real, is real in its consequences" is as valid as ever. In order to understand people's attitudes and behaviour, information on their *perception* of parties' policy positions is at least as important as their true positions. These perceptions can be measured by a thoroughly tested and analysed battery of questions, asking people to indicate – in addition to their self-placement – the position of the major political parties on the left-right dimension.

5.1.2   ESS and the study of electoral behaviour

Above I have been working from the assumption that the ESS is not an election study and therefore questions that are primarily or exclusively relevant for the study of electoral behaviour should not have a high priority.

However, in case this argument would not pass undisputed, it would be useful to have a clear understanding of the possibilities and limitations of ESS for electoral research.

Even when – contrary to my assumption - the policy would be that ESS should be a primary source for the study of electoral behaviour, one could hardly maintain that ESS should contain all the information needed for the explanation of the outcome of a particular election in a particular country.

If it is the main purpose of ESS to monitor and explain changes in people's behaviour and attitudes over time and across European democracies, this should apply to the study of electoral behaviour as well.

In order to assess the minimal information needed to study changes in electoral behaviour across time and across countries, a simple heuristic device I developed for a different project (the *European Voter*: in progress) might be useful.

Figure 3
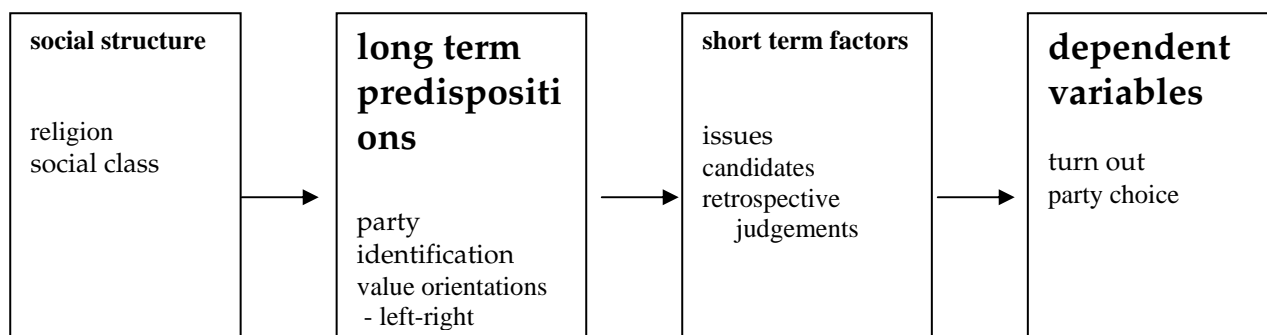
The fundamental contention of the European Voter project is that over time the explanatory power of the variables in this scheme gradually shifts from left to right in figure 3. In a nutshell the argument can roughly be summarised as follows:.

The point of departure is Lipset and Rokkan's famous dictum that "the party systems of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 50). They argue that the party systems that came into

existence at the time of the introduction of universal suffrage in the countries of Western Europe reflected four historical cleavages, between Centre and Periphery, between State and Church, between Land and Industry and between Owner and Worker, and that almost without exception these party systems withstood the turbulent political events of the first half of the century. Of these four historical conflict dimensions social class (owner and worker) and religion (state and church) have been the most important and persistent in most European countries.

Identification with a particular social group implied identification with a particular political party. Therefore, it might be argued that there was no functional need for an independent handhold like party identification, the key concept in the famous *funnel of causality* on which figure 1 to some extent is based. This might be a possible explanation for the empirical finding that party identification in Western Europe never had the same pivot function as in the United States (a.o. Thomassen 1975).

The traditional, historically defined, social cleavages were the basis for the development of different ideologies or *Weltanschauungen* (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 2-3). The ideological orientation connected to the class cleavage is traditionally related to the concepts of *Left and Right*. Differences between left and right are reflected in the twin concepts economic *equality* and *inequality* and the *role of government* and the *market*. The second major cleavage, religion, is primarily reflected in the role of religion and the church in society and secondly in views on moral issues. The value orientations connected with these views are reflected in the distinction between a *libertarian* and a *traditional* value orientation.

There is a general understanding that Lipset and Rokkan's characterisation of the party systems of Western Europe already was loosing it's validity at the moment it was written. The impact of social cleavages has substantially declined for two reasons. First, because of a composition effect. The number of people integrated in one of the social groups defining the traditional cleavage structure has generally declined (the most telling example is the decrease in the number of Catholics who regularly attend church). Secondly, the relationship between the membership of these traditional social groups and political behaviour has declined.

However, a stable party system and more or less stable relations between political parties and voters are not necessarily based upon the social position of voters.

The logical consequence of the argument above on party identification is that one might expect the development of an independent party identification at the time when the social structure no longer gives a clear clue for voting behaviour. However, this argument has never convincingly been made.

A somewhat similar argument applies to the role of values. Although these value orientations historically are related to the social cleavage structure, this is not to say that they should loose their political significance once the social cleavages behind them do. More or less stable political cleavages can be based directly on these value orientations (Bartolini and Mair 1990: 212-20; Rose and McAllister 1986: 121-23). Time and again it

has been argued that the left-right dimension is by far, if not the only, important dimension on which political parties compete. More recently it has been argued that people's left-right position has become independent of their social position. Whereas left-right orientation originally could be considered as a derivative of one of the most important social cleavage dimensions, according to this view it gradually became an independent dimension (Van der Eijk and Niemöller 1992:332).

A different approach was introduced by Inglehart (see above). His point of departure was that value orientations related to the traditional cleavage structure had lost much of their significance in the second half of the twentieth century. He foresaw a *silent revolution* by which materialist generations gradually will be replaced by generations with dominantly a post materialist orientation. This revolution will lead to a realignment: post materialist will base their party choice on issues related to their value orientation, like environmental issues.

However, even the possible relevance of this new cleavage dimension is disputable. Figure 3 suggests that value orientations precede and define people's issue orientations and their evaluation of government policies and candidates. This is based on the presumption of an ideological alignment of voters. However, this presumption seems to be somewhat at odds with at least part of the process of modernisation as sketched above. According to this view the decline of the political relevance of the traditional cleavage structure is not followed by realignment but by an *individualisation of politics.* This will lead to an increasing heterogeneity of the political issues people deem important, and to an increasingly *instrumental* orientation towards politics. This instrumental orientation implies that voters will decide from election to election whether they will vote and what party they will vote for. This can lead to large fluctuations, both in turnout and election outcomes. However, this is not necessarily a sign of a lack of political interest, but reminds us of the almost forgotten informed and rational voter from classic democratic theory. The party choice of these emancipated voters will be determined more than ever by their position on issues and their evaluation of candidates and the performance of the incumbent government. This implies that after the social structure people's value orientations are loosing part of their significance as an explanation of party choice as well.

Again, the issue is not whether everybody should agree with this argument. The real issue is whether or not the variables in this scheme are sufficient for a study of possible changes in the explanatory power of several sets of variables and whether ESS should and could incorporate these variables.

I suppose that the variables in box I, on *social background* will be included in the social background module.

Party identification is an essential variable in modernisation theory (decline of party attachment).

I assume that in the module on values, value orientations on at least three dimensions will be covered: *left-right, traditional-libertarian* and *materialism-post-materialism*. Above I

have made an argument for incorporating the placement of political parties on the left-right dimension, in addition to self-placement. These measurements are absolutely essential for testing two of the most prominent theories in electoral research, proximity theory and directional theory.

I'm inclined to say that for two reasons ESS almost by definition is the wrong vehicle for the measurement of people's opinions on short term issues and candidates. First, because these factors are nation specific and therefore can hardly be measured by a common instrument, secondly because they should be measured during the election campaign, or/and immediately after the election. As ESS will not follow the election cycle, in general this will not be possible.

It would be useful though if there would be space for the measurement of people's opinions on *structural issues*. However, these would not serve as measurements of opinions on short term issues, but as an (additional) measurement of people's positions on the basic dimensions of political contestation, which then would be considered as latent class variables. For the traditional-libertarian and materialism post-materialism dimensions this might be the only measurement possible.

Retrospective judgements refer to the evaluation of the performance of the incumbent government and can be measured by the same instrument as specific support, the need of which was argued above.

Turnout is indispensable as an indicator of conventional political behaviour. Party choice is the only variable that I will include in my proposal without any further argument. I assume it goes without saying that it is an essential variable in a module on politics.

Therefore, with the exception of opinions on short term issues and candidates, all variables in figure 3 should, at least in my opinion, already be included in the ESS questionnaire because of other arguments than could be derived from electoral research.

This implies that under certain assumptions about the content of the standard modules of ESS it will be possible to test the general hypothesis of a decline of the impact of long term predispositions. It would not be possible to study the effect of possible short term factors that might have replaced these predispositions in importance. And this, in my opinion, would be out of reach for ESS in any case.

5.1.3   Concepts and measurements

According to the argument so far, we need instruments of measurement for the following concepts.

a) Political interest
b) Political efficacy
c) Political Participation and Party Choice
d) Party affiliation
e) Political support
f) Self-placement and perception of political parties on left-right dimension

Political interest

A straightforward, well tested and economic way of assessing political interest is people's self-rating of their political interest.
"How interested would you say you are in politics – are you very interested, somewhat interested, not much interested, or not at all interested?"
>   1. *Very interested*
>   2. *Somewhat interested*
>   3. *Not much interested*
>   4. *Not at all interested*

Source: Political Action

As common as this measurement is, it might have a clear disadvantage. It is not unlikely that people in general will associate "politics" with traditional politics and will claim not to be interested in politics, although they are interested in the activities of, for instance, new social movements.

However, I am not aware of an alternative –and parsimonious- way of measuring political interest that avoids such a possible bias.

Political efficacy

The classic measurement of political efficacy as originally developed in the context of the American National Election Study is –with little varieties in wording- still widely used in National Election Studies. Of the original five items two refer to <u>system responsiveness</u>, or <u>external efficacy</u>, whereas the other three refer to <u>subjective competence</u>, or <u>internal efficacy</u>. Only the second dimension is relevant from the perspective of the argument above.

Here the wording as used in the Norwegian election studies is proposed (Listhaug 1995).

In how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements- disagree very strongly, disagree, agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree ?

1. *Voting is the only way that people like me can have any say about how the government runs things.*
2. *Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on.*
3. *It is difficult to see the important differences between the parties.*

Source: Norwegian National Election Study

These items form one dimension, refer unequivocally to subjective effectiveness, whereas the last item in particular will also provide the possibility to assess to what extent political efficacy depends on system characteristics, in addition to individual characteristics.

Political participation

According to Brady (1999: 737) almost all definitions of political participation include four basic concepts: *activities or actions, ordinary citizens, politics and influence*. A typical definition of political participation therefore, is Verba and Nie's definition in which political participation refers to those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take.

Of course, such definitions still leave room for different interpretations. But taking the four basic concepts seriously leads to a restrictive use of the concept of political participation.

Activities or actions means that political participation literally refers to political action and not to attitudes (about political action).

ordinary citizens excludes the activities of political elites.

Politics refers to the authoritative allocation of values by the government and excludes all activities that are not attempts to affect governmental actions, even though these actions may indirectly shape politics because of the public policy problems they create or solve. Political participation, then, must be directed at some government policy or activity.

Influence excludes actions such as getting information about politics by reading a newspaper or watching a television program; being contacted by a person, party, or organisation soliciting involvement in some political activity; and going to a

governmental office to pick up a welfare check. These activities border political activity, but they are not in and of themselves attempts to influence politics. And the person going to a governmental office to receive a welfare check is certainly interacting with government, but this (usually) does not constitute an attempt to influence public officials.' (Brady 1999: 737-738).

After this restriction of the use of the concept of political participation, the next question is which dimensions of political participation we want to distinguish.

Following the rough theoretical outline sketched above the major distinction to be made is between political behaviour within the context of traditional political institutions, mainly electoral behaviour, and non-institutional, non-electoral behaviour. The distinction between conventional and non-conventional political participation as made in the Political Action Project is less relevant, the more so because the borderline between what is conventional and non-conventional will vary from time to time and country to country. I will only make the distinction in order to make references to earlier studies easier. Therefore, partly following Brady (1999:767) we need a measurement for the following aspects of political participation.

<u>Participation in Elections</u>

Two question should be asked:

*Did you vote in th*e last parliamentary election? Yes/ No

Which party did you vote for in the last parliamentary election?

....

Comment: Precise wording to be adopted to political system of each country.

<u>Non-electoral activity</u>

It is close to impossible to find a set of measurements for political participation that is both comprehensive and parsimonious. Turnout and party choice are not a real problem. But none of the major studies of political participation was challenged to measure the remaining forms of political participation within the constraints of this module.

Taking into consideration that instruments of measurement to be included in ESS should have been thoroughly tested, preferably in comparative research, I think a battery of items from the *Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy* project might be the best alternative available. Testing it against Brady's four basic concepts, all these items refer to *activities* of *ordinary citizens*. However, not all of them refer to *politics*, at least not according to Brady's definition of *the authoritative allocation of values by the <u>government</u>* and they do *not*

exclude *all activities that are not attempts to affect governmental actions*. But this might be an advantage rather than a disadvantage because the wording of the question and some of the activities imply a broader definition of politics, broader than the allocation of values by the government. This seems to be more in line with the argument of the decline of traditional politics and the rise of new politics and the self reliance of the civil society. Also, it is still possible to distinguish traditional and less traditional (political) actions. Brady's last concept, *influence,* excludes a number of aspects that often are considered as aspects of political participation ('actions such as getting information about politics by reading a newspaper or watching a television program; being contacted by a person, party, or organisation soliciting involvement in some political activity; and going to a governmental office to pick up a welfare check.'). These same aspects are excluded by the proposed battery, in particular by the wording of the question. The whole battery is presented below, but it seems obvious to me that not all of the items can be included. I would suggest to drop B, L, M, N, O, P, S,T, U.

The remaining items include campaign activity (G, R), conventional (C, D,) and unconventional (E, H, I, J, K, Q) activities.

There are different ways of attempting to bring about improvements or counteract deterioration in society. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following ?

	Yes 1	No 2
A. Contacted a politician	☐	☐
B. Contacted an association or organization	☐	☐
C. Contacted a civil servant on the national, regional or local level	☐	☐
D. Worked in a political party	☐	☐
E. Worked in a [political action group]	☐	☐
F. Worked in another organization or association	☐	☐
G. Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker	☐	☐
H. Signed a petition	☐	☐
I. Taken part in a public demonstration	☐	☐
J. Taken part in a strike	☐	☐
K. Boycotted certain products	☐	☐

L. Deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons ☐ ☐

M. Donated money ☐ ☐

N. Raised funds ☐ ☐

O. Contacted or appeared in the media ☐ ☐

P. Contacted solicitor or judicial body ☐ ☐

Q. Participated in illegal protest activities ☐ ☐

R. Attended a political meeting or rally ☐ ☐

S. Other activity ☐ ☐

INT.: If the respondent has reported that he/she has done any of the activities (i.e., yes in one or more of the items A-S) go to 37T. Else (not active at all) go to 37U.

T. Did you use the Internet in connection with any of these activities? ☐ ☐

U. And have you ever abstained from participating in a general election out of protest? INT.: We think of all general elections, whether on the local, regional, national or European level. ☐ ☐

Source: Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy

Comment: The most appropriate term for "political action group" may vary across countries. What we have in mind are various kinds of "citizen initiatives". Each country should try to find the most appropriate term available in its national context.

Political parties

Three questions are proposed for the monitoring of people's party affiliation and the function of political parties. Of these three party identification has top priority.

Party membership

Are you a member of a political party? Yes / No

Party identification

a. Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular party?

Yes
No
DK

b. IF NO, Do you feel yourself a little closer to one of the political parties than the others?
    Yes
    No
    DK

c. IF YES at a OR b. Which party do you feel closest to?
…………………………..

d. IF YES at a OR b. Do you feel very close to this party, somewhat close, or not very close?

Source: CSES

Function of political parties

(SHOW CARD) Some people say that political parties are necessary to make our political system work in [country]. Others think that political parties are not needed in [country]. Using this scale on this card, (where ONE means that political parties are necessary to make our political system work, and FIVE means that political parties are not needed in [country], where would you place yourself?

Political parties are necessary to make our political system work	12345	Political parties are not needed in [country]

Source: CSES

For an overview of the alternatives to measure party identification or partisanship see Weisberg 1999). The proposed measure is taken from the CSES-module which will probably become the standard in comparative electoral research. As far as I am concerned, the question on party membership does not have such a high priority. Its main purpose would be to study trends in party membership. However, official statistics can serve that purpose just as well and probably better. Because of the low and declining membership in most countries it is not a very useful variable for analysis at the individual level. I have included it here for no other reason than to ensure that, if it is dropped, this will be a deliberate decision.

The question on the function of political parties would be important for testing the decline of the function of political parties thesis and could also be used as an indicator of "trust in specific institutions".

However, I am afraid it is also one of the first candidates for being dropped.

Political support

In order to fully measure the concept of political support, in principle measurements of the concepts in all boxes of figure 2 would be necessary. However, I think it would be sufficient to have good indicators for *satisfaction with output, trust in authorities* and *trust in specific institutions,* and *satisfaction with democracy.*

Satisfaction with output

Two questions are proposed here.

Evaluation of economy
What do you think about the state of the economy these days in [country]? Would you say that the state of the economy is very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad, or very bad?

Source: CSES

Evaluation of incumbent government
How satisfied are you with the way the government in [capital or residence of national government] is doing its job? Would you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?[4]

The first one does not directly refer to government policy, but in my opinion should be included in any case, because people often will only implicitly blame the government ('it's the economy stupid'). Also, testing recent propositions that a more immediate relationship between economic performance and support for the political system is developing (see above) asks for such a measurement.

The second question, of course, is a direct evaluation of the incumbent government.

Trust in authorities and specific institutions

For the measurement of trust in authorities two alternatives might be considered. The first alternative is to use two items that originally were developed as part of the efficacy

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[4] This question is based on two somewhat different questions: "How satisfied are you with the way the people in national office are handling the country's affairs? Would you say you are very satisfied, fairly dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied? (WVS 1995, Q165) and "Now thinking about the performance of the government /president in [capital] in general, how good or bad a job do you think it/he/she has done over the past (NUMBER OF YEARS THAT LAST GOVERNMENT/PRESIDENT HAS BEEN IN OFFICE] years? Has it done a very good job, a good job, a bad job, or a very bad job. [draft of second CSES module]
In the WVS question the accent is more on the *people* in government than I think is desirable, whereas the second one assumes that the study is conducted immediately after the elections, which in the case of the ESS is uncertain.

scale (external efficacy) and have been used as measurement of trust in politicians before (Listhaug 1995; Dalton 1999). The advantage of this measurement is that at least in a few countries there is a time series of these items. However, this advantage should not be exaggerated. A time series consists only in a few European countries. Also the wording used in these countries is not exactly similar. Therefore, if a standard wording is chosen for ESS, even in these few countries the comparability over time might be dubious[5].

The advantage of the second alternative, which I prefer, is that both trust in authorities (A, G) and institutions are measured by a single battery of items which saves interview time and makes it easier to compare levels of trust for authorities and institutions.

I will now read out names of different institutions such as the police, government, civil service, etc. Please tell me how strongly you personally trust each of these institutions.

INT.: Show card

	No trust at all										Very strong trust	Don't know
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	88
A. [Name of the municipal board]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. The cabinet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. The political parties	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. [Name of the national parliament]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. The courts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F. The civil service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
G. The police	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
H. Politicians	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I. The European Union (EU)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

---

[5] These items are: a. Parties are interested in people's votes but not in their opinions;
        b. Public officials (or MPs) don't care much about the opinions of people
like me.

J. The United Nations (UN)   ▢   ▢   ▢   ▢   ▢   ▢   ▢   ▢   ▢   ▢   ▢   ▢

Source: CID

Note for Q13: Countries should select the appropriate expression for "civil service", e.g., public administration.

The item on the European Union is not really needed, but it is a cheap and perhaps valuable addition.[6]. *The development of the (legitimacy of the) EU as a political system might be important enough in the near future to justify a separate battery of questions.*

Satisfaction with democracy.

I will not suggest to include indicators on *trust in the basic structure of government* or on *legitimacy*. *Trust in the basic structure of government* could be measured by a question assessing people's opinion on *democracy as form of government.* However, former research made it clear that such support in most countries is beyond dispute. As explained above *legitimacy* depends on an evaluation of the present regime with people's basic norms and values. A lack of legitimacy of a democratic regime can only occur when people do not support democratic norms and values. However, the support for *the idea of democracy* in 12 European countries in 19.. was even higher than for democracy as a form of government and nowhere below 92% (Fuchs et al. 1995: 349). Even without embracing Fukuyama's *end of history* thesis, it would be hard to think of an argument why that support would have declined. Of course, one can never foretell the future. But I think it would be sufficient to ask this kind of questions every 10 years or so.

As far as people are dissatisfied with the working of democracy, it is pretty safe to assume that they are dissatisfied, not because they dislike democracy but because they think the present political system is not democratic enough.

So the following question is suggested for the ESS:

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[6] The original battery of the *Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy* project also included an item on local government and the UN.

On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [name of country]?

> *1. Very satisfied* .... ☐
> *2. Fairly satisfied* .... ☐
> *3. Not very satisfied* .... ☐
> *4. Not at all satisfied* .... ☐
>
> *8. Don't know* .... ☐

Source: EBR, CSES, CID.

Satisfaction with the *working* of democracy is the highest level of abstraction we need. This question has been asked in most Euro-barometers since 1976. By referring to 'how *on the whole* democracy *works*' it implies an instrumental, but generalised, orientation towards the performance of democracy and it clearly refers to the regime level.

Self-placement and perception of political parties on left-right dimension

<u>Self location</u>

In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?

<u>Perception of political parties on left-right</u>

Using the same scale, where would you place PARTY A?

And where would you place PARTY B?

And PARTY C?

And PARTY D?

And PARTY E?

And PARTY F?

Question to be asked of up to six 'relevant' parties.

Source: CSES

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5.2   Comments of the CCT

In this chapter several different measurement instruments are discussed. In the next sections we will each time in each section finish a topic completely. That means that we first present the discussion that took place between Jacques Thomassen and the CCT about the specific topic, including the conclusion of the CCT. If a detailed test of a topic has been done in the pilot, this is discussed in the next section and then another section follows with the final proposal of the CCT .

5.2.1.   *Measurement of Political interest*

The proposed question to measure political interest is a direct measure of political interest based on the people's self-rating of their political interest.
"How interested would you say you are in politics – are you very interested, somewhat interested, not much interested, or not at all interested?"

  1. *Very interested*
  2. *Somewhat interested*
  3. *Not much interested*
  4. *Not at all interested*

Discussion

Technically this question is   rather good with respect to reliability and validity (Reliability =.77, validity = .83 , method effect = .17 and total quality = .64). A problem is that the answer categories are not exclusive. 'Not much interested' is the complement of much (or very) interested and so the complement (not much interested) overlaps with 'somewhat interested'. This is not ideal and the translation in other languages might give problems as shown by Saris (1997) because people might try to solve this problem in different ways.

With respect to the content of the question Thomassen comments on this question himself: As common as this measurement is, it might have a clear disadvantage. It is not unlikely that people in general will associate "politics" with traditional politics and will claim not to be interested in politics, although they are interested in the activities of, for instance, new social movements. However, I am not aware of an alternative –and parsimonious- way of measuring political interest that avoids such a possible bias.

Kriesi in his book 'Political mobilization and social change' suggested that the participation in politics changes from the classical participation in parties to participation in new social movements. So as a possible solution the following question was suggested to Thomassen as an extra question.

There are many organisations which try to influence political decisions in your country and the world, for example the trade unions, employers organisations, environmental protection organisations.

How interested would you say you are in the activities of such organisations –
are you very interested, somewhat interested, not much interested, or not at all interested?
  1. Very interested
  2.Somewhat interested
  3.Not much interested
  4.Not at all interested

Also for this question the quality is quite good , especially the validity (Reliability =.64 , validity = .94 , method effect = .06 , total quality = .60) but the question has the same problems in the categories as the question above.

The reply by Jacques Thomassen was: I have no problems with an extra question but whatever you do about it, you will run from one problem into the other. In the past many attempts have been made to improve the simple straightforward question suggested above. A problem with the present question is that people probably consider only the specified organisations and do not give a general judgement.

The proposal of the CCT

On the basis of this discussion the CCT has decided to use the following two questions in the pilot study:

1.“How interested would you say you are in politics – are you …

- *not at all interested,*
- *hardly interested,*
- *quite interested,*
- *or, very interested?*

2.There are various organisations in (COUNTRY) that try to influence political decisions or actions in one way or another. How interested would you say you are in the work of these sorts of organisations – are you…

- *not at all interested,*
- *hardly interested,*
- *quite interested,*
- *or, very interested?*

Results of the pilot

In the pilot study it was possible to see how strong the relationship between these two variables was. If the correlation would be very high it would make no sense to use both variables. Furthermore it would also be not attractive to use both questions if there are only very few people are not interest in politics in general but only in the new politic movements.

With respect to the correlation between the two questions the correlation in the Netherlands was quite high .535 while the correlation in the United Kingdom was lower .367. Both correlations are not that high that one omit one question.

On the other hand the number of people not in politic in general but in the new social movements was rather low in the UK there were only 19 people of this kind out of the total of 473 and in the Netherland it was a bit more 32 of 409 but still so low that one can wonder if the extra question is really needed.

The definite measure of political interest

On the basis of the above presented evidence the CCT has decided to use only one questions namely the first one

C4 *How interested would you say you are in politics –*
*are you… **READ OUT**…*

very interested,	*1*
quite interested,	*2*
hardly interested,	*3*
or, not at all interested?	*4*
(don't know)	*8*

5.2.2   *Measurement of Political efficacy*

Thomassen suggested the following questions :
In how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements- disagree very strongly, disagree, agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree ?

1. Voting is the only way that people like me can have any say about how the government runs things.
2. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on.
3.It is difficult to see the important differences between the parties.

Discussion

SQP suggest that these questions are quite good as can be seen in the table below

Item	Reliability	Validity		Method effect	Total quality
1	.77	.82	.18	.63	
2	.76	.83	.17	.63	
3	.62	.76	.24	..47	

Substantively a problem is that the first item presents a relationship , the second an evaluative belief and the third a complex judgment. This means that these items measure different concepts. Besides the complex questions have in general a lower reliability and validity. This can be seen in the table. These results led the CCT to the following questions : How should we check the unidimensionality ? What is normally the quality of the scale ? How should the answers be aggregated to an efficacy score ?

Jacques Thomassen replied: An extensive report on scalability etc. can be found in John Robinson et al. *Measures of political attitudes*, chapter 7. Listhaug (in Klingemann and Fuchs 1995: 268) used factor analysis (whether this is the best strategy or not) to test dimensionality and found these items on the same dimension. Aggregation: simply adding up the scores on individual items is good enough.

The CCT replied on this comment that at least in the Dutch Election studies even the first two items did not correlate enough to end up in the same scale while the third item was not included in the study. Maybe we should go back to the original scale of Campbell et al., *The American Voter,* to get a better scale because I do not see a reason to include these items as separate items for their own sake.

Thomassen comments that there has been indeed a lot of discussion about the quality of these questions. An elaborate study has been done by Vetter (1997). He shows that the old questions do not have a clear meaning i.e. the factor structure is not clear. He

experimented with other items and obtained a clear factor structure for internal efficacy using the following battery:

In how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements- disagree very strongly, disagree, agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree ?

- *I think I can take an active role in a group that is focussed on political issues*
- *I understand and judge important political questions very well*
- *Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on.*

SQP suggest that also these questions are quite good as can be seen in the table below

Item	reliability	validity	method effect	total quality
1	.64	.72	.28	.46
2	.63	.91	.09	.57
3	.65	.87	.13	.57

Because of the unclear structure of the first proposal the first scale is rejected. As an alternative we could use the items suggested by Vetter (1997) which has a clear structure and is indeed also more homogeneous while the quality is also reasonable.

Proposal of the CCT

The set of questions was slightly rephrased by the CCT. Besides that, it was decided, partly because of requests from other people, not only to measure internal political efficacy but also external political efficacy. This led to two extra items. The total scale became now as follows:

Using this card, how far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree ?

- *Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that I can't really understand what is going on*

- *I am the sort of person who could play an active role in an organisation that tries to influence political decisions and actions*

- *I am good at making up my mind about difficult political issues*

- *Politicians do not care much what people like me think.*

- *Politicians are only interested in people's votes but not in their opinions.*

Although Political efficacy is measured in most of the political science studies. the measurement of the concept is not at all clear. The correlations between the different variables is normally very low and the structure within the 5 questions with respect to internal and external or individual and system efficacy is not at all clear. Therefore the CCT decided to test the structure of the items in the pilot study and to study the quality of different formats of the questions.

The results of the pilot study

The first format used in the main questionnaire is the commonly used agree/disagree (A/D) format with 5 categories (C3-C7). The second format presented in the drop off was a concept specific (CS)format where no statement was used (N13,N14,N15) still with 5 response categories. The last format was expected to be the same as the first but in Britain the scale was reduced to a 4 point scale and the ordering of the categories of the first set was reversed from low to high to from high to low. In the Netherlands the last set was the same as the first set (N44.N45,N46).

Let us start with the comparison of the reliabilities because the validities are equally high for all three formats. The results are presented in the table below.

Reliabilities	Complexity		Active role		Understand	
Method	NL	GB	NL	GB	NL	GB
A/D 5 cat	.65	.83	.66	.71	.69	.78
CS 5 cat	.88	.70	.94	.86	.86	.84
A/D 4/5 cat	.78	.73	.87	.82	.82	.80

This table shows that in the Netherlands the CS format has a much higher reliability than the Agree/Disagree format. In Great Britain the size of this effect is much less clear but holds true for 2 out of three items. Given the low reliabilities in the first measure it is understandable why the correlations are normally so low between these items without correction for measurement error and why the structure is unclear. If the correlations are corrected for measurement error, as we did for all 5 variables of this set the structure becomes much clearer. This can be seen in the table below for the Dutch data.

The correlations between the 5 political efficacy variables after correction for measurement error

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
F1	1.0				
F2	-.22	1.0			
F3	-.54	.38	1.0		
F4	-.04	.09	.10	1.0	
F5	-.11	.00	.10	.81	1.0

In this correlation matrix it is very clear that the first three items belong to one factor (individual efficacy) while the last two belong to a second factor (system efficacy) . This is in line with the theory about these measures.

The final choice

On the basis of these results that indicate that the concept specific form has the best measurement quality and gives very clear results with respect to the structure of this the set of variables, it was decided to use in the main questionnaire the CS format of these questions.

C5   **CARD C4** *How often do politics and government seem so complicated that you can't really understand what is going on?*

Never	*1*
Seldom	*2*
Occasionally	*3*
Regularly	*4*
Frequently	*5*
(don't know)	*8*

C6   **CARD C5** *Do you think that you could take an active role in a group that is focused on political issues?*

Definitely not	*1*
Probably not	*2*
Not sure either way	*3*
Probably	*4*
Definitely	*5*
(don't know)	*8*

C7   **CARD C6** *How good are you at understanding and judging political questions?*

Very bad	*1*
Bad	*2*
Neither good nor bad	*3*
Good	*4*
Very good	*5*
(don't know)	*8*

C8   **CARD C7** *Do you think that politicians care what people like you think?*

Never	*1*
Seldom	*2*
Occasionally	*3*
Regularly	*4*

Frequently 5
(don't know) 8

C9 **CARD C7** *Would you say that politicians are more interested in getting people's votes than in their opinions?*

Never 1
Seldom 2
Occasionally 3
Regularly 4
Frequently 5
(don't know) 8

5.2.3   *Measurement of participation in elections*

The standard questions suggested are:

Did you vote in the last parliamentary election? Yes/no

Which party did you vote for in the last parliamentary election? ………………..

<u>Discussion of the questions</u>

The program SQP does not indicate that these standard questions are very good with for the first questions the following results: Reliability =.43 , validity = .55 , method effect = .45 , total quality = .24 and for the second question the following: Reliability =.40 , validity = .54 , method effect = .46 , total quality = .22. However this should not be a point of discussion because in the sample of questions on which these estimates are based, contains too few behavioral questions and they had mostly to do with the frequency of activities which had a very negative effect on the quality. So it was decided not to take this result into account.

Thomassen suggest with respect to the content of the latter question that the precise wording has to be adopted to political system of each country.

<u>The proposal of the CCT</u>

Given the over estimation of the participation in election in most studies the CCT thought that it might be advisable to make it easier for the respondent to say that he/she has not voted. This was done by adding an extra introductory sentence to the first question.

1. A lot of people don't vote these days for one reason or another. Did you vote in the last national election? Yes/no

2.Which party did you vote for in that election? ………………..

Country-specific lists of parties has to be provided while certain countries will need to adjust the question to deal with multi-stage or multi party voting.

In the pilot study no evidence has been obtained that suggested that these questions had to be changed.

5.2.4 Measurement of other forms of political participation

Thomassen suggested the following battery of questions for measurement of other forms of political participation:

There are different ways of attempting to bring about improvements or counteract deterioration in society. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following ?

	Yes 1	No 2
A. Contacted a politician	☐	☐
B. Contacted an association or organization	☐	☐
C. Contacted a civil servant on the national, regional or local level	☐	☐
D. Worked in a political party	☐	☐
E. Worked in a [political action group]	☐	☐
F. Worked in another organization or association	☐	☐
G. Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker	☐	☐
H. Signed a petition	☐	☐
I. Taken part in a public demonstration	☐	☐
J. Taken part in a strike	☐	☐
K. Boycotted certain products	☐	☐
L. Deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	☐	☐
M. Donated money	☐	☐
N. Raised funds	☐	☐
O. Contacted or appeared in the media	☐	☐
P. Contacted solicitor or judicial body	☐	☐
Q. Participated in illegal protest activities	☐	☐
R. Attended a political meeting or rally	☐	☐

S. Other activity ☐ ☐

INT.: If the respondent has reported that he/she has done any of the activities (i.e., yes in one or more of the items A-S) go to 37T. Else (not active at all) go to 37U.

T. Did you use the Internet in connection with any of these activities? ☐ ☐

U. And have you ever abstained from participating in a general election out of protest? INT.: We think of all general elections, whether on the local, regional, national or European level. ☐ ☐

<u>Discussion with the CCT</u>

The program SQP could not be used for prediction of the quality of the questions because of the limited number of items of this kind in the sample of questions on which these predictions are based.

Thomassen comments on this battery: The whole battery is presented, but it seems obvious to me that not all of the items can be included. I would suggest to drop B, L, M, N, O, P, S,T, U. The remaining items include campaign activity (G, R), conventional (C, D,) and unconventional (E, H, I, J, K, Q) activities.

The CCT asked him the following: Should these items form a scale ? How should this be controlled ? What is normally the quality of the scale ? How do we determine the total score or should that not be done ? Shouldn't other activities like participation in new social movements be included as suggested by Kriesi ?

Jacques Thomassen replied: These items do not form a scale. From previous research on political participation we know that normally 4 – 5 scales are found. These items try to cover all these dimensions. How exactly these scales look like is an empirical question.

If there is anything that might improve our instrument of measurement it would be to include all items and not to exclude any of them as I suggested earlier. If there is any possibility at al to add new questions or items this would have my strong preference. I agree with you that questions about new social movements should be included. Indirectly this is done by the use of items L, M and N.

<u>Proposal of the CCT</u>

As we have seen above, normally a battery with 21 items is used where people have to indicate whether they did an activity or did not. Because of the fact that it was expected that this set of questions would take too long (expected duration 5 minutes) it was suggested that an alternative measure with only 8 items would be tried in the pilot questionnaire. The different items should be chosen in such a way that they represent the different types of actions.

There are different ways of trying to improve things in Britain or stop things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?
Firstly … READ OUT

		Yes	*No*	*(Don't Know)*	
C20	*Contacted a politician or civil servant to try to get them to act as you would wish on an important issue*	*1*	*2*	*8*	*419*
C21	*Done some work for a political party*	*1*	*2*	*8*	*420*
C22	*Joined or worked for an organisation set up to influence political decisions*	*1*	*2*	*8*	*421*
C23	*Signed a petition*	*1*	*2*	*8*	*422*
C24	*Boycotted or deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons*	*1*	*2*	*8*	*423*
C25	*Taken part in a public demonstration*	*1*	*2*	*8*	*424*
C26	*Participated in illegal protest activities*	*1*	*2*	*8*	*425*

Because of the fact that some members of the CCT were wondering what the relationship would be between the new measure and the old an experiment was prepared including these two forms plus one where people had to specify how many action out of three sets they had done (k/n format). In the last case the sets were created on the basis of a classification of actions as conventional, unconventional and new social movement actions. The new version was specified as follows

There are different ways of attempting to bring about improvements or counteract deterioration in society. During the last 12 months, how many of the following activities have you done ?

- *contact a politician*
- *contacted an association or organization*
- *contacted a civil servant on the national, regional or local level*
- *worked in a political party*
- *worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker*
- *attended a political meeting or rally*

And how many of the following activities have you done during the last 12 months ?

- *worked for a political action group*
- *signed a petition*
- *taken part in a public demonstration*

- *taken part in a strike*

- *participated in illegal protest activities*

And how many of the following activities have you done during the last 12 months ?
- *boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons*

- *deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons*

- *donated money to an organisation which tries to realise a political goal*

- *paid contribution to an organisation which tries to realise a political goal*

- *raised funds for to an organisation which tries to realise a political goal*

And how many of the following activities have you done during the last 12 months ?
- *contacted or appeared in the media*

- *contacted a solicitor or juridical body*

- *use internet in order to communicate about some activity*

abstained from participating in a general election out of protest

Thomassen comments on the latter alternative: pre-testing in itself cannot do any harm, but if this would be a final proposal, I would not be very happy with it. The whole idea of the core modules of ESS is that the information obtained should serve as many purposes as possible. One traditional research question is whether the dimensional structure of different forms of political participation differs over time and across countries. For instance: have activities that in the 1970s were labeled as protest activities become normal and become part of a more general dimension of political activities?

Such research questions can be answered by using the format I proposed, but they cannot be answered if one imposes a certain dimensional structure. moreover, the proposed grouping of items proves how tricky this is. I would have done it totally differently because the proposed allocation to the remaining categories of activities does not fit any dimensional structure I know from the literature. I can also hardly believe that much time would be saved using the alternative form.

The CCT decided not to make a decision at this moment but design an experiment in the pilot study using the forms mentioned above.

The results of the pilot study

First of all, we will present the results obtained from the MTMM analysis. This is done in the table below. The measures are compared for three possible subsets of political actions. These sets have been measured with three different methods. In the first method (single action) a single item (c20,c22,c24) was used for each kind of actions. In the

second measure (K/n action)   three questions asked how many of n action the respondent has done in the last 12 month (L7, L8, L9). In the third method (Sum over n) a sum score is computed over the items which also have been specified in the sets of method 2. The results with respect to reliability and validity were as follows.

Reliability and validity of measures of political action measured in three different ways

Reliability	Conventional		Unconventional		New social movement	
Method	NL	GB	NL	GB	NL	GB
Single action	.79	.53	.17	.26	.84	.79
K/n actions	.77	.96	.99	.99	.90	.89
Sum over n	.89	.84	.73	.81	.90	.82
Validity						
Single action	.99	.97	.95	.88	.99	.99
K/n actions	.83	.99	.89	.99	.86	.99
Sum over n	.86	.98	.74	.98	.85	.98

It will be clear that the single item method (single action) now planned for the main questionnaire is the worst method to collect information about the three sets of political actions. The reason is also obvious: the other two methods use more than one item to measure the different kinds of political actions.

The choice between the other two measures is not so simple. In the British survey the k/n measure is clearly better than the aggregation in three sets of the original question battery. In the Netherlands there is no clear winner with respect to reliability and both have considerable method effects indicating that people react quite differently to the different methods.

This is also what can be seen if the correlations between the different scales (Participation in Conventional actions, Unconventional actions and new actions) without correction for measurement error are compared with the correlations after correction for measurement error.

Correlations between the K/n measures   Correlations between the sum scores per set

	Conv	unconv	new		conv	unconv	new
Conv	1.00				1.00		
Unconv	.23	1.00			.31	1.00	
New	.17	.52	1.00		.19	.43	1.00

Correlations after correction for measurement errors

	Conv	unconv	new
Con	1.00		
Unconv	,10	1.00	
New	.05	.38	1.00

These results show that the correlations are reduced by correction for measurement error which is due to the fact that the systematic effect of the method on the correlations

is larger than the effect of the random errors. The matrices also show that the conventional actions are hardly correlated with the other kinds of actions while unconventional activities and new social movement activities are somewhat related.

On the basis of the results of the pilot study the following conclusions have been drawn. Given that the single item method is not good enough the choice is between the other two. In the Netherlands the two are equally good . In Britain the k/n method is clearly better. Nevertheless, we think that a choice should be made for the original procedure.

The reasons are the following:
1. The original battery takes in average only one and a half minute and not 5 minutes as expected. The k/n procedure contains only 3 questions but the questions are complex and take more than 3 minutes
2. The original battery provides the possibility in the long run to detect changes in acceptance of different political actions which would lead to different ordering of the action. This can not be detected if the subsets are formed a priori.
3. The use of the original battery gives the possibility to make comparisons through time which will not be possible if one of the new methods would be chosen.
4. The correlations with other variables measuring political interest are approximately the same and all significant.

The final form for wave 1 of the ESS

After all this work the CCT decided for the following formulation of this battery of questions.

After all this work the CCT decided for the following formulation of this battery of questions. The final decisions were based on the recommendations of Thomassen and of the head of the question design team for the citizenship, involvement and democracy module Ken Newton (who also advocated this approach for their uses). The eight items were devised to encapture all the factors included in the longer 21-item list (based on analysis of the pilot data), combining similar activities into one category to reduce the questionnaire length.

There are different ways of trying to improve things in Britain or stop things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?
Firstly … READ OUT

		Yes	*No*	*(Don't Know)*
C18	*Contacted a politician or civil servant to try to get them to act as you would wish on an important issue*	*1*	*2*	*8*
C19	*Done some work for a political party*	*1*	*2*	*8*
C20	*Joined or worked for an organisation set up to influence political decisions*	*1*	*2*	*8*

C21	*Signed a petition*	*1*	*2*	*8*
C22	*Boycotted or deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons*	*1*	*2*	*8*
C23	*Taken part in a public demonstration*	*1*	*2*	*8*
C24	*Participated in illegal protest activities*	*1*	*2*	*8*
C25	*Participated in violent protest*	*1*	*2*	*8*

5.2.5   Measurement of attachment to Political Parties

The standard question for member ship is

 Are you a member of a political party?

The standard questions for party identification suggested also by Thomassen are:

1. Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular party?

>   *Yes*
>   *No*
>   *DK*

2. IF NO, Do you feel yourself a little closer to one of the political parties than the others?
>   *Yes*
>   *No*
>   *DK*

3. IF YES at 1 OR 2. Which party do you feel closest to?
………………………………..

4. IF YES at 1 OR 2. Do you feel very close to this party, somewhat close, or not very close?

Discussion about measurement of attachment

The quality prediction by SQP for the membership questions was not very good:

Reliability =.55 , validity = .79 , method effect = .21 , total quality = .44

However, it is hard to imagine how one can improve this question. So no change in this question will be introduced.

The quality prediction of the 4 items has led to the following result.

Item	Reliability	Validity	Method effect	Total quality
1	.56	.85	.15	.48
2	.67	.86	.14	.58
3	.47	.85	.15	.40
4	.72	.84	.16	.61

The reliability of the first three questions is not high while the validity is good. The last question asking a degree of attachment has a much higher reliability and good validity. That is attractive but then this question has to be reached by the respondents.

Question 3 can not be evaluated too well by our system because we have not much experience with open ended questions.

The CCT commented : The first question in this set asks an absolute judgement of closeness while the next questions ask a feeling of the amount of closeness. Is that the same ? It has been found that more people refuse to answer the first question, being too crude (Klingeman 1997). According to me , the first two questions are not needed. One can immediately ask:

Is there a particular political party you feel closer to than all the other parties ? Yes/No

After that question follows : *Which party is this? …………………..*
And question d : *Do you feel very close to this party …. ?*

This question is just as good/bad as the quality of the other questions mentioned above as can be seen from the results obtained with SQP: Reliability =.57 , validity = .77 , method effect = .23 , total quality = .44

Thomassen replies: I suppose you are right, although I have the feeling that we are getting ever further away from the original PI questions.

The decision of the CCT

The decision was made to keep the memberships question the same and with respect to party identification to skip the first two questions and use the above specified formulation of the third and fourth question. The advantage, besides a reduction of one question, is that one will get fewer item non-response so that more information will be obtained about the strength of the identification with the last question which has also the best quality.

The last question uses again the form 'not very …' This form should be avoided. So the formulation chosen was:

Are you a member of a political party?
 Yes no
If yes Which one ? ……

 ASK IF NOT A MEMBER AT C26
C27b *Is there a particular political party you feel closer to than all the other parties?*

 Yes / no

If yes : Which one ? ………………..

ASK IF YES AT C26 OR C27b
C28 *How close do you feel to this party?   Do you feel that*
       *you are … **READ OUT***

very close,	*1*
quite close,	*2*
not close,	*3*
or, not at all close?	*4*
(Don't know)	*8*

5.2.6 Measurement of satisfaction with economy, government and the functioning of the democracy

The following questions were suggested for the evaluation of the economy, government and the functioning of the democracy:

Economy
What do you think about the state of the economy these days in [country]? Would you say that the state of the economy is very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad, or very bad?

1. very good,
2. good,
3. neither good nor bad,
4. bad,
5. very bad

Government
How satisfied are you with the way the government in [capital or residence of national government] is doing its job? Would you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

1 *very satisfied,*
2 *fairly satisfied,*
3 *fairly dissatisfied*
4 *very dissatisfied?*

Functioning of the Democracy
On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [name of country]?

1. Very satisfied
2. Fairly satisfied
3. Not very satisfied
4. Not at all satisfied

Discussion of the measures

SQP predicts the following quality of the three measures:

Topic	reliability	validity	method effect	total quality
Economy	.56	.68	.32	.38
Government	.58	.69	.31	.40
Democracy	.58	.69	.31	.40

The quality of these questions is rather low. This is mainly due to several choices:
1. the ordering of the response categories from high to low.
2. A limited number of answer categories without fixed reference points
3. The choice of a uni-polar scale for the last topic while the concept is bi-polar
4. No middle category and no don't know category

The first two questions concerning the economy and the government did not lead to any further discussion. With respect to the functioning of the democracy the following questions were asked: People can attach very different ideas to 'the way democracy works'. Some people might think of the government other about the parties other about the administration. Why would they think that the system is not democratic enough?

And what does that mean ? Maybe it is good to focus the attention on certain aspects. How about this approach ?

Essential for a democracy is freedom of speech and association and the influence of the citizens on the building of a new government by free elections.
(INT card A)

1.In how far do you think democracy is , in principle, a good or a bad way of governing our country ?
Very bad / rather bad / bad /bad nor good/ good / rather good / very good
2.On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [name of country]?
> *1. Very satisfied*
> *2. Fairly satisfied*
> *3. Not very satisfied*
> *4. Not at all satisfied*

Thomassen replies: I have been arguing for years that people think of different aspects of democracy. But this solution to that problem is not a good one because close to nobody wants something else than democracy. The use of the first alternative question is a bad idea. It is leading too much and the question is multidimensional. If there is space for an additional question I have a clear preference for:

- *'What do you think of when you hear the word democracy'?*
[Dutch National Election Study; Thomassen 1995; cfr. Rohrschneider 1999:

The CCT replied: The first question had the purpose to focus the reaction of the respondents and reduce the confusion. That is not the same as a leading question. The second question does not have to be different from the normal question but after the first question the orientation of the respondents is more focused. Firstly, they will evaluate the given basic characteristics of the democracy and , secondly, they will evaluate the functioning of the democracy in their country on the mentioned aspects.

The open question is not very attractive, not only because of the amount of work but for the same reason given before : people do not know what to mention and only mention the first thought which comes up in their mind and not others they would produce if they thought a bit longer.

Thomassen replies: I cannot emphasize strongly enough how much I oppose any introduction trying to explain the meaning of democracy. Democracy is an essentially contested concept, not only in political philosophy, but among common people as well.

I accept that for practical reasons open questions are not very welcome, but not for the reason you mention. One of the most interesting developments in the empirical research on democratic values is focusing on the meaning people attach to the concept of democracy. What comes out of this is that people know very well what they are mentioning, and do not mention the first thought which comes in their mind. People have a surprisingly well developed sense of democracy. But one of the most important findings is that there are structural differences in the way people perceive democracy, differences across time and across countries. …Therefore, the very last thing I want to happen is any attempt to focus people on any meaning of democracy.

This argument still asks for a question on people's understanding of democracy. Accepting that an open question is not manageable, let me propose the following question from the world values study. It measures people's preference for a more collectivist or individualist conception of democracy and therefore is the best alternative to an open question.

Which of these two statements comes closest to your own opinion?

A. *I find that both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to choose one or the other, I would consider personal freedom more important, that is, everyone can live n freedom and develop without hindrance.*
B. *Certainly, both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to choose one or the other, I would consider equality more important, that is, that nobody is underprivileged and social class differences are not so strong.*

> 1 *agree with statement A*
> 2 *agree with statement B*
> 3 *neither*

SQP suggest that the quality of this question is rather low: Reliability= .81 , the validity = .38 method effect = .62 total quality = .31. The reason for the low validity is mainly the length of the question which is a measure of the complexity of the question.

Proposal of the CCT

On the basis of this argument the CCT has decided not to use this last question in the questionnaire but use the original question of Thomassen without any definition of what democracy means.

Given the fact that many suggestions were made to improve the formulations of these questions, it was decided to test these questions in more detail in the pilot study using an MTMM design. In doing so it was necessary to use the same form of response scale for all three questions but in the repeated versions alternative forms have been used.

The results of the pilot study

It was planned that three methods would be evaluated in both countries for these measures: a 4 point scale (C33,C34,C35) going from very satisfied to very unsatisfied in the main questionnaire, a method asking an evaluation on a 11 point scale from very unsatisfied to very satisfied (N19,N20,N21) and a third method asking an evaluation on a 4 point scale again but now going from not at all satisfied to very satisfied (N50,N51 and N52). By mistake the last method has been omitted in the Dutch pilot.

Since in this experiment a 11 point scale is involved the British sample has been split in two groups on the basis of the different versions of the questionnaire they got. One group got a questionnaire with show cards, the other group a version without show cards. However in this experiment the 11 point scale was presented in the self administrated part so there was absolutely no difference in the way the two 11 point scales were presented to the two British samples.

In the table below the quality estimates of the MTMM experiments are presented.

The Reliability and validity of the satisfaction measures

	Economy			Government			Democracy		
Reliability	NL	GB1	GB2	NL	GB1	GB2	NL	GB1	GB2
4pts cat, h-l	.65	.72	.84	.81	.80	.87	.78	.77	.84
11 pts cat, l-h	.80	.94	.88	.91	.95	.94	.90	.93	.93
4pts cat , l-h	-	.79	.84	-	.84	.90	-	.84	.84
Validity									
4pts cat , h-l	.99	.94	.94	.99	.95	.95	.99	.94	.94
11 pts cat, l-h	.76	.90	.93	.81	.91	.94	.81	.90	.94
4pts cat l-h	-	.80	.90	-	.82	.91	-	.92	.90

As before the different samples don't show much differences with respect to the quality of the 11 point scale but they show differences for the other two methods. Why this happens requires further research.

Besides these less clear differences between the samples the table shows very large differences in quality between the three methods. It turns out that the 11 point scale is much better than the two other methods. This higher quality of the 11 point scale is found in the Dutch ample as well as the two British samples. The only less positive finding is that the validity of the 11 point scales for the Dutch sample is rather low compared with the British samples.

This is also an interesting case to show the difference it makes whether one is making corrections for measurement error or not. For this purpose we show the correlations between these three variable for the first (m1) and second method (m2) without correction for measurement error and after correction for measurement error for the first British and the Dutch sample.

Correlations between the satisfaction variables in the British and Dutch sample with and without correction for measurement error

Combination of variables	British no correction		corrected	Dutch no correction		corrected
	m1	m2	both	m1	m2	both
1 with 2	.43	.70	.73	.34	.54	.61
1 with 3	.28	.67	.71	.25	.51	.55
2 with 3	.48	.70	.76	.42	.64	.67

This table shows first of all the very large differences in correlations between the 4 point scale and the 11 point scale in both countries. The differences between the methods are much larger than the differences between the countries. Correction for measurement error gives for both methods the same corrected correlations which are very similar to the correlations for the 11 point scale. Using the 11 point scale or correction for measurement error shows that these variables are highly correlated. This was not at all clear if the 4 point scale would have been used.

Note that this result does not mean that there are no errors. In fact in this case the random errors and the systematic errors have nearly the same effect and therefore there is no large change in the correlations.

These analyses suggest very clearly that the 11 point scale should be used in the main questionnaire. In doing so even scholars who do not make corrections for measurement get results which are much closer to the proper values than with the 4 or the 5 point scale.

The final choice

It was suggested to use for all three questions bipolar, 11 points scales with fixed reference points with midpoint and a don't know option which is not presented but only used on request. On the basis of the above presented arguments the following scales have been chosen for the satisfaction questions:

Evaluation of economy

C30 CARD C10: *On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in Britain? Please answer on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means extremely dissatisfied and 10 means extremely satisfied.*

Extremely										**Extremely**	**(DK)**
Dissatisfied										**satisfied**	
00	*01*	*02*	*03*	*04*	*05*	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*10*	*88*

Evaluation of incumbent government

C31 CARD C10 *Now think about the national government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?*

Extremely										**Extremely**	**(DK)**
Dissatisfied										**satisfied**	
00	*01*	*02*	*03*	*04*	*05*	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*10*	*88*

Satisfaction with democracy

C32 CARD C10 *And on the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Britain?*

Extremely										*Extremely*	*(DK)*
Dissatisfied										*satisfied*	
00	*01*	*02*	*03*	*04*	*05*	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*10*	*88*

5.2.7 Measurement of Political Trust in Authorities and Specific Institutions

Thomassen suggested the following battery of items:

I will now read out names of different institutions such as the police, government, civil service, etc. Please tell me how strongly you personally trust each of these institutions.

INT.: Show card

	No trust at all										Very strong trust	Don't know
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	88
A. [Name of the municipal board]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. The cabinet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. The political parties	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. [Name of the national parliament]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. The courts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F. The civil service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
G. The police	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
H. Politicians	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I. The European Union (EU)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
J. The United Nations (UN)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Discussion

With SQP the following prediction of the range quality measures was predicted

Item	Reliability	Validity	Method effect	Total quality
1	.73	.78	.22	.57
others	.77	.64	.36	.50

The quality of these questions is acceptable. There is no reason for a change.

Thomassen comments on these questions: Countries should select the appropriate expression for "civil service", e.g., public administration. Furthermore he mentions: The item on the European Union is not really needed, but it is a cheap and perhaps valuable addition. The development of the (legitimacy of the) EU as a political system might be important enough in the near future to justify a separate battery of questions.

The CCT asked: Should these items form a scale ? How should this be controlled ? What is normally the quality of the scale ? How do we determine the total score or should that not be done ?

Reply by Jacques Thomassen: There is no reason why these questions should form a scale. Quite the contrary, part of the relevant literature refers to the fact that people might loose their trust in the legislature, but not in the executive or the judicial branch of government. This is a matter of empirical research that should not be prevented by throwing all these items in a single basket. These are well tested questions that have been used at least twice in the World Values Study. I do not see that the number of items can be reduced: each item measures a different component of the political system.

<u>Final decision</u>

The CCT decided that there is no reason to change the format of this battery. So the battery as presented above has been used in the pilot study where no problems were discovered except that the CCT thought that it would be better to chose some other items to be evaluated. So the final battery chosen was as follows:

CARD C8: Using this card, please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you <u>personally</u> trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust them at all, and 10 means you have complete trust. Firstly…READ OUT

		No trust At all										*Complete trust*	*(Don't know)*
C10	*… the British government?*	*00*	*01*	*02*	*03*	*04*	*05*	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*10*	*88*
C11	*… the legal system?*	*00*	*01*	*02*	*03*	*04*	*05*	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*10*	*88*
C12	*… the police?*	*00*	*01*	*02*	*03*	*04*	*05*	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*10*	*88*
C13	*… politicians?*	*00*	*01*	*02*	*03*	*04*	*05*	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*10*	*88*
C14	*… the European Parliament?*	*00*	*01*	*02*	*03*	*04*	*05*	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*10*	*88*
C15	*… the United Nations?*	*00*	*01*	*02*	*03*	*04*	*05*	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*10*	*88*

5.2.8 Measurement of Self-location and perception of political parties on the left-right scale

Thomassen suggested the following standard procedure for this set of variables*:*

In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?

Using the same scale, where would you place PARTY A?

And where would you place PARTY B?

And PARTY C?

And PARTY D?

And PARTY E?

And PARTY F?

Discussion

SQP suggested that the first question and the follow up questions were rather good questions with Reliability= .81 validity = .80 , method effect = .20 , and a total quality = .65

There was no reason to change these questions. The only change that has been introduced was that the number of questions has been reduced. In the end the decision was made for economic reasons that only the self placement will be asked and not the placement of the different parties.

The final choice

Since there is no reason to change these questions on the basis of the pilot study the following set of questions has been used in the first wave of the ESS:

C29 ASK ALL
 CARD C9: *In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Using this card, where would you place yourself on this scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?*

Left										*Right*	*(DK)*
00	*01*	*02*	*03*	*04*	*05*	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*10*	*88*