Global Public Opinions Project codebook

Please refer to the codebook as follows:

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Abstract

The Global Public Opinions Project (GPOP) introduces a unique and multi-dimensional interpretation of the concept of public opinion. While it is possible to interpret public opinion as a singular analytical construct, the project proposes a more nuanced and disentangled interpretation of public opinion. This allows for the analysis of its different dimensions, forms and expressions, both across countries and through time.

The project collects in-depth public opinion data concerning a wide variety of salient and important topics. This ranges from the economy to immigration in Europe and corruption in Latin America, as well as different forms of political trust and political satisfaction/approval. In doing so, GPOP creates a truly global and universal collection of comparative public opinion data that comprises survey responses from cross-national and national level investigations and covers extensive cross-sectional and longitudinal ground. This document serves as the primary codebook for the comparative data sets the project will produce.

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Foreword

Column 1: id

The unique project id number

Column 2: Our variable name

The project's unique variable name is used to connect identical questions across surveys and between years. This column will only have a value if a specific item is repeated at least once (so present at least twice) throughout the country's ensemble of included survey questions. The absence of a proper variable name for the purposes of the project can mean this item either is not repeated (at least twice) across waves or surveys. Typically, the items without a clear match throughout the data set are indicated with an 'x' in this column.

In the context of this project, the notion of "identical" is interpreted in a rather restricted sense, meaning those questions or items that are not only the same in meaning, but also in their precise formulation and the answer categories they present. On occasion, exceptions to this rule are made, particularly when common references are changes in line with the political or societal debate, but the content of a term does not. For example, when the name of a government assistance scheme changes or when the politically salient term for "immigrant" changes, the project chooses to advance continuity in lieu of uniqueness.

While we identify all questions that are repeated at least once, most of the project's larger-scale analyses will rely on series of at least three items (so at least two repetitions). For more detailed information on this, please consult the project's accompanying documents and the website (www.gpop.eu).

Column 3: Country

The country to which the survey item applies. The project only provides country-specific data files, so typically the value for this column remains constant. The project also provides a more limited number of sub-national data sets, for which this column specifies the region, rather than the country.

Column 4: Survey

The acronym of the survey from which the item was taken. This serves as a primary identifier of the data source from which a specific item has been taken.

Column 5: Data collector

This refers to the entity that has been tasked with fielding the survey and collecting the data. This is typically a survey company or (polling) institute.

Column 6: Start date

The first day the survey was fielded. The first day the data collector started collecting the data. When the day of the month is unknown, the project uses the 1st of the month as a standard. When the month is unknown, the project uses January as a standard. If the year is unknown, the project uses the same year as column H "year".

The date should be entered in the following format MM/DD/YY.

Column 7: End date

The last day the survey was fielded. The last day the data collector started collecting the data. When the day of the month is unknown, the project uses the 30th or 31st of the month as the standard. When the month is unknown, the project uses December as the standard. If the year is unknown, the project uses the same year as column H "year".

The date should be entered in the following format MM/DD/YY.

Column 8: Year

The year of the original survey, as assigned by this project. This does not necessarily equal the official year of the original survey. For example, the

different waves of the World Values Survey are assigned a time bracket (1990-1995) and the different European Social Survey rounds have a harmonised year (2002, 2004, etc.). In both cases, a specific country's data collection period can vary from the harmonised and official time associated with a particular wave or round.

If the begin- and end-dates of the data collection fall in a different civil year, this project uses the year of the end date in this column. For example, if field work started in October 1990 and ended in March 1991, the year of the survey (i.e. column H) will be 1991.

Column 9: Positive (right)

The individual responses to each item are recoded into survey marginals, or what we could refer to as (weighted) aggregated summary scores of the response categories. Furthermore, for the purpose of this project, we do not look at all answer categories separately. Rather, we recode the number of available answer categories into two broad categories, namely what we could conceptualise as positive and negative, located around a neutral middle-category. This latter category remains hypothetical in case a survey item does not provide such answer category to respondents.

This column represents the positive marginals, i.e. the percentage of respondents that provided an answer located to the right of the (potential) middle-category, and this after weighting the data. This excludes those respondents without an opinion (see column 13 "don't know/non-responsive") and those with neutral opinions (see column 12 "Neutral").

While 'positive' - by itself - is rather arbitrary, the intrinsic meaning of 'positive' and what positions this specifically entails for each question is always determined by the definition of the overarching category within which a specific survey item falls. For more detailed information on the overarching categories, the project refers to the topic codes discussed in column X "question topic code". In addition to a general theoretical description, the project also provides a brief conceptualisation of the different poles within each overarching category.

Each overarching category can be considered an axis with two extremes (a negative and a positive) and a potential zero-point. This column represents the weighted percentage of respondents one can find above this (hypothetical) zero-point, i.e. in the upper half of the response categories. Alternatively, using a different analogy, it is possible to interpret each overarching theo-

retical concept as having a certain range, going from a pre-defined left (e.g. 0) to a pre-defined right (e.g. 100), with a potential neutral category. This column represents the weighted percentage of respondents one could find on the right of this (hypothetical) middle-category, i.e. in the upper half of the response categories.

In most cases, for the different dimensions of public opinion this project proposes, the positive marginals correspond to what most scholars would refer to as 'right-wing' positions.

Column 10: Negative (left)

The individual responses to each item are recoded into survey marginals, or what we could refer to as (weighted) aggregated summary scores of the response categories. Furthermore, for the purpose of this project, we do not look at all answer categories separately. Rather, we recode the number of available answer categories into two broad categories, namely what we could conceptualise as positive and negative, located around a neutral middle-category. This latter category remains hypothetical in case a survey item does not provide such answer category to respondents.

This column represents the negative marginals, i.e. the percentage of respondents that provided an answer located to the right of the (potential) middle-category, and this after weighting the data. This excludes those respondents without an opinion (see column 13 "don't know/non-responsive") and those with neutral opinions (see column 12 "Neutral").

While 'negative' - by itself - is rather arbitrary, the intrinsic meaning of 'negative' and what positions this specifically entails for each question is always determined by the definition of the overarching category within which a specific survey item falls. For more detailed information on the overarching categories, the project refers to the topic codes discussed in column X "question topic code". In addition to a general theoretical definition, the project also provides a brief conceptualisation of the different poles within each overarching category.

Each overarching category can be considered an axis with two extremes (a negative and a positive) and a potential zero-point. This column represents the weighted percentage of respondents one can find below this (hypothetical) zero-point, i.e. in the lower half of the response categories. Alternatively, using a different analogy, it is possible to interpret each overarching theoretical concept as having a certain range, going from a pre-defined left (e.g. 0)

to a pre-defined right (e.g. 100), with a potential neutral category. This column represents the weighted percentage of respondents one could find on the left of this (hypothetical) middle-category, i.e. in the lower half of the response categories.

In most cases, for the different dimensions of public opinion this project proposes, the negative marginals correspond to what most scholars would refer to as 'left-wing' positions.

Column 11: Neutral/dk

The individual responses to each item are recoded into survey marginals, or what we could refer to as (weighted) aggregated summary scores of the response categories. Furthermore, for the purpose of this project, we do not look at all answer categories separately. Rather, we recode the number of available answer categories into two broad categories, namely what we could conceptualise as positive and negative, located around a neutral middle-category. This latter category remains hypothetical in case a survey item does not provide such answer category to respondents.

This column represents the total weighted proportion of respondents with a neutral opinion and those without a clear opinion. This corresponds to the sum of column 13 ("don't know/non-responsive") and column 12 ("Neutral").

Column 12: Neutral

The individual responses to each item are recoded into survey marginals, or what we could refer to as (weighted) aggregated summary scores of the response categories. Furthermore, for the purpose of this project, we do not look at all answer categories separately. Rather, we recode the number of available answer categories into two broad categories, namely what we could conceptualise as positive and negative, located around a neutral middle-category. This latter category remains hypothetical in case a survey item does not provide such answer category to respondents.

This column represents the percentage of respondents who provided a neutral opinion to the particular survey item. In case no answer category reflects a neutral response to the question, this column is coded as zero per cent.

Column 13: dk/nr

The individual responses to each item are recoded into survey marginals, or what we could refer to as (weighted) aggregated summary scores of the response categories. Furthermore, for the purpose of this project, we do not look at all answer categories separately. Rather, we recode the number of available answer categories into two broad categories, namely what we could conceptualise as positive and negative, located around a neutral middle-category. This latter category remains hypothetical in case a survey item does not provide such answer category to respondents.

This column represents the percentage of respondents without a clear opinion. Typically, this corresponds to those respondents who provided a "don't know" answer or refused to respond to the particular survey item. This category does not include respondents who are part of the larger survey, but were not asked a particular survey question.

Column 14: Total

This is a control column. It corresponds to the sum of columns 9 (positive marginals), 10 (negative marginals) and 11 (sum of neutral and dk). Throughout this project, marginals are scaled as percentages, so this column should consistently be 100.00%. Due to rounding errors, however, this can vary between 99.99% and 100.01%.

Column 15: Index

This is the crucial value for the calculation of the public opinion measures and lies at the foundation of further calculations. It weights the left-wing summary score according to the sum of the left- and right-wing summary scores. Concretely, this corresponds to the negative marginals (column 9) divided by the sum of the positive and negative marginals (columns 9 and 10). It is then multiplied by 100 to generate a percentage. Respondents with a neutral position or without a clear position are not taken into account for this index.

The index thus represents the percentage of left-wing opinions. In formula form, this can be portrayed as:

$$Index = 100 * \frac{left - wing\ opinions}{left - wing\ opinions + right - wing\ opinions}$$

Column 16 Sample size

This corresponds to the number of respondents that are asked a specific survey item. If respondents are not asked a certain survey question, they also do not count towards the sample size. Even though the sample size is typically the same within the same survey, it can be different for different items within the same survey.

An important remark has to made regarding what surveys code as 'missing values'. It is crucial to determine for each survey item whether its "missing values" actually correspond to respondents who are not asked a certain question. If missing values are the result of a question that is not asked to a certain segment of respondents, they do not count towards the sample size or the dk/nr answer categories (Column 13). If they have a different origin and the question is asked to all respondents, we typically include the missing values in the sample size and the dk/nr answer categories (Column 13).

If the percentage of missing values appears excessive (e.g. > 10%), this is worth signalling. As part of the project's rigorous data controls, further steps are taken to analyse such apparent inconsistencies.

Column 17: Sample Note

Any and all notes, comments, questions, observations, etc. can be listed in this column.

Column 18: Weight variable

The name of the weight variable in the data file (not in the questionnaire) we use to generate the project's marginals. We use weights because common modern-day sampling problems, like non-response or self-selection, have the potential to bias the survey data. By mathematically accounting for such bias, this project corrects for this lack of or challenges to representativeness.

Most commonly, this project relies on post-stratification weights. This type of weight compensates for the fact that persons with certain characteristics are not as likely to respond to surveys. This type of weight is not always available. In absence of a proper post-stratification weight, this project relies on alternative weight variables to render its summary statistics representative. A design weight is most common in these instances, and is typically used to compensate for over- or under-sampling of specific cases or for disproportionate stratification.

Only in very rare cases does the project propose marginals without accounting for a weight variable. This can have two reasons. First, it is possible a data set does not contain weight variables. This does not occur often, but is more common in countries with limited survey traditions or for data sets with origins before the 1980s. In the overwhelming majority of cases, such data sets do not become part of the project. If the rare cases they do (e.g. to guarantee data continuity), a note is made in column Q any all output containing that data set is amended by a footnote indicating this shortcoming.

Second, it is also possible a sample is part of a high-quality survey that is already representative (for example in Switzerland and Norway). Here, the calculation of the marginals does not necessarily require a weight. In this case, we identify this column with an 'n/a' label.

Column 19: Original variable name

This column includes the reference name of the survey item in its original data file. This is typically different from the question name or number that can be found in the questionnaire. This latter data is not included for the purposes of this project.

Column 20: Answer categories

This column includes a numeric entry that refers to the number of answer categories the variable of interest has in the original data file. The number does not include "don't know", "non-response" or certain missing categories.

Column 21: Answer category labels

This column gives a descriptive account of the labels of the answer categories as they appear in the questionnaire. This column only refers to the labels of answer categories that are not numerical in the original questionnaire.

Column 22: Survey mode

The survey mode refers to the method of surveying (face-to-face, telephone, online, etc.). It is possible multiple modes are used. In that case, this column contains multiple entries.

Column 23: Response rate

This is a survey-level variable and refers to the percentage of respondents that actually participated in the full survey, divided by the number of individuals that were asked to participate in the survey.

Column 24: Question topic code

This category refers to the classification scheme this project uses to examine public opinions. While the project examines public opinion as a whole, it does not restrict its conceptualisation of public opinion to that of a one-dimensional construct. Instead, it conceives public opinion as a multi-dimensional composition that constitutes separate analytical components that can either be examined separately or be aggregated to study public opinion as an overarching conception.

This classification scheme can serve as an analytical tool that allows for the investigation of the different public opinions that might prevail. In other words, the classification scheme provides a pre-defined set of dimensions that can serve both a theoretical and empirical purpose. At the same time, while this disaggregation might be particularly useful when examining a complex phenomenon like public opinion, by no means should this classification scheme be considered fixed or definitive. Even more, there certainly exists potential overlap between categories, particularly alongside the economic dimension. This is something worth exploring.

As a general rationale within each of the separate dimensions, the project typically codes 'negative' marginals as left-wing positions in either an economic (state intervention/socialism/equality) or a cultural sense (social progressivism), and 'positive' marginals as right-wing positions in either an economic (no state intervention/liberal/freedom) or a cultural sense (social conservatism). More details regarding the different ends of each individual dimension are provided in the outline below.

1 ECONOMIC DIMENSION

110 Trade unions and industrial relations

The involvement of trade unions has historically been seen as a political statement or issue. This can serve as a close proxy as to how industrial relations should operate and be defined. The role trade unions play, or at least the desirability of their intervention, throughout economic and industrial relations is indicative of how respondents view the organisation of the socio-economic space and where they are subsequently located in the political space.

Positions and preferences coded as left propose a substantial, if not essential, role for trade unions. Not only are they able to positively contribute to business and industrial relations, but their contribution and effect is also a necessary one, particularly as it pertains to the protection of workers, their rights and their remuneration. At heart, regardless of a trade union's potential political affiliation, their primary concern is the worker and this is primordial. On a larger scale, left-wing positions regarding this issue also see a sizeable role for trade unions as political actors steering or at least influencing politics and policy.

Positions and preferences coded as right hold that trade unions should play a much more limited, if not absentee, role in business relations. They are not an actor when it comes to industrial relations. Furthermore, often times they are even perceived as detrimental to successful and efficient business undertakings. Therefore, the independence of industry and trade unions is crucial. Much in line with this, the role of trade unions in politics should also be limited, if not non-existent. At times their involvement can even be seen as detrimental and undesirable.

120 Welfare state and social benefits

In this context, the welfare state refers to a general intention or conception of government in which the state is a crucial actor in the protection and promotion of the social and economic well-being of its citizens. While the welfare state is different across countries in its conception and implementation, it is generally based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth (income), and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life. Typically, this is done by means of a social security system and the tangible social benefits it provides.

Opinions coded as left regarding the welfare state favour a more proactive state that provides financial and social support for its citizens – particularly for those with limited resources and abilities. At the same time, such left-wing welfare preferences also advocate in favour of a more sizeable welfare state, often by means of a comprehensive social security system. Such a proactive and sizeable welfare state typically involves financial transfers from the state to publicly provided services (e.g. education and health care) and individuals directly (e.g. unemployment benefits).

Opinions coded as right interpret the welfare state much more minimalistic in its conception. These positions typically promote a limited or no state provisions when it comes to the welfare and support of its citizens. This also means the size of the social security system remains restricted and the provided services are basic or reduced to a minimum. The emphasis of these positions is more on individual provisions and less on state-provided or public welfare.

The conception of the welfare state is closely related to a country's taxation schemes and the potential redistributive efforts that come with this. However, for topics related to taxation and redistribution, we refer to category 160.

130 Public vs private ownership

This category relates to the socio-political sectors that can play a role throughout any sort of large-scale market endeavours affecting public interest. Most commonly, this refers to the ownership of sizeable corporations or services that have some sort of effect on the well-being of the public. This typically opposes two positions with one another, namely private and public ownership. Overall, this closely relates to concepts such as privatisation (nationalisation)

and the potential contracting out of government services.

A position coded as left holds that government should play an important role when it comes to protecting or even advancing public interest. Directly applied to ownership, this indicates public ownership would be better at achieving such goals. Considering public enterprises would be free of any kind of corporate pressures (reports, profitability, etc.), this would allow these companies to better focus on long-term goals and quality. Therefore, public ownership would be the most desirable of the two, because it allows for a more efficient and desirable advancement of public interests and goods. Supporters of such positions typically favour at least some degree of nationalisation and are against private sector contracting for public sector services.

A position coded as right typically finds a comprehensive government apparatus rather undesirable. Therefore, when it comes to protecting and advancing public interests, privately owned enterprises are more apt and efficient in doing so than public companies. It is exaclty because of corporate qualities, like industry competition, operational accountability and necessary efficiency, that privately owned services perform better than public ones, and therefore are better at achieving goals and advancing marginal profits in terms of public interest and benefits. Supporters of such positions therefore favour privatisation and private sector contracting.

While this category could also include social security and welfare (benefits) as the most obvious interpretation of public interest, this is something specifically included in the previous category (120).

140 Public spending

Preferences for public spending levels and changes are some of the core components of public opinion. Extant literature often interprets spending preferences as a key indicator, if not the closest to concept, of public opinion. This category includes any and all spending questions, general and program-specific, that provide some indication about where respondents want to see spending. Classic spending items ask about how respondents would like to see certain forms of spending evolve compared to current levels; however, this category comprises any and all items that relate to public spending. Most of the items in this category refer to economically salient spending categories like social benefits, welfare and social assistance.

In line with the overall conception of how government should be, preferences coded as left typically favour more government spending. This is

typically considered a part of wider efforts to redistribute wealth and provide citizens with welfare or opportunities. In line with previously discussed positions, this would be in line with a more proactive and sizeable government apparatus.

Preferences coded as right regarding the extent or amount of government spending are those that prefer limited government spending, preferring individuals, enterprises, and markets to determine how money and wealth flows through an economy. They would naturally favour reductions in spending, and be highly resistant to increasing government spending – particularly in areas of welfare. This is in line with previously discussed positions of small government, both in terms of impact and size.

For theoretical reasons, this category does not include defence spending, and this is considered to be a category by itself (see category 150).

150 Defence spending

Extant public opinion research indicates defence spending is quite distinct compared to the more general public spending. From a theoretical perspective, defence spending is unique in its underlying rationale and should be distinguished from more welfare-oriented spending because it typically does not relate to domestic spending. From a more empirical perspective, most extant research finds that the relationship between defence spending and policy is opposite to that between general public spending and policy. Therefore, given the importance and specificity of defence spending, the project proposes to separately code any and all items regarding the levels and direction of defence spending.

While empirical research predicts an opposite relationship with policy, the directionality of the coding scheme for this category remains the same as the scheme for category 140 "Public spending". For the purpose of this project, more defence spending is coded as left (negative) and less spending is coded as right (positive). This appears counter-intuitive; however, the project prefers continuity with the previous category.

160 Redistribution and taxes

The redistribution of income and wealth refers to the transfer of means from one group to another. This transfer typically goes from a group with relative means towards a group with more modest means and occurs through

taxation or monetary and fiscal policies. The underlying rationale of this socio-economic mechanism is the desire or desirability of in/equality. More specifically, this category opposes two interpretations of inequality, namely of means and of opportunity. It also includes the extent to which socio-economic contributions assist in achieving these goals.

An opinion regarding redistribution coded as left favours income (wealth) transfers (contributions) from more fortunate groups to less fortunate ones. In this process, the government plays an important role. Such socio-economic positions typically also coincide with preferences for redistributional or progressive taxation (increasingly higher taxes for higher incomes). They also set out to reduce the income or wealth gap (at least partially), which in turn will reduce poverty. Overall, socio-economic equality in means serves as a guiding principle.

An opinion coded regarding redistribution as right supposes that income and wealth would largely (or wholly) remain property of its original owners. Such positions would advocate that governments intervene to a much lesser extent when it comes to social or economic inequality. Such economic positions also include preferences for lower or less progressive tax schemes (contributions) and the continuation of certain social and economic differences. They might even see this latter as stimulating. Rather than equality in means, right-wing opinions favour equality in opportunities.

While it is also possible to interpret state provisions of social benefits and welfare as examples of specific social mechanisms that redistribute resources towards those who in less favourable positions, we classify such items as 120 (Welfare state and social benefits).

170 Inflation and unemployment

Based on the fundamental economic principles of supply and demand, inflation and unemployment are historically considered opposites in terms of economic intervention. This is typically illustrated by the Phillips curve, which plots unemployment rates against inflation rates and returns an inverse non-linear relationship between the two concepts (at least in the short-term). Economic interventions, and thus policies and economic preferences, therefore typically favour one of the two poles. In this category, we include items that specifically oppose indicators of these two concepts against one another.

This project defines positions coded as left alongside this dimension as

those who favour policies that combat unemployment over inflation-reducing policies. Such opinions argue that unemployment is the primary challenge of the economy. Particularly in times of economic downturn, these positions argue that the primary route to economic improvement is to promote employment.

This project defines positions coded as right alongside this dimension as those who favour policies that combat inflation over unemployment policies. Such opinions argue that the primary challenge to the economy are the increasing prices and the fall in the purchasing value of money. In times of economic challenges (e.g. recession or depression), the principal concern is the monetary value of the economy and the proposed solution is typically a reduction of the inflation rate.

180 Government intervention

This category describes the role and the degree of government involvement throughout economic and business functioning. In its purest and most extreme form, this dimension would range from no government intervention (or free-market economy) to full governmental penetration of economic life (or planned economy). In more pragmatic terms, this category refers to what is desirable in terms of how government behaves. To a large extent, this particular dimension also touches upon - at least the economic translation of - the equality versus freedom debate.

In line with earlier categories, positions coded as left typically favour more government intervention and presence. Central control and market intervention are desirable. One of the guiding principles of this line of reasoning is equality. Rather than economic freedom, these positions favour equitable distributions of means and opportunities and general economic equality. Government interventions, typically economic in nature, go beyond the government function described by laissez-faire economists because they correct market failures and alleviate levels of welfare. This corresponds to a more sizeable government apparatus that also becomes more involved and engaged in day-to-day economic intervention.

Positions coded as right are more in line with laissez-faire economics. They argue there should be little to no government interference regarding economic activity, with the state only intervening to protect property rights, uphold the rule of law and maintain the value of the currency. The individual desire to do and become better, strong and free competition, and limited taxation form the foundation of a strong economy. Freedom is the guiding

principle. Market forces are best suited to attribute scarce resources and set prices. This corresponds to a limited sized government and a more reduced role in day-to-day economic intervention.

2 CULTURAL DIMENSION

21 Immigration

Ever since the 1980s, immigration is one of the most salient socio-political issues. It is a visible political topic that maintains its political relevance through time and space. Immigration in itself is a comprehensive concept, and this project seeks to capture a number of relevant components of this concept as part of this category.

Opinions and preferences towards immigration coded as left are those that would be against restricting immigration and favour more open borders. At the same time, this includes a certain cultural freedom for immigrants, meaning they are not forced to adopt local traditions and can maintain their own identities. Such positions also assert that immigrants – including any and all sub-groups – have a positive impact on their own lives and the economic and cultural circumstances of their country. This typically also includes equal right for any minority groups, including citizenship rights and access to social welfare.

Opinions and preferences towards immigration coded as right favour reductions in the number of immigrants coming into the country and a more restricted border policy. Proper integration requires immigrants to fully adopt local culture in all its aspects and take on the customs and traditions of the country. Such positions would generally perceive the impact of immigration (on their own lives, on their country's economy and society, and so on) to be more negative. Therefore, strict requirements for immigrants should be in place, particularly to obtain the nationality and welfare state benefits.

Because the simple notion of immigration can be so comprehensive, the project further splits this category into different components. Each individual component can easily serve as a stand-alone analytical concept. Specifically, this project distinguished between,

- 210 General immigration and opinions towards immigrants

- 211 Muslims and Islam

- 212 Race and racism

- 213 Refugees and asylum seekers

- 214 Illegals

The first category, ethnicity and ethnic minority groups (210), contains general items that pertain to ethnic (minority) groups in general, and their relationship with the majority group/s. This includes questions of integration vs. assimilation, certain citizenship rights (e.g. voting), cultural challenges, etc. This category does not include references to Muslims, racially defined groups, refugees, asylum seekers and illegal immigrants. All items that reflect on these groups should be included in categories 211 to 214.

This is colour coded LIGHT PURPLE (for now).

22 The European project

Another important dimension of political behaviour pertains to the perception or opinion of the European project. Since its inception, there are opponents and proponents of the European project. Their positions can be described as follows.

Opinions and ideas coded as left refer to a desire for a harmonised Europe, and hence more integration or even expansion of the European project, whether it be socially, politically or economically. The harmonisation efforts of European countries are put in a positive light, indicating consumer benefits, increased prosperity, the commitment to human rights, rule of law and market economy, and the free movement of individuals. Positions in line with this perspective typically also favour more power and responsibilities for the European institutions. This also includes any efforts to establish a European constitution.

Opinions and ideas coded as right refer to limited (or non-existent) ties between the respondent's own country and other countries within the European Union (or any other European harmonisation effort, like e.g. the EMU). Any trans-national effort is typically seen as impeding national sovereignty and promoting the current democratic deficit. This further aligns with preferences for more social, economic and political independence between European countries. Following this, such opinions argue against integration and expansion, and advocate in favour of a status quo or even a retrenchment of the European project.

As part of the project, and in line with the literature, opinions of the Europe project are often related to two specific components, namely its inte-

gration and its expansion. Therefore, we further specify them as part of this category. The classification then looks as follows,

- 220 General Europe and the European Union

- 221 European integration

- 222 European expansion

European integration relates to anything that increases the power of the European institutions or expands the scope of European competences. More integration is coded as left and less integration is coded as right. This category also includes references to leaving the European project, which would be coded as right. Positive references to membership of the country in question to the European project (regardless of its current membership status) would be coded as left.

European expansion mainly deals with the enlargement of the European project in terms of its member states. Throughout the European project, this can refer to the different accession waves of European member states. Recently, this also deals with the recognised and potential candidates of EU enlargement. Enlargement is coded as left and retrenchment is coded as right. This largely refers to countries other than the country in question.

23 Law and order

Law and order as a topic refers to the legal interpretation of authority. Furthermore, it also includes anything related to the state exercise of power. This can refer to both the means (i.e. a judicial system) and the goal (i.e. criminal containment).

More restrictive opinions regarding law and order are coded as right. They favour stricter penalties for law-breaking behaviour and a strong and well policed rule of law. In line with that, they typically promote longer terms of imprisonment, mandatory sentencing and capital punishment. Supporters of such positions also argue that incarceration is the most effective means of crime prevention. Under the current circumstances, investigations into terrorist activity sometimes warrant breaking or stretching the rule of law. Different forms of torture can be justified.

More remissive opinions regarding law and order are coded as left. They focus more on issues like the rehabilitation of criminals and softer sentencing, while advocating against the death penalty. At the same time, these

positions also bring attention to the social and economic deprivation factors that might lead to crime because this is the only efficient way to address the underlying causes of crime and eventually stimulate crime prevention. Terrorism investigations do not justify breaking the law as it stands and torture is typically condemned.

As part of the project, we observe two key components of this category, namely opinions regarding the harshness of sentencing and the death penalty. We thus identify them as as further specifications of this category,

- 230 General law and order

- 231 Sentencing

- 232 Death penalty

Harsher sentencing and positions in favour of the death penalty are coded as right, whereas more lenient sentencing and positions against the death penalty are coded as left.

24 Social conservatism

Social conservatism as a topic is quite broad and comprehensive, perhaps even more so than the previous categories of the cultural dimension. Most generally, this category projects beliefs regarding social affairs and moral issues. Furthermore, it encapsulates opinions towards the rights and freedoms of various social groups – typically those marginalised (women, for example) or with a minority status (such as ethnic minorities).

This project codes positions that lean towards or align with social liberalism as left. Such positions promote that individual liberty requires a level of social justice. At the same time, these positions typically opposes (most) restrictions of civil and political rights and freedoms (particularly to minority groups). Differently put, social liberalism equates the good of the whole with the freedom of its parts. Concretely, such opinions can include positions favouring abortion (the right to choose), euthanasia, homosexuality (LGBT), positive discrimination (e.g. quotas) and (legal) drug use. Also in line with these positions are more progressive and non-stereotypical gender roles, which includes women in the working force and equal pay, for example.

This project codes positions that lean towards or align with social conservatism as right. Such positions are typically sceptical of (social) change

and promote a status quo when it comes to social and moral issues. This includes the promotion of traditional (conservative) values and the restriction (or complete denial) of rights and freedoms for minority groups. Concretely, such opinions can include positions that promote traditional sexual relations, oppose abortion and euthanasia, as well as reject (legal) drug use. Also in line with these positions are more more traditional gender roles, which includes the strength and necessity of marriage, the importance of children and the role as women as matriarchs.

More than any other category, social conservatism is exemplified and illustrated by a range of highly political and salient issues. With that in mind, this project further recognises the following (non-exhaustive) list of components of social conservatism,

- 240 General moral and social opinions

- 241 Abortion

- 242 Gender roles

- 243 Homosexuality

- 244 Drug use

- 245 Authority

- 246 Euthanasia

The general category includes opinions about marriage, stem-cell research, in vitro fertilisation (IVF), birth control, pornography, genetically modified food, and gun control/ownership. Naturally, not all these single issues are applicable in all countries - hence their harmonisation in this more general moral and social opinions component.

The additional components are coded as follows. Opinions in favour of abortion are coded as left, while those rejecting abortion are coded as right. Opinions in line with non-stereotypical gender roles are coded as left, whereas the promotion of traditional gender roles is coded as right. Positions favouring homosexuality or LGBT interests are coded as left, whereas the belief in traditional sexual relations are coded as right. Allowing (legal) drugs is coded as left, whereas the opposition to (legal) drug use is coded as right.

Authority as a topic is characterised by a dualistic worldview that promotes power relations, dominance and divides the world in obedience and

submission. This project codes as left the opinions that promote a more pluralist approach to power and government, and believe that the government can and should be legitimately questioned and held accountable. Individuals must be promoted to think for themselves, and this self-awareness should trump the importance or relevance of power/authority. The project codes as right the opinions towards authority and government that assert the absolute power of government and unconditional respect for its authority. Individuals must always respect and follow authority, regardless of any mediating factors.

3 POLITICAL SUPPORT

310 Political trust

This category includes different indicators of political trust and its different components. For all intents and purposes, this project defines political trust as citizens' trust in different political institutions. Low levels of political trust are coded as left, whereas high levels of political trust are coded as right.

This is colour coded LIGHT BLUE.

320 Satisfaction with democracy

This category includes different indicators for democratic satisfaction. This dimension ranges from dissatisfied (left or negative) to satisfied (right or positive). It also includes items that inquire about citizens' preferences of democracy over other governing systems, often in very general terms.

This is colour coded ORANGE

330 Executive approval

This polls for the approval or satisfaction with governmental leaders who have actual powers, such as presidents and/or prime ministers. In parliamentary systems, this means we mostly collect items that gauge the approval or satisfaction with prime ministers. In presidential systems, this means we mostly collect items that gauge the approval or satisfaction with presidents.

However, exceptions exists to this rationale. For example, in Germany the president has no power and, likely, approval items are not included in surveys. In other systems, like France and Portugal, both presidents and

prime ministers have powerful positions so surveys typically include items that ask about approval and/or satisfaction of both position.

It is important to distinguish this category from political trust in the president or prime minister. These would be coded as '310'.

This is colour coded LIGHT GREY

340 Government satisfaction/approval/support

The logic behind the coding of this category is similar to that of '330 executive approval'. The primary difference is that here, we include items that ask about the government or the executive as a whole, rather than just its leader/s. This category does include references to general and specific policy areas. It is not to be confused with trust in the government or executive, which would be coded as 310.

This is colour coded DARK GREY.

5 SELF-PLACEMENT

This category includes all questions regarding respondents' ideological self-placement. Typically, this includes the stereotypical question where a respondent would place his or herself on a scale from 0 to 10, when 0 refers to the left and 10 refers to the right.

This is colour coded YELLOW.

Column 25: Question topic code 2

Some items touch upon multiple topics and can serve as an indicator of different forms of public opinion. We therefore include an opportunity to code multiple topic codes for a single item. The coding in this column follows the same rationale as column X.

Column 26: Question topic code 3

Some items touch upon multiple topics and can serve as an indicator of different forms of public opinion. We therefore include an opportunity to

code multiple topic codes for a single item. The coding in this column follows the same rationale as column X

Column 27: Relative vs. absolute preferences

This project's theorisation of public opinion as such does not necessarily distinguish between individuals' absolute opinions towards a certain issue and their preferences relative to a given status quo. However, this distinction is quite useful for the analysis of the interaction between public opinion and policy. The current literature often argues there is a certain responsiveness of policy to citizens' relative preference, not their absolute preferences.

With that in mind, it thus becomes important to construct a public opinion measure that solely relies on relative preferences. This column has a value of "0" when an item corresponds to an absolute preference and "1" when it corresponds to a relative preference.

Column 28: Question wording original language

The column contains the question wording of a particular survey item in the original language, i.e. the language in which the survey was fielded In countries where surveys have been fielded in multiple languages (e.g. Belgium, Switzerland, etc.), we only include one of the language wordings.

Column 29: Question wording English

This column contains the English translation of the original question corresponding to the survey item. For Great Britain and Ireland, the questions are only listed in this column (not the previous column Z).