

the other side, one political party is able to put their plans through, and delays in political processes are avoided. Thus, for each of the three dimensions the data set contains two variables (shown in Table 5.5). The wording of items in this study is slightly different from the variables in the first study. The core messages are the same, however.

In order to test the discriminant validity of the process preferences scale as regards different objects of assessment, data from the another pilot survey with 530 Swiss citizens was used. Process preferences concerning decision-making processes in the Swiss government (“Bundesrat”) and the Swiss parliament – which consists of National Council (“Nationalrat”) and Council of States (“Ständerat”) – were distinguished. A 7-point scale response format assessed how relevant the different aspects of political decision-making are for the individual respondent. When responding to the scale, individuals were asked the following questions: ‘Citizens hold different preferences regarding how political decisions in the parliament should be made. Please answer according to the following scale how important you consider the various preferences. The scale ranges from 1 (not important at all) to 7 (very important)’, ‘Citizens hold different preferences regarding how political decisions in the government should be made. Please answer according to the following scale how important you consider the various preferences. The scale ranges from 1 (not important at all) to 7 (very important)’. Preferences regarding the consensus-orientation of political processes were for instance measured with the question ‘How important is it for you, that politicians in the parliament sometimes concede a point to the other side?’ / ‘How important is it for you that politicians in government sometimes concede a point to the other side?’ Preferences regarding the efficiency of political processes were for example measured with the question ‘How important is it for you that political decision-making processes in the parliament are simple and short?’ / ‘How important is it for you that political decision-making processes in the government are simple and short?’ The items used to measure process preferences are presented in footnote 56.

5.2.2. Participants and Procedures

A first pretest of the process preferences and perceptions items was done with five persons.⁴⁶ The persons were informed about the purpose of pretesting the questionnaire. The test included a post-interview probing with a focus on comprehension. Pretests are a relevant step in developing the final questionnaires (Probst, 1998). They encompass the careful analysis of unclear formulations, redundancies, and questions that result in many “don’t know” answers. Moreover, the variances of items might give hints on whether the scales are appropriate. In addition, pretests

46 The persons were doctoral students at the University of Zurich and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich.

give information on the question order. The insights from the pretest informed the further development of the survey items. Special attention was given to the items measuring process preferences and perceptions. Wordings were edited, single items were deleted, and complex items were simplified.

In a pilot study with samples from two different cultures, Switzerland as a consensus democracy and Germany as a rather competitive democracy, the cultural invariance of the process preferences scales was tested. In November and December 2007, standardized written surveys were conducted with college students in Germany (n = 163) and Switzerland (n = 150). Students in Münster, Lucerne, and Zurich participated in the study.⁴⁷ The survey was conducted within the framework of university lectures and seminars. The surveys were conducted in the German-speaking part of Switzerland only, which has the advantage that potential differences in the measurement in the two samples might not be attributed to language differences. The college samples seemed appropriate for the purpose of scale development, where representative samples are not necessarily required (Noar, 2003, p. 626). The survey dealt with attitudes toward the government and politicians. The samples had an above-average number of participants with higher levels of formal education. In the German survey, 42 percent were males, and the age ranged from 18 to 31 (M=22; SD=2.7). In the Swiss survey, 51 percent were males, and the age ranged from 18 to 33 (M= 22; SD=2.8). The duration of the surveys was approximately 15 minutes.

The second pilot study was conducted in March/April 2008 for the purpose of testing the invariance of the scale as regards different objects of assessment. The subjects were recruited in collaboration with “smartvote”, an online voting decision-making tool in Switzerland.⁴⁸ In the “smartvote” post election survey in November and December 2007 a question was included that asked whether the respondent would be interested in participating in a social science research project. Those respondents who indicated ‘yes’ were included in a pool of potential participants. The sample therefore includes a high number of subjects with strong interests in politics. In addition, the sample has an above-average number of participants with a high level of formal education. The study was conducted as an online survey. Out of 800 invited subjects, 530 people completed the questionnaire. The response rate was 0.66. In the sample from the second pilot survey, 61 percent were males, and the age ranged from 16 to 76 (M=38; SD=13.9). The survey dealt with attitudes towards the government and parliament. The duration of the survey was approximately 15 minutes.

The development of the process perceptions and process preferences scales is based on data from a standardized online survey that was conducted in May 2008 in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Respondents were recruited through the

⁴⁷ Thanks to Margit Bussmann, Frank Esser, Tina Freyburg, Frank Marcinkowski, Urs Scheuss, and Doreen Spörer for their help with the implementation of this pilot study.

⁴⁸ The author thanks Jan Fivaz from the online voting platform “smartvote” for his help with the recruitment of participants (www.smartvote.ch).

newsletter of ‘smartvote’, an electronic voting decision-making tool in Switzerland. The newsletter is regularly sent to all registered users of the ‘smartvote’ online-platform (www.smartvote.ch). The participants, hence, were more interested in politics than the average Swiss citizen. Moreover, participants had an above-average level of higher educational degrees. For the purpose of scale development and validation, this survey sample was separated into two groups, a smaller sample with 157 participants who participated in the control group of the experimental study, and a second sample with 366 participants who participated in the two experimental groups. In the first group ($n = 157$), 64 percent were males, and the age ranged from 19 to 84 ($M=42$; $SD=14.5$). In the second group ($n = 366$), 69 percent were males, and the age ranged from 18 to 80 ($M= 44$; $SD=15.5$).

5.2.3. Data Analysis

The items measuring process preferences and process perceptions were tested by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with maximum-likelihood parameter estimation. The analysis used EQS version 6.1 software (Bentler, 2006). CFA is a technique that can greatly enhance confidence in the structure and psychometric properties of a new measure (Noar, 2003) and several studies have provided evidence for the usefulness of CFA in further developing conventional measures of political attitudes (e.g. Funke, 2005; Weatherford, 1992). Data were tested for univariate and multivariate normal distribution. Extreme violations (moderate ones are given in parentheses) on the assumption of the univariate distribution are associated with skew values of at least 3 (2) and kurtosis of at least 20 (7) (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). These values were not reached in all of the samples. Yuan, Lambert, & Fouladi (2004) developed an extension of the Mardia (1970; 1974) test of multivariate kurtosis that can be applied to data with missing values. The normalized estimate is interpretable as a standard normal variate; the hypothesis of multivariate normality must be rejected if it is outside the range of -3 to +3 (Bentler, 2006, p. 282f.). Strong outliers were excluded from data analysis. Missing values were estimated with the maximum likelihood method, also known as full information maximum likelihood (cf. Bentler, 2006, 275ff.). To evaluate the model fit, the following criteria were evaluated: the Chi-Square value divided by the number of degrees of freedom (< 3), the comparative fit index ($CFI > .90$), the Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation ($RMSEA < .06$) with its 90% confidence interval (CI, lower bound $< .05$, upper bound $< .10$) (Kline, 2005, p. 133ff.).

5.3. Results

Section 5.3.1 presents the model development and validation of a scale to measure process preferences. Section 5.3.2 describes the development and validation of scales to measure citizens’ perception of political processes. In Section 5.3.3, it was