GovLis Guidelines for the coding of positions of identified actors through the survey

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NOTE: these instructions are derived from and are very similar to the instructions for the coding of positions of actors that were identified through the desk research

We aim at creating a database of all non-state actors[1] who have formed a position on one of the 50 specific policy issues in the 5 different countries on which we have public opinion data. In a first step, we coded newspapers in order to identify active non-state actors and their claims. Secondly, we conducted expert interviews in order to complete our actor list. In a third step, we collected additional information on non-state actors active on our issues by relying on information from formal tools used by national parliaments or governments to interact with external stakeholders (such as online consultations, public hearings etc.). Fourthly, we surveyed all actors that were identified. The survey also asked which actors were the most important ones on the policy issues they were active on, which helped identify yet more actors.

The goal is to do a web-search to find the positions of actors that were added through the survey. As you might know already, the issues are quite specific. It is very important that information regarding an advocate's position is actually on the specific issue asked about in the relevant public opinion question and not the overall topic. Detailed information how to identify an actor's position follows below.

There are six excel files. One contains all the new actors that were added through the survey. You will add information about the positions of each actor in this file. The other files contain the formulation and description of the specific policy issues per country.

In the files about the policy issues, you find information with regards to the policy issue, i.e. the survey question asked in the opinion poll, the answer categories, some background information about the issue and whether policy change took place or not. You can also find a link to where you can find more information if needed. The policy issues are quite specific which is important to keep in mind when coding an actor's positions, so please make sure you carefully read the issue description.

In the other file (surveyactorlist_position) we ask you to identify the positions of all the actors in the file. The most relevant pieces of information for you concern the name of the organization and - if available - the name of the individual working on the issue for that organization.[2]

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[1] Please note that we define non-state actors as all organised interests which are "external" to the political system; in other words, we exclude political parties, party officials, and the governmental administration" (cf. Rasmussen et al. 2015)[1]. We also exclude individuals. Instead, we include firms, trade unions, profession organisations, NGOs and citizen groups, private research institutes, think tanks and experts.

[2] *Source* and *interest group type* refer to the different types of actors (whether it is an expert, an interest group and if so what kind of interest group). This is not relevant for you but for your information they are listed in the appendix.

You will add **two** things to the excel file:

1. An actor's position (how you do this will be described below) in the last column called **position**. You have four options. The actor can be in favour of the policy question at stake, the actor can oppose the policy issue, or the actor holds a position that is neutral. If you cannot identify an actor's positions, its position will be coded as missing. The codes are the following:

0 – in favour of the policy action in question
1 – uncertain or neutral
2 – against the policy action in question
99 – missing

2. Secondly, we ask you to provide a URL link to the webpage where you found the document in the column called **google**.

3. Identify an actor's position

To identify an actor's position on the policy issue, make sure you first read the information about the policy issue, because it is very important to ensure a close match between the policy issue and the statement by the actor. Once you are familiar with the formulation of the policy issue, use google (or your preferred search engine) to search for the actor (organization and (if available) individual name) and use some key words from the issue. **Start with the keywords, which are provided in the column called media keywords** in the file containing information about the policies. You may get an article in a newspaper citing this actor, or you find a position paper published on the webpage of that actor. Make sure that the date of publication fits our time period of observation (which you can check in the column **observation period**)[3].

The goal is to then **identify a statement**. A statement is a piece of text conveying information about the position of an actor on a specific policy issue. It is important that the source is credible (for example: mainstream news media, the website of the organization or actor). Once you have found the statement, code the **position** of the actor (appendix A), and provide the link to the website in the column called **google.**

If you cannot find a position, try expanding your search terms. If that does not work, code the position as missing (99) and leave the column **google** blank.

An example: Issue ID 12 in the UK discusses a bill that proposes to scrap identity cards. We see in the excel sheet that **the London School of Economics and Political Science Identity Project** has submitted an opinion on this issue. When searching, we find the following paragraph:

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[3] Our time observations starts with the date the question was asked in the public opinion poll and ends four years later or the time policy change was adopted.

"4. Having raised concerns with the original proposals, the LSE Identity Project welcomes this legislation to repeal the Identity Cards Act and to destroy the data held on the National Identity Register. We also welcome the announcement that the opposition will not vote against the Bill at Second Reading."

This passage provides information with regard to the position. The actor is in favour of the proposed policy (scrapping ID cards) which is why we code its position as 0.

Again, keep in mind that the statement has to be specifically on that statement. If the actor would have made a statement related to higher protection of personal data, we could imply that they are in favour or scrapping ID cards but as long as we do not find evidence for that, we do not code this as their position.

These appendices help you read the files containing information about the actor

Appendix A: Coding Actor

1 – Interest association (this requires that a specific interest group is mentioned rather than a reference to collections of actors such as "employers" or "workers")
2 – Expert
3 – Private company – management
4 – Private company - employees
5 – Individuals who are not representing any of the other "collective actors" mentioned
6 – International organisations/agencies
7 – Other actors / not specified

Appendix B: List of group types[4]

1 Labour groups
11 Blue-collar union
12 White-collar union
13 Other labour groups (i.e. think tanks related to unions)
14 Employee representative committee

2 Business groups
21 Peak-level business group
22 Sector-wide business group
23 Breed associations
24 Technical Associations
25 Other business group

3 Institutional Associations

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[4] In the case of labour groups, business groups, and institutional associations, the subgroup does not need to be specified – they are only listed here to facilitate the classification of interest associations.

31 Associations of local authorities
32 Associations of other public institutions
33 Associations of managers of public institutions
34 Other Institutional associations

Occupational associations
41 Doctors' associations
42 Other medical professions
43 Teachers' associations
44 Other occupational associations

Identity Groups
51 Patients
52 Elderly
53 Students
54 Friendship groups (i.e. non-specific groups related to a country)
55 Racial or ethnic
56 Other – undefined - identity group
57 Women
58 Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transsexual

Hobby/Leisure groups
61 Sport
62 Other hobby/leisure

Religious groups
71 Associated with the protestant church
73 Other religious group
74 Roman/Catholic groups

Public interest groups
81 Environment and animal welfare
82 Humanitarian – international
83 Humanitarian – national
84 Consumer Group
85 Other – undefined – public interest
86 Government reform
87 Civil liberties
88 Citizen Empowerment

90 Think Tanks

99 Missing / uncodeable