

## External Efficacy and Perceived Responsiveness – Same, same or different?

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Responsiveness is a central component of representative democracy. It is central because it is the prime mechanism through which citizens exert control over government between elections (Pitkin 1967; Dahl 1971; Mansbridge 2003; Powell 2004; Dovi 2011; Disch 2011; Esaiasson, Gilljam & Persson 2013). During the past decades, a number of innovative studies on policy responsiveness and policy adaptive processes have introduced new ways to measure the objective side of the phenomenon (e.g. Stimson, Mackuen & Erikson 1995; Wlezien 1995; Gilens 2006; Soroka & Wlezien 2010). However, research on perceived government responsiveness – the subjective side of the phenomenon – has yet to see a corresponding revitalizing inventory of concepts and measurements.

Empirical studies on perceived government responsiveness go back to the very first U.S. national election studies in the 1950s and to the idea that citizens value a political system that is open to their wishes and demands. To capture citizens' beliefs about system openness, Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin and Warren Miller (1954) introduced the concept "political efficacy" along with four survey items for its operationalization. Within short, Robert Lane (1959) added a distinction between internal and external efficacy, with internal efficacy picking up individuals' feelings that he or she has the capacity to participate in democratic decision-making processes, and with external efficacy relating to the perceived willingness of those in power to adhere to citizen opinion.<sup>1</sup> The early work on political efficacy has been tremendously influential on research on perceived responsiveness. At the operational level, the measurements that are available in national election studies and in cross-national comparative surveys derive directly or indirectly from the efficacy items in the original US study (e.g. Miller and Listhaug 1990; Arzheimer 2008). At the conceptual level, there is a close kinship so that the one concept is often defined in terms of the other (see Niemi, Craig & Mattei 1991; Hayes & Beans 1993; Craig et al. 2006; Clarke, Kornberg & Scotto 2010; Chamberlain 2012). Indeed, "perceived responsiveness" and "external efficacy" are typically used interchangeably, and we know of no attempt to systematically differentiate between the two concepts and their operational indicators.<sup>2</sup>

This paper offers a critical examination of the standard approach to perceived government responsiveness. It argues that there is theoretical and empirical reason to differentiate between "perceived responsiveness" and "external efficacy." When perceived responsiveness is anchored in recent theories of political representation rather than in the idea of political efficacy, we observe a difference in meaning between the two concepts. Specifically, we argue that perceived responsiveness captures cognitive beliefs about representative processes – how elected representatives and institutions act to accommodate the wishes and views of citizens – whereas external efficacy focuses highly generalized and affectively charged beliefs about the outcome of these processes. To capture these differences empirically, we develop new indicators of perceived responsiveness, and we put these measurements through psychometric tests. When contrasting our

suggested indicators with standard external efficacy items in citizen surveys in two national contexts (the Netherlands and Sweden), we find the expected two-dimensionality in the data, and that the new measure of perceived responsiveness is an independent predictor of political support variables.

In what follows we first briefly substantiate the claim that research in the field typically equates the two concepts and their empirical indicators. The following sections develop conceptual differences and introduce empirical indicators. Thereafter we present our data and empirical findings. A concluding section summarizes and discusses implications for future research. We maintain that research on perceived responsiveness should make more considered decisions about concepts and indicators, and that a long-term goal for research in the field is to include new survey indicators in high-quality data sources.

### **The two concepts and their measurements in previous research**

An important reason for the close kinship between perceived responsiveness and external efficacy is the availability of empirical indicators in trusted data sources. Most survey items that pertain to representatives' willingness to respond to citizens' wishes and demands are derived from the early U.S. national election studies. This is exemplified by a comparative study of the role of parties for political trust in Norway, Sweden and the U.S. by Miller and Listhaug (1990). Having searched a series of national election studies for comparable data, they remark that '[s]urvey indicators of perceived government responsiveness have generally been drawn from a standardized battery of trust or external efficacy' (Miller & Listhaug: 1990: 359). Similarly, in an entry for an encyclopaedia of political behaviour Arzheimer (2008) notes that "(t)ranslations of the SRC [Survey Research Center] items were developed for surveys of social and political attitudes in a whole host of other countries, and nowadays the concept has gained universal recognition in western democracies."<sup>3</sup>

The close kinship is found also at the conceptual level. Craig and colleagues (2006: 585) assert that their concept of governmental responsiveness is 'very close to the concept of external efficacy'. Other studies as well explicate their understanding of perceived responsiveness with reference to external efficacy (e.g. Acock and Clarke, 1990; Hayes and Bean, 1993; Mossberger and Tolbert, 2005; Niemi et al., 1991). Moreover, the interchangeable usage of the concepts travels both ways so that external efficacy is defined in terms of perceived responsiveness. In a methodological study, Craig and colleagues (1990: 290) define external efficacy as citizens' 'beliefs about the responsiveness of governmental authorities and institutions'. Similarly, in a study on negative wording effects Clarke and colleagues (2010: 107) conceptualise external efficacy as 'the belief that political elites and governmental institutions are responsive to citizen demands'. And in a recent longitudinal study of the U.S. case, Chamberlain (2012: 4) maintains that external efficacy 'by definition relates to perceptions of the government's responsiveness to citizens demand'.

While it is clear that the two concepts are interrelated, we turn now to the reasons why they nevertheless should be treated as separate phenomena.

## Perceived responsiveness and external efficacy as distinct concepts

Campbell, Gurin and Miller (1954: 187) originally defined political efficacy as follows:

‘the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process, i.e., that it is worthwhile to perform one’s civic duties. It is the feeling that political and social change is possible, and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change’.

Thus defined, efficacy is a highly generalized and affectively charged belief about the likely consequences of citizen involvement in politics. (Does it matter to engage politically?) While this definition is repeated in most subsequent work on efficacy, definitions of external efficacy vary to a degree between studies. The example definitions in the previous section referred to beliefs about ‘the responsiveness of governmental authorities and institutions’ (Niemi, Craig & Mattei 1991: 1408), and to the belief that ‘political elites and governmental institutions are responsive to citizen demands’ (Clarke et al. 2010: 107). Although the meaning of “responsiveness” is unspecified, it is clear from the context that external efficacy involves bottom-up policy adaptation from the government broadly understood.<sup>4</sup>

Further clarity is gained by looking at the two preferred empirical indicators as they appear in the ANES studies: “People like me don't have any say about what the government does” (NOSAY); and “I don't think public officials care much what people like me think” (NOCARE). From these items we can infer that an individual is externally efficacious if he or she believes that citizens’ opinions are consequential for a broad collective of political decision-makers. Furthermore, in accordance with the original definition of efficacy, terms like ‘have a say’ and ‘care’ suggest that the belief in question is affectively charged.

In sum, external efficacy refers to affectively charged and generalized beliefs about the likely outcome of political processes in terms of bottom-up policy adaptation. The underlying question can be described as follows: Does citizens’ wishes and views matter when authoritative political decisions are made?

To see how perceived responsiveness differ conceptually we turn to representation theory for anchorage. An initial difference is with regard to reference object. While external efficacy refers to a wide set of governmental actors (governmental authorities and institutions; political elites; political institutions; public officials), representation theory directs attention towards a more narrow group of elected representatives and institutions.

With regard to content, representation theory identifies responsiveness as the prime mechanism for citizen control over government between elections (Pitkin, 1967; Dahl 1971; Dovi 2011). According to the standard account, representative democracy is an approximation of the original democratic idea of a rule by the people (e.g., Dahl 1971; 1989). This implies a bottom-up understanding of responsiveness in which representatives pay close attention to citizen opinion (Andeweg 2011). In line with the standard account, Powell (2004:91) defines responsiveness as “what occurs when the democratic process induces the government to form and implement policies that the citizens want” (Powell 2004:91). This definition is clearer about the meaning of policy adaption and less affectively charged, but apart from that close to external efficacy.

However, recent theorizing on representation suggests a more complex relationship between citizens and government in which policy adaption from below is only one of several legitimate options. To this effect, Bernhard Manin argues that representative democracy is a system of government in its own right with strong elitist features, which was originally designed “in explicit opposition to government by the people”, and that “its central institutions have remained unchanged” (Manin 1997: 232). Other theorists take less radical positions, but maintain that a full account of democratic representation must acknowledge that representatives continuously offer policy views, make representative claims, and shape citizen preferences, and, hence, that representation does not only travel bottom-up but also top-down (Mansbridge, 2003; Urbinati 2006; Saward, 2010; Disch 2011). Accordingly, responsiveness should be seen as an iterative, communicative process rather than as a fixed outcome.

The view that responsiveness is a continuous communicative process is present already in Hanna Pitkin’s classic *The Concept of Representation* (Pitkin 1967). According to Pitkin, responsiveness cannot be inferred from an action in itself; rather “there must be a constant condition of responsiveness, of potential readiness to respond” (Pitkin, 1967: 233). Pitkin explicates what responsiveness without adaption requires from the representatives: They “must not be found persistently at odds with the wishes of the represented without...a good explanation of why their wishes are not in accord with their interest” (Pitkin, 1967: 209f). When translated to real-world situations, this implies that representatives are obliged to communicate their reason for action, but not necessarily to adapt to current views and opinions of citizens. That is, responsiveness should be understood as “a promise of communication, not of adaptation in the short-term” (Esaiasson, Gilljam & Persson 2013: 24).

Developing on this communicative relationship, Esaiasson, Gilljam and Persson (2013: 24) argue that responsiveness is manifested in three types of actions from representatives: that they keep themselves informed about citizen opinion (they listen); that they give credible accounts for their actions (they explain) and, when they find it reasonable, that they adjust decisions in accordance with citizen preferences (they adapt). Perceived responsiveness is citizens’ beliefs about how well elected representatives and institutions perform these actions.

The question underlying this definition is as follows: To what extent do elected representatives and institutions listen, explain and adapt to citizens wishes and views? Compared to external efficacy, this understanding of perceived responsiveness has a more narrowly defined reference object, is more cognitive, involves a wider set of actions from representatives, and is more concerned with the process of representation.

### **New measures of perceived responsiveness**

Drawing on the reasoning above, Esaiasson, Gilljam and Persson (2013: 26) suggest a three-item operationalization in which respondents are asked to evaluate the extent to which the incumbent government during their term in office (a) 'had found out about the wishes of citizens', (b) 'explained their policies to citizens', and (c) 'tried to accommodate the wishes of citizens'. In a first trial, these items were administered to a representative samples of Swedish voters and to all Members of Parliament in association with the 2010 parliamentary election with encouraging results. With modifications, we take these three items as our first measurement of perceived responsiveness (PR3).

To test sensitivity for wording effects, we have developed an alternative five item battery (PR5). The battery asks whether representatives' keep themselves informed about citizen wishes and views on a regular basis. Moreover, it draws a distinction within the idea of explaining actions. Have representatives explained their actions post-decision or pre-decision? This is an important point because the communicative and iterative understanding of responsiveness encompasses both. The interaction of pre-decision explanation can alter possibly citizens' as well as representatives' views on the subject at hand. In contrast, post-decision explanation serves a different purpose. It is almost exclusively about seeking approval and shaping future views.

Our point of comparison is a measure of external efficacy. We rely on a three item battery taken from the Dutch national election study (EE3). In addition to versions of the NOSAY and NOCARE items, it includes an item on the interest of political parties in citizens' opinions (PARTIES). This item was included in the ANES battery of efficacy items between 1968 and 1980.

The three measurements are summarised in Table 1.

Two new measures of perceived responsiveness		A standard measure of external efficacy
PR3	PR5	EE3
Elected representatives after elections... 1. listen to citizen wishes? 2. explain their politics to citizens? 3. try to accommodate citizen wishes?	Elected representatives after elections... 1. keep themselves informed about citizen views? 2. care about citizen views? 3. provide reasons for actions they have taken? 4. provide reasons for actions they are going to take? 5. decide in line with citizen views?	1. Representatives [NL: Parliamentarians] do not care about the opinions of people like me. NOCARE 2. People like me have no influence at all on government policy. NOSAY 3. Political parties are only interested in my vote and not in my opinion. PARTIES

**Table 1. Summary of basic operationalizations.**

In the following, we use confirmatory factor analysis to investigate whether or not each of the responsiveness batteries is empirically distinct from the efficacy battery. Finally, in order to test for construct validity we investigate how the responsiveness batteries relate to an important theoretically pertinent concept such as political trust. Political theory and existing empirical findings suggest that responsiveness and trust are highly positively related (for example Craig et al., 1990; Dahl, 1992; Held, 1996).

### Survey setup and data

The empirical differences between responsiveness and external efficacy in citizen minds are investigated through a series of comparative survey designs. In total, three sets of surveys were launched.

In the first survey (I) two groups of respondents were presented each with the external efficacy battery above, EE3, and one of the two responsiveness batteries, PR3 and PR5. Each external efficacy item is here scaled with agree/disagree in line with today's question format in the Dutch NES and with the ANES until 1988. Both PR3 and PR5 are measured on an 11-point scale ranging from 'no extent at all' to 'full extent'. The experiment was launched in the *Citizen Panel* as part of the MOD project (Multidisciplinary Opinion and Democracy Research) administered by the University of Gothenburg.<sup>5</sup> The panel is a standing web-based, self-selected survey that is non-representative of the Swedish population. Respondents of the panel tend to be more educated, more interested in politics and more male in numbers, compared to the general Swedish population (Dahlberg et al., 2011). This entails that we cannot generalise from these data to the wider Swedish population. According to Yeager et al. (2011), however, the use of a non-probability sample is justifiable in such cases as ours when the primary goal is to reject the null-hypothesis, in this case that the two concepts cannot be separated. The panel survey is composed of a core questionnaire and a supplementary section. In the Spring 2012 wave, fielded between 26<sup>th</sup> March and 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2012, in total 11,359 people were approached; the response rate was 64.24 per cent. As part of the

supplementary section, respondents were randomly selected from the sample and randomly distributed across groups. Both groups have an initial size of 717 respondents.

In the second survey (II) the groups were presented each again with EE3 and one of the two responsiveness batteries PR3 and PR5. However, this time external efficacy items were measured on a 5-point agree/disagree scale in line with the amendments in the ANES in 1988. This variation was also included to remedy response scale effects. The responsiveness batteries were both again measured on a 10-point scale. In addition, a third group of respondents received already the tested PR3 battery but on a 5-point scale, also to alleviate response scale effects. The second study was part of a randomly selected subsample of the Swedish *Citizen Panel* which was fielded in the fall of 2012. This sample of randomly selected panel participants had an original recruitment rate of 20 percent. In the current panel wave, a total of 1,500 respondents were approached; the response rate among those contacted was about 70 percent. The first group (C) having answered to questions EE3 (5-point scale) and PR3 (10-point scale) yields a size of 921 respondents. The second group (D) who received EE3 (5-point scale) and PR5 (10-point scale) comprises a total of 969 respondents, while the third group (E) who answered the EE3 (5-point scale) and the PR3 (5-point scale) batteries includes 986 respondents in total.

And finally, a third survey (III) was launched whose aim was two-fold. For one, it is supposed to take further into account response scale effects by presenting each one of the groups with a different response scale of EE3, either the binary response alternatives or the 5-point scale. For another, it is designed to validate our results also in another context to see whether or not also citizens of another country, here the Netherlands, draw a distinction between responsiveness and external efficacy. Both groups were thus presented with the PR3 battery of questions on a 5-point scale<sup>6</sup>. The experiment was part of the European Social Survey Panel Component data. Respondents are selected from the Dutch population through address based probability sampling for the panel study<sup>7</sup>. The first group (F) yields a sample size of 291 whereas the second group (G) includes 311 respondents.

In total, there are seven groups of respondents as part of three different surveys. Each group or subsample tests whether respondents distinguish between the two concepts of responsiveness and external efficacy. Between groups we alter the wordings and response scales to secure that the distinction in citizen minds is due to the underlying difference in trait not in measurement. The different groups are summarised below in Table 2 with their appropriate survey, sampling method, sample size and batteries of questions.

Survey and context	Sampling method	Group	Sample size	Batteries of questions
I Citizen Panel (Sweden)	self-selected	A	717	PR3 (11-point) EE3 (binary)
		B	717	PR5 (11-point) EE3 (binary)
II Citizen Panel (Sweden)	randomly selected	C	921	PR3 (11-point) EE3 (5-point)
		D	969	PR5 (11-point) EE3 (5-point)

		E	986	PR3 (5-point) EE3 (5-point)
III ESS Panel Component (Netherlands)	randomly selected	F	291	PR3 (5-point) EE3 (binary)
		G	311	PR3 (5-point) EE3 (5-point)

**Table 2. Summary of survey setups.**

## Results

In order to test whether or not respondents draw a distinction between the two concepts of perceived responsiveness and external efficacy, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were performed on each of the groups. The expectation is that each of the models, irrespective of which precise operationalization of responsiveness or response scale was used, will return a good model fit. At the same time, the correlation between the two constructs is expected to be relatively high, given their kinship.

In our confirmatory factor analyses, we hypothesized a two-factor model. For the analyses we used listwise deletion method. To evaluate missing data patterns we used Little's MCAR test in SPSS 20.0, and in each of our samples data is proven to be missing completely at random. Groups A to E were analysed using the *lavaan* package (Rosell, 2013) in R, whereas the CFAs for F and G were estimated using MPlus. Further, for groups A and B robust diagonal weighted least square estimates are used. All other confirmatory factor analyses are based on Maximum Likelihood estimates with robust standard errors.

The results are summarised in Table 3. It depicts model fit indices and standardized coefficients for the latent constructs ordered by group. What can be seen from the model fit indices is that each of them performs as expected. CFIs and TLIs are all above 0.99, while the RMSEA values and their corresponding 90% confidence interval are below 0.005 and 0.008, respectively. Further, pClose values are all around or above 0.8. And finally, the covariances between constructs is relatively stable across groups, i.e. operationalizations and response scales. It ranges from 0.63 to 0.8 and thus indicates that perceived responsiveness and external efficacy are highly related constructs. Yet importantly, the findings also support the idea of an empirical distinction between the constructs.

Group	Model fit indices	Standardized coefficients
A	CFI: 1.00 TLI: 1.00 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.000 [0.000; 0.033] pClose: 0.994	PR3 (11-point) <-> EE3 (binary): 0.77
B	CFI: 0.99 TLI: 0.99 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.017 [0.000; 0.040] pClose: 0.995	PR5 (11-point) <-> EE3 (binary): 0.80
C	CFI: 0.99 TLI: 0.99 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.016 [0.000; 0.044] pClose: 0.983	PR3 (11-point) <-> EE3 (5-point): 0.75
D	CFI: 0.99 TLI: 0.99 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.030 [0.014; 0.045] pClose: 0.986	PR5 (11-point) <-> EE3 (5-point): 0.71



E	CFI: 0.99 TLI: 0.99 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.032 [0.007; 0.054] pClose: 0.904	PR3 (5-point) <-> EE3 (5-point): 0.69
F	CFI:1 TLI: 1 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.000 [0.000; 0.072] pClose: 0.802	PR3 (5-point) <-> EE3 (binary): 0.63
G	CFI:0.99 TLI: 0.99 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.024 [0.000; 0.077] pClose: 0.732	PR3 (5-point) <-> EE3 (5-point): 0.67

**Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analyses results.**

To substantiate these findings further, structural equation models were estimated that use a battery of trust questions as the dependent variable. As mentioned above, the literature has argued repetitively for a strong association with political trust. Both external efficacy and perceived responsiveness are thought to predict institutional trust. In line with previous research we therefore expect that each of the latent constructs can independently predict institutional trust.

The Swedish surveys included three trust items that were used for this purpose, all relating to institutional trust: trust in parliament, trust in politicians and trust in government. Each of these was measured on a 5-point scale. In comparison, in the Dutch survey similar items were available. Also here three items were used, yet government was substituted for political parties. All items were measured on an 11-point scale.

The models were again estimated using the *lavaan* package in *R* (groups A to E) and *MPlus* (groups F and G). For all groups estimates are obtained through Maximum Likelihood estimation with robust standard errors, except for group B for which a robust weighted diagonal least square estimator was used.

Table 4 below reports a summary of the results. They show that the model fit indices perform all well, according to common standards (cf. Schreiber et al., 2006). The only exception to this is group A, whose model did not converge. Similar problems were encountered with group E. It might be that the binary character of the EE3 battery provides too little information for the model to converge. Further analyses are needed to substantiate this hypothesis. So far, no control variables were used in any of the models. It might be that the introduction of controls will alleviate some of the problems encountered with the binary EE3 battery. Irrespective of this point, all other model fit indices perform as expected. In addition, standardized coefficients reported in the final column of Table 4 support the idea of an independent effect of each of the constructs. Across models, perceived responsiveness and external efficacy exert an independent effect on institutional trust. While the effect of responsiveness is continuously higher in the Swedish surveys, the Dutch survey results report the opposite. Here, external efficacy has a higher effect on trust, compared to responsiveness. This is a rather odd finding. Further analyses are required here to exclude effects resulting from the different software or slight differences in trust items used. Most importantly, however, the results of the structural equation modelling show that irrespective of operationalization or response scale, perceived responsiveness and external efficacy exert each an independent effect on institutional

trust. This adds further support to the idea that the theoretical distinction between the two constructs can also be found on the empirical level, and it should thus be made, as well.

Group	Model fit indices	Standardized coefficients
A	CFI: <i>no convergence</i> TLI: RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]:	PR3 (11-point) <-> EE3 (binary): PR3 -> trust: EE3 -> trust:
B	CFI: 0.99 TLI: 0.98 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.033 [0.019; 0.046] pClose: 0.99	PR5 (11-point) <-> EE3 (binary): 0.806 PR5 -> trust: 0.522 EE3 -> trust: 0.288
C	CFI: 0.99 TLI: 0.99 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.028 [0.013; 0.041] pClose: 0.997	PR3 (11-point) <-> EE3 (5-point): 0.739 PR3 -> trust: 0.465 EE3 -> trust: 0.371
D	CFI: 0.99 TLI: 0.98 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.040 [0.031; 0.050] pClose: 0.958	PR5 (11-point) <-> EE3 (5-point): 0.708 PR5 -> trust: 0.495 EE3 -> trust: 0.326
E	CFI: 0.99 TLI: 0.99 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.036 [0.024; 0.048] pClose: 0.971	PR3 (5-point) <-> EE3 (5-point): 0.679 PR3 -> trust: 0.486 EE3 -> trust: 0.372
F	CFI: 0.99 TLI: 0.99 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.020 [0.000; 0.056] pClose: 0.860	PR3 (5-point) <-> EE3 (binary): 0.64 PR3 -> trust: 0.32 EE3 -> trust: 0.48
G	CFI: 0.99 TLI: 0.98 RMSEA [90% confidence intervals]: 0.034 [0.000; 0.063] pClose: 0.795	PR3 (5-point) <-> EE3 (5-point): 0.67 PR3 -> trust: 0.20 EE3 -> trust: 0.51

**Table 4. Structural Equation Model results.**

## Summary and conclusions

This paper set out to examine critically the standard approach to measure perceived government responsiveness. It argued that there is theoretical reason to differentiate between ‘perceived responsiveness’ and ‘external efficacy’, which should also be visible in the empirical world. When perceived responsiveness is anchored in recent theories of political representation rather than in the idea of political efficacy, we observe a difference in meaning between the two concepts. Specifically, we argued that perceived responsiveness captures cognitive beliefs about representative processes – how elected representatives and institutions act to accommodate the wishes and views of citizens – whereas external efficacy focuses on highly generalized and affectively charged beliefs about the outcome of these processes. To capture these differences empirically, we developed new indicators of perceived responsiveness and contrasted those with standard external efficacy items. First survey results obtained through confirmatory factor analyses and structural equation models in two national contexts (the Netherlands and Sweden), support the idea of two-dimensionality. Perceived responsiveness and external efficacy are not only theoretically distinct concepts but also empirically distinguishable constructs. What is more, they each yield an independent effect on political trust.

In the future, several steps need to be taken to substantiate these findings further. Firstly, so far the models were estimated using different software for each of the national contexts. In order to exclude

possible effects occurring from the differences between R and MPlus, next all models need to be estimated with the same software. Secondly, so far no control variables are included in any of the models. One of the next steps is to control for important confounds. It might also be that the failure of model convergence in the case of the binary measure of external efficacy is connected to this point. Thirdly and relatedly, the results of the structural equation modelling indicate that perceived responsiveness is consistently a stronger predictor of trust in the Swedish context, compared to external efficacy. In contrast, the results obtained from the Netherlands show the opposite effect. Further analyses are required here as well. And finally, slightly different trust items were used in each of the national context. The next step also requires excluding potential effects this might have had on the results.

Despite these constraints, the initial results of this paper show that citizens in Sweden and the Netherlands draw the anticipated distinction between perceived responsiveness and external efficacy. While many existing studies use the two concepts synonymously, this choice can be criticised theoretically and empirically. With this finding we contribute to the existing methodological literature on political support beliefs. We maintain that research on perceived responsiveness should make more considered decisions about concepts and indicators, and that a long-term goal for research in the field is to include new survey indicators in high-quality data sources.

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<sup>1</sup> For empirical confirmations of the internal-external distinction, see for example Converse 1972; Balch 1974; Clarke & Acock 1989; Acock & Clarke 1990).

<sup>2</sup> The scholarly debate over measurements has focused instead on which exact indicators that tap internal and external efficacy (e.g. Niemi, Craig & Mattei 1991; Morell 2003), and how to differentiate between external efficacy and various dimensions of political trust (e.g. Craig, Niemi & Silver 1990; Niemi, Craig & Mattei 1991).

<sup>3</sup> The American National Election Study (ANES) offers a two item "government responsiveness index," which dates back to 1964. The items are worded as follows: "Over the years, how much attention do you feel the government pays to what the people think when it decides what to do?"; "And how much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think?" However, these items are seldom repeated in other national contexts, they are less frequently used in empirical research, and they are closely correlated with external efficacy items. For instance, Niemi, Craig and Mattei (1991:1407-10 ) chooses without further discussion to group the two items with their measures of external efficacy (see also Morrell 2003: 596).

<sup>4</sup> Some definitions refer explicitly to policy adaption from below: External efficacy 'is the individual's feeling that he or she is [un]able to influence government decisions' (Denters and Geurts, 1993: 447).

<sup>5</sup> For more information, please visit: [http://www.mod.gu.se/english/data/data/Citizen\\_Panel/](http://www.mod.gu.se/english/data/data/Citizen_Panel/)

<sup>6</sup> Note that instead of phrasing R1 as a set of questions it was here phrased as a set of statements, mirroring the external efficacy format.

<sup>7</sup> The experiments utilized in the current study are conducted in the fourth wave of the ESS Panel Component. The average response rate for the four-wave panel study is recorded as .72.