Methodology for the Voting Advice / Matching

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Introduction

smartvote Tibet is a so-called Voting Advice Application (VAA) that enables voters to compare their own policy preferences with those of candidates running in the upcoming Tibetan exile elections. Based on a comprehensive questionnaire, users receive a personalized ranking of candidates according to the degree of congruence between their responses and those of the candidates.

Questionnaire

The smartvote Tibet questionnaire consists of 34 questions covering a wide range of policy areas. It was developed by *Project Democracy*, an association of Tibetans from diverse professional backgrounds, through an inclusive and participatory process. The editorial process was carried out with the scientific support of Politools, the organization that has operated smartvote Switzerland since 2003, and under the guidance of an advisory board.

The questions are primarily focused on specific policy issues, with a few that relate to broader ideological positions. One key goal of *smartvote Tibet* is to encourage issue-based debate and decision-making among voters. Since some topics may not be widely familiar, each question is accompanied by a short explanatory text that provides background information as well as pro and con arguments. Candidates are invited to add comments to their answers to offer additional nuance or clarification.

All candidates running in the upcoming Tibetan elections have been invited to participate in the tool. In order to be present on *smartvote Tibet*, candidates must answer all questions. Voters, on the other hand, may choose to skip certain questions. Skipped questions are excluded from the matching calculation with candidates. However, it is essential to note that the more questions voters answer, the more accurate their matching results will be.

The table below summarizes the available answer options for candidates and voters, as well as the numerical values assigned to these options:

Table 1: Answer options and their numerical values

Question/Answer options	Candidates	Voters
Standard questions		
"Yes"	100	100
"Rather yes"	75	75
"Rather no"	25	25
"No"	0	0
"No answer"		X

Calculating the matching result

To calculate the congruence between a voter and a candidate running for the upcoming Tibetan elections, *smartvote Tibet* uses the Euclidean distance (geometric distance in a multidimensional space) as a measure.

In a first step, the total distance between a voter and candidate is calculated taking into account all questions answered by the voter:

$$Dist(v,c) = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (v_i - c_i)^2}$$

Dist(v,c): Total distance between a voter (*v*) and a candidate (*c*) over *i* questions.
v_i: Voter's answer on question *i*.
c_i: Candidate's answer on question *i*.

In a second step, we calculate the (theoretically possible) maximum distance between the voter and the candidate as the sum of 100 per question over all questions answered by the voter.

$$MaxDist = \sum_{i=1}^{n} (100)$$

MaxDist: Maximum distance between a voter (*v*) and a candidate (*c*) over *n* questions.

Finally, we subtract the total distance normalized by the maximum distance from 1 in order to receive a congruence measure instead of a distance measure. This measure is multiplied by 100 and presented as a matching in percentage.

$$Matching(v,c) = 100*(1 - (\frac{Dist(v,c)}{MaxDist}))$$

It is important to note that this value represents a measure of geometric correspondence. This value cannot therefore be considered as the proportion of the questionnaire proposals to which the users responded in the same way as the candidates. Thus, a 70% match between two profiles does not mean that a candidate has answered 70% of the questions in the same way as a user.

smartvote International fulfills the transparency and quality criteria of the "Lausanne Declaration on Online Electoral Assistance".

For more information on the methodology, please contact:
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