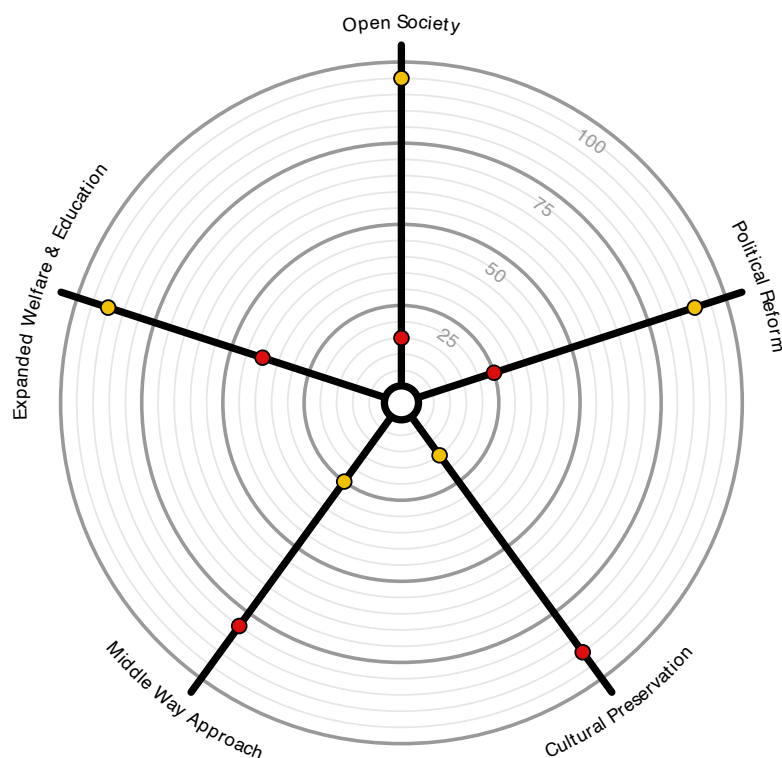# Methodology for the smartspider

November 23, 2020

Calculation and interpretation

In addition to calculating the positional matching of users with the candidates running in the 2021 Sikyong and 17th Tibetan parliamentary elections, the *smartvote Tibet* website provides a graphical analysis in order to compare the political positions of users and candidates.

Figure 1: Example of a smartspider for a candidate (yellow) and a voter (red)

The smartspider expresses the intensity of the candidates' and/or users' attitudes and political positions on thematic axes. For each axis, a score of between 0 and 100 points can be achieved. 100 points means a strong endorsement to the political goal represented by the axis, while 0 points represent strong rejection of it.

Before explaining the calculation of the smartspider in detail, the following points need to be taken into consideration:

- A smartspider can be analysed separately for either a candidate or a user. It provides a summary of the positions taken on questions assigned to the five thematic axes (for the assignment of questions see the document "Question assignment smartspider" in the methodology section on the *smartvote Tibet* website). When consulting a smartspider that compares the responses of a user with those of a candidate, one can check the overlap between the two on those different axes. This information is clearly distinct from the matching score shown on the results page as a ranking, which is calculated based on the total number of questions that a user responded to.

- More precisely, some questions of *smartvote Tibet* cannot be assigned to any of the five axes defined here. These questions are therefore not included in this graphical representation. Thus, the smartspider should be considered as a partial, autonomous and simpler visualisation of the user's result, which provides additional information on candidate's positions.

The axes of *smartvote Tibet*'s smartspider

The smartspider aims to visualize, at a glance, positions on relevant policy areas in the Tibetan political landscape. We chose to represent the Tibetan landscape with five axes, each axis or dimension focuses on one of the five major political issues in Tibet at this time.

1. **The "Open Society" dimension** refers to social aspects and different topics concerning the Tibetan society. It represents the goal of social liberals who typically have progressive values and seek to improve society through change stressing both individual freedom and social equality (e.g. gender or racial equality). In contrast, social conservatives find security in traditions and values of the past.

2. **The "Political Reform" dimension** refers to the goal of implementing political reform in order to address various concerns regarding liberal democratic standards. The opposite end of the dimension represents the endorsement of the current Tibetan political system i.e. the status-quo.

3. **The "Cultural Preservation"** dimension refers to the goal of safeguarding and keeping the Tibetan culture alive, in particular under the current circumstances of being in exile. Tibetan culture thereby is closely connected to Tibetan Buddhism, language and traditions. Often, they also promote the application of religious mores to politics. The opposite end of the dimension represents liberal views on the importance of Tibetan culture and the believe that society should not impose any specific code of behaviour.

4. **The "Middle Way Approach"** dimension refers to the Tibetan freedom struggle and how to achieve a long-term solution for Tibet (i.e. positive change within Tibet). It represents the support of the current policies of the CTA (e.g. Middle-Way Approach "Umaylam"). The opposite end of the dimension represents the belief that the CTA needs to have new ideas in terms of the upcoming challenges within the next years and favours a more confrontational approach instead of cooperation (e.g. Tibetan independence "Rangzen").

5. **The "Expanded Welfare & Education"** dimension refers to the belief that equality and justice should be guiding principles emphasizing that the CTA has a responsibility to provide certain services to Tibetan citizens, especially those in greatest need. This often includes greater investment in areas such as education, health, disability and unemployment.

Calculation of the smartspider

The full list of questions and the direction in which answers affect one's position on the axis is provided in the document "Question assignment smartspider" in the methodology section of the smartvote Tibet website (www.smartvote-tibet.org).

The calculation of the positions in the smartspider is based on the answers to the questions in the *smartvote Tibet* for the 2021 Sikyong and 17th Tibetan parliamentary elections questionnaire. The "agreement" with the goal stated in the name of the axis is calculated by summing the answer values for each question included in the relevant axis. This is done for the five axes of the smartspider respectively. The values of the answers are classified as follows (see Table 1):

Table 1: Numerical values of answer options

Standard questions	
Answer	**Value**
"Yes"	100
"Rather yes"	75
"Rather no"	25
"No"	0

There may be questions that must be answered in the negative ("no" answers) in order to be consistent with the goal formulated on the smartspider axis. The answer values to these questions are reversed, that is, they will receive the following values (see Table 2):

Table 2: Numerical values of answer options (reversed)

Standard questions	
Answer	**Value**
"Yes"	0
"Rather yes"	25
"Rather no"	75
"No"	100

The candidate's or user's total agreement with the goal of each axis is calculated by adding together their answer values for all assigned questions of a specific axis.

Then the maximum possible agreement for each axis is calculated by multiplying the number of questions assigned to each axis by the maximum possible score per question (i.e. 100 points). For example, if there are six questions are assigned to one axis, the maximum possible agreement score for that axis is 600 points (6 * 100 points).

In a final step, the total agreement achieved by the candidate or user is divided by the maximum possible agreement for the axis. The result is reported as the position (expressed as a percentage) on the smartspider axis.