

# GovLis Guidelines for the identification and position coding of additional actors through desk research

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The first part will explain how additional actors were identified through desk research, whereas the second part will provide guidelines how positions of these identified actors were coded. A third part gives an overview of the different tools used in the five countries through which additional actors have been identified.

## Part 1: Identification of additional actors

We aim at creating a database of all non-state actors<sup>1</sup> who have formed a position on one of the 50 policy-specific issues in the 5 different countries. 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 now collect additional information on external stakeholders active on our issues by relying on information from formal tools used by national parliaments or governments to interact with external stakeholders (see Part 3 for an overview of the formal tools used). These contacts should have taken place the same year that the public opinion question was asked or the subsequent years that fall within our observation period for each opinion item.

A public consultation is one potential procedure, but in practice, we can imagine a different set of formal procedures in each country where the formal tool for interacting between stakeholders and the government/parliament may vary. Examples of possible data sources include:

- Parliamentary committee hearings (e.g. oral evidence provide to a committee), roundtables, petitions and meetings
- Official consultation procedures of the respective national parliaments or governments in relation to new proposals for lawmaking, 'green' or 'white papers' etc. Consultation (e.g. written evidence provided to either a ministry or a parliamentary committee)
- Formal advisory bodies etc. which work (independently) under the umbrella of the respective department in the government.

Note, that our issues are specific and that sometimes the formal tools from which we map actor participation relate to a wider theme. When singling out actors from a more general consultation on a theme (e.g. revision of the framework of nuclear policy) it is important to check that the more specific issue that we are concerned with (e.g. whether nuclear power plants should be subsidized) is addressed in the

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<sup>1</sup> 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)<sup>1</sup>. We also exclude individuals. Instead, we include firms, trade unions, profession organisations, NGOs and citizen groups, private research institutes, think tanks and experts.

exercise. In practice, we check that by searching for keywords related to the more specific topic in e.g. the consultation document from the relevant government ministry or by making sure a committee meeting on a more general theme concerns the more specific issue. Yet we do not check whether the evidence we record for all the different actors is about the specific issue. Instead we record all actors that participated in the consultation of relevance to the issue. In our survey, we will subsequently ask actors about their degree of involvement on the more specific issue.

For a small number of issues where the tool from which we gather the evidence is very general we do not record all actors who have participated in a given exercise. One of our issues in the UK is for example whether corporation tax should be reduced in the UK. This is usually discussed within the Budget Report. Generally, people provide oral or written evidence to the Budget Report. In order to single out the relevant actors, we searched for the passages specifically related to corporation tax and only included actors who made a statement with regards to whether corporation tax should be reduced or not.

### **Information to extract**

From these formal tools which stakeholders can use to interact with government and parliament, we extract the following information on the external stakeholders (if available):

- *Issue (i.e. link to issue id in the dataset)*
- *Name of the formal tool through which external stakeholders are in touch with the government*
- *Date of the procedure*
- *Name of the organization*
- *Webpage*
- *Email*
- *Contact person*
- *Position of the actor (if this is easily retrieved from the source from which we collect the information about actor names)*
- *Phone number of the contact person (if available)*
- *Email of the contact person (if available)*
- *Link to the relevant document/webpage from which the data is gathered*
- *Actor id: Check whether the actor appears on the id list of actors. If so attach actor id to the actor. If not add a new actor id and add the actor to the existing list of actor id's.*
- *If the actor appears on the list of existing actors: coding is completed!*
- *If the actor does not appear on the list of actors code the following two variables:*
- - A) *Identify the source (i.e. the actor) of the statement.*
    - 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

If a given source has two affiliations (e.g. because the actor represents both an interest group and a firm) the coder selects on behalf of which source the actor primarily speaks but makes a note on this. In a scenario in which one of the two affiliations is not a source coded here (e.g. an actor that represents both a governmental entity and an interest group of governmental actors), we register the actor under the source coded here (e.g. the interest group category).

\* We apply a broad definition to experts and define an expert as someone who has working experience in the field and as such knows the rules and procedures (Farrington-Darby & Wilson, 2006, 18), as someone who is moreover able to define problems and create solutions (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005, 787) or as someone who is in the possession of specialized knowledge (Schudson, 2006, 499). That means, if the policy issue is on a new school reform, the principal of a school has to be coded as an expert and not an individual, because the principal is working in this field and has very specialized knowledge about the school system and is also able to identify problems and solutions. The same holds true if the issue is on whether to prolong the mandate of the army in Afghanistan and individual soldiers give their opinion on that issue. Again, these actors have sufficient experience in that field and highly specialized knowledge on the operation and as such have to be coded as experts. Finally, note that we regard advisory boards and committees to the government as experts.

\*\*Agencies which belong to the national government are not to be coded

- *B) In case the source is an expert, identify whether the expert is an individual expert or an organised expert, see below:*

Individual expert – coded as 2

This signifies an individual expert speaking on his/her own behalf, rather than on behalf of an organisation. If they have an organisational affiliation, these are organisations that are not unitary (political) actors, so not organised for the purpose of giving specific institutional advice on issues.

Organised expert – coded as 1

These are actors speaking on behalf of a (perceived) unitary actor, organised for the purpose of specific institutional advice on issues.

- *C) In case the source is an interest group, identify what kind of interest group(s) (see separate, detailed coding scheme at the end of the document).*

## Part 2: Coding of the positions of the identified actors

In the first step, we have identified additional actors that used formal tools to interact with the government. However, we do not yet have their position on an issue, which is what we would like you to do now. Sometimes, this is fairly easy as we have (for example) a protocol of a public hearing in which an actor states his or her opinion with regard to the policy issue. However, in other cases it is impossible to get the position based on the desk research since we only have information on the actors that have submitted a statement, whereby the statement is not accessible. In such a situation we would like you to search for information about the position of the actors on the issues in the internet to extract their position where possible. Again, 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 is an excel file for the country you are working on. In this excel file you find information about the policy issues and the actors whose positions we would like you to identify. Please add this information in the excel file in the relevant column (how you do this follows later).

In the first few columns, 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.

The column called *link* contains a link to the document or webpage based on which we identified the actor. Like already mentioned, sometimes this document may contain information with regards to an actor's position. As a result, this document serves as your starting point for identifying an actor's position.

Please 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. Please add a link where you found information on an actor's position. If the position could be identified based on the document we provided, just add a note in the respective column saying *document entails position*. If you found this information elsewhere, please provide a link and copy the URL in the respective column.

### **3. Identify an actor's position**

There are basically two ways of identifying an actor's position.

#### 1. Step: Use desk research data

We have conducted in-depth desk research in order to identify actors that have mobilized on the respective policy issue, e.g. by submitting an opinion in an online consultation or by providing oral evidence in a public hearing. So far we have only coded the kind of actor and not its position. Yet, it is possible that our source contains information about actor position as well. Therefore, please open the document in the link and search for the actor for whom we ask you to identify a position. Check, whether the document entails not just the name but also a statement with regard to the policy issue. Read the statement carefully and check whether you can identify a position. As already indicated, bear in mind that the statement has to be on the specific policy issue and not the policy in a broad sense.

**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. We open the link which is provided and which refers to the submission

(<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmpublic/identity/memo/mid04.htm>).

After quickly scanning the first passages we can find the following paragraph:

*"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.

This example is pretty straightforward and it is quite easy to extract the position. Sometimes we only find the actor but not its position. In the UK, issue ID 204 discusses whether ecstasy should be reclassified. As a consequence, an advisory council has been established. Based on their annual reports, we managed to identify its members. Yet, being member does not imply that an actor is either against or in favour of the policy action in question. In a situation where you cannot extract the position based on the source we have provided, you do the following:

#### 2. Step: Search the internet

If the desk research did not get you anywhere, use google (or your preferred search engine). 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.** 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 source fits our time period of observation (which you can check in the column **observation period**)<sup>2</sup>. Again, make sure, the statement you have identified relates specifically to the issue. Please provide the link where you found this information in the respective column.

**Note of caution:**

Position papers or statements are often times quite strategic and technical so it is not so easy to extract the position. Often actors say, we are in favour, BUT and then list a whole list of issues they disagree with. So how to code here?

First, we try to be as issue-specific as possible. Here is an example from the UK sample: The opinion poll asked the people whether they are in favour or against the reduction of corporation tax. An actor submitted a written statement saying that overall he is in favour of reducing corporation tax. However, he disagrees with some of the measurements proposed in the bill that come along with a reduction of the corporation tax. You could be tempted to code this as neutral/uncertain. Yet, since the opinion poll asked specifically about the reduction of corporation tax and the actor explicitly says he in favour, we code this accordingly. Note that people answering the opinion poll also only have the option to either agree or disagree with the statement, without knowing what the consequences would be or what other measurements the bill would entail.

If the same actors makes several statements (all with regard to the specific issue), and these statements have different content (e.g. a neutral statement and one in favour), the statement that takes a position is to be coded. If there are statements in favour and against the policy by the same actor, a statement with the view that represents the majority of displayed views is to be coded. If there are equal numbers of positive and negative statements, they are to be coded as neutral.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

### **Part 3: Desk research overview**

The aim of the desk research was to collect additional information on external stakeholders active on our issues by relying on information from formal tools used by national parliaments or governments to interact with external stakeholders. These contacts should have taken place the same year that the public opinion question was asked or the subsequent years that fall within our observation period for each opinion item.

A public consultation is one potential procedure, but in practice, we can imagine a different set of formal procedures in each country where the formal tool for interacting between stakeholders and the government/parliament may vary.

#### **Germany**

In Germany the following sources have been used:

1. Public hearings on legislative proposals (related legislative proposals)

In the case of complex and conflictual policy proposals the responsible legislative committees of the Bundestag have the opportunity to invite stakeholders and policy experts to public hearings. In these hearings policymakers try to acquire political expertise but also look for additional support for their respective position.

The information from these hearings was only available from the archive of the Bundestag.

2. Consultation proceedings of governmental agencies

Quite similar to the legislative committees of the Bundestag, governmental agencies can invite stakeholders and policy experts to hearings.

#### **United Kingdom**

To identify additional advocates that have mobilized on the respective issue a number of formal tools have been analyzed through which the government and external stakeholders interact with each other. For each issue we have started at the website of the respective department and have used their search function to get an overview of all available documents and stages in the discussion of that issue. Thereafter, the website of the parliament has been checked. If a new bill was proposed, all documents for the different stages are published and can be searched for. Some issues, like tax issues, are discussed in the Budget Reports, which is why all budget reports in the time period of our observation have been looked at. We used the search function and checked for main key words of the issue.

1. Oral and written evidence

One of the main instruments is a Public Bill Committee (PBC). These committees are formed in order to publicly discuss a policy proposal. PBCs consist of members of Parliament who invite witnesses such as

external stakeholders of any kind. They are invited to give written and/or oral evidence where they can argue for their position. Discussions of the Budget Reports also involve oral and written evidence. All submissions of this kind are either part of the report itself or available in the protocols of the discussion.

## 2. Consultations

Another important mechanisms are online consultations. On a number of issues public consultations are held. For some consultations every single submission is available which allows identifying all actors that have submitted their opinion. In some occasions, only summaries of the consultations are available, yet with a list of all actors that have submitted which is sufficient for us as we only code the actors and not their positions as this will be captured through our survey.

## 3. Advisory committee or a steering group

Third, we include actors that have been invited to form an advisory committee or a steering group. If such groups have been formed it is stated at the webpage of the respective department which redirects us to the individual websites of the committees or provides detailed reports about them. We looked at the annual reports of these groups for each year of our observation to get all actors that have been member in our period of observation.

## **Netherlands**

For the identification of additional stakeholders that participated in consultations, the following procedures were analyzed. All actors participating in any of these procedures (during the observation period and when the procedure was about one of the issues) were coded.

### 1. Online consultations

These internet consultations started from 2008 and citizens and organizations are able to respond to legislative proposals through the consultations. There were no consultations for the issues in our dataset during the relevant periods.

### 2. Hoorzittingen (hearings) and rondetafelgesprekken (round tables) in parliamentary committees

Hoorzittingen and rondetafelgesprekken are formally the same method of consultation. For both, a number of actors is invited for a session with a specific parliamentary committee. In practice, hoorzittingen tend to be somewhat more formalized (with all actors presenting an opinion), whereas rondetafels allow for more discussion between the actors. Hoorzittingen and rondetafelgesprekken from before 2008 were retrieved from the physical archive of the Parliament (“Tweede Kamer”)

### 3. Gesprekken (conversations)

During gesprekken, an individual actor or organization is invited by a parliamentary committee to exchange thoughts.

### 4. Petities (petitions)



Petitions to parliament. These are typically received by the (vice) chair of the relevant parliamentary committee.

#### 5. Bijzondere procedure

Special (extraordinary) procedures. These appear on the committee agendas and show procedures by parliamentary committees that are not the usual ones. In the data, this usually meant a technical briefing by actors in to the parliamentary committee.

For the online consultations, we consulted <https://www.internetconsultatie.nl/>.

For the agendas of parliamentary committees agenda (that contain consultation types 2 – 4), we identified the relevant committee(s) per issue during the observation period and looked through the entire online agenda, as found on <https://www.tweedekamer.nl>. These archives only go back to September 2008. That is why data for the 2006 – 2008 period came from the physical archives, which are located at the Dutch Parliament. For the physical archives we analyzed the hoorzittingen, round tables, gesprekken and petitions of the relevant committees. It should also be noted that a round table on issue ID 18 (Building Nuclear Plants) was scheduled in the parliamentary calendar (on 15-03-2006 at 13:00, with the Commissie voor Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer), but no record of it was found in the archive.

### **Denmark**

In Denmark the following sources have been considered:

#### 1. Høringssvar

Translation: Written hearing statement

Description: As a part of the legislative process relevant organizations, associations, companies, and authorities get the opportunity to comment on new bills and send their comments to the minister. The comments are called høringssvar (written hearing statements).

#### 2. Høring i folketingsudvalg

Translation: Parliamentary committee hearing

Description: Folketinget has 26 permanent parliamentary committees. The committees can organize parliamentary committee hearings about subjects of interest to the committee. Experts are invited to make oral presentations where they share their knowledge and position on the subject in question.

#### 3. Ekspertgruppe/ekspertudvalg

Translation: Expert commission

Description: An expert commission is group of experts appointed by the minister investigating a specific subject/question(s).

#### 4. Deputation

Translation: Deputation

Description: Citizens, associations etc. have the opportunity to present their position on a subject orally to the parliamentary committee working with the subject in question. The citizen, association etc. has 15 minutes to present his/her/its position. The members of the committee can ask questions. The members of the committee do not answer questions. Citizens, associations etc. can arrange a deputation by contacting the secretariat of a given parliamentary committee.

#### 5. Skriftlig henvendelse

Translation: Written statement

Description: Citizens, associations etc. have the opportunity to send a document/e-mail describing their position on a given subject to the parliamentary committee working with the subject in question.

#### 6. Kommission

Translation: Commission

Description: A commission is appointed to investigate a specific subject/question(s) and/or develop policy recommendations. Typically consists of experts, interest organizations, and civil servants.

#### 7. Møde med minister

Translation: Meeting with minister

Description: Ad hoc type of tool. Meeting arranged by contacting the minister and asking for a meeting.

#### 8. Oplæg på Christiansborg (kaffeklub)

Translation: Presentation at unofficial meeting at Christiansborg

Description: Ad hoc type of tool. Interest organization making oral presentation at an unofficial meeting in "den østjyske kaffeklub" which is a group of parliamentary politicians from different parties who were all elected in Midtjylland (part of Denmark) discussing the development of the region.

#### 9. Fælles appel til integrationsminister

Translation: Joint appeal to the minister

Description: Ad hoc type of tool. Five interest organizations sent a joint appeal to the integration minister asking the minister to grant Iraqi asylum seekers humanitarian residence permit.

### **Sweden**

In Sweden the final desk research is based on the participation of stakeholders in

1. public hearings,
2. public investigations,
3. submissions for external comments (remissvar) during legislative processes and
4. participation in seminars hosted by the government.

The data come from the website of both the Swedish Government and Swedish Parliament, through a search of the online documentation. Key words were used, e.g. 'RUT' for the issue on making household services tax deductible.

On the government website, it was difficult to make this kind of general search, as the government's website had been updated and the date limitation in the search function did not work. A second option was to go to each specific ministry page and make a search limited to their documents, but here the same problem with the date function was encountered.

Therefore, the search function at the website for the Swedish Parliament was used, where more information got included, as parliament votes, bills, and parliament debates, but also where there are functions as time limitation and choice of document type.

In both the governmental and non-governmental bills made in parliament you can find referrals to if there was any Swedish government official report (SOU), public referrals and hearings made on the issue. The government has a website for the official reports where you can download the specific document, in which they list all the external actors that were officially contacted for comments, as well as a list of those who choose to comment on the specific issue. For each issue there was also a general search made on the Google search engine, with search keys as 'government' and issue specific keywords, in order to find more documentation that may not have been found in the search result on the official websites.

## **Appendix**<sup>3</sup>

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

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

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

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