POLPOP II Elite Survey: Technical Report
2022-2023
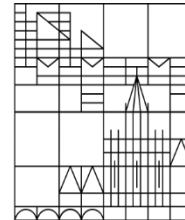
Contents

1. Project description

This data collection was part of the POLPOP II project and is supported by Stefaan Walgrave's ERC Advanced Grant at the University of Antwerp (agreement ID: 101018105, officially named POLEVPOP). The POLPOP II project collects data among national and regional politicians in thirteen countries: Australia, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Belgium (Flanders and Francophone Belgium), Germany, Israel, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland. Patrick Dumont is the principle investigator in Australia, Jack Lior and Peter Loewen in Canada, Ondřej Císař in Czechia, Anne Rasmussen in Denmark, Stefaan Walgrave in Flanders (Belgium), Christian Breunig and Stefanie Bailer in Germany, Lior Sheffer and Eran Amsalem in Israel, Javier Olivera in Luxembourg, Rens Vliegenthart in the Netherlands, Yvette Peters in Norway, Jorge M. Fernandes and Miguel Pereira in Portugal, Mikael Persson in Sweden, Pirmin Bundi and Frédéric Varone in Switzerland, and Jean-Benoit Pilet and Nathalie Brack in Francophone Belgium. Fieldwork took place between 7 February 2022 and 4 May 2023, with some variation between countries.

2. Ethical Clearance

All country teams received ethical clearance for conducting the elite surveys from their respective Universities. In <u>Australia</u> the project received approval from the Humanities and Social Sciences DERC of the ANU in October 2022 (reference number 2022/408). In <u>Canada</u> ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Calgary Research Ethics Board (reference number REB22-0205) in June 2022 and from the University of Toronto Research Ethics Board (reference number REB 00043361) in October 2022. In <u>Czechia</u> the project received ethical approval from the Commision for Ethics in Research of Faculty of Social Sciences at the Charles University in March 2022. In <u>Denmark</u> the project obtained approval from the Ethics Committee of the Department of Political Science of the University of Copenhagen in February 2022 (reference number 2022-04). In <u>Flanders (Belgium)</u> the project obtained clearance from the Ethical Advice Committee of the Social and Human Sciences at the University of Antwerp in February 2022 (reference number SHW_22_032). In <u>Francophone Belgium</u> the project obtained clearance from the Ethical Committee of the Social and Human Sciences at the Université libre de Bruxelles in March 2022 (reference number R2022/004). In <u>Germany</u> the project obtained ethical approval from the Ethical Advice Committee of the University of Konstanz (Ethik-Kommission der Universität Konstanz) in February 2021 (IRB statement 10/2021). The <u>Israeli project</u> received ethical clearance from the University Committee for the Use of Human Subjects in Research at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in April 2022 (reference number 29042022). In <u>Luxembourg</u> the project obtained ethical clearance from the LISER Research Ethics Committee in August 2022. In the <u>Netherlands</u> the project received approval from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences in April 2022 (Reference number 2022-PCJ-1477). In <u>Norway</u>, the project obtained approval from the Data Protection Services at the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research in June 2022 (reference number 770184). In <u>Portugal</u> the project obtained approval from the Ethical Committee of the Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Lisbon in June 2022 (reference number 07/2022). In <u>Sweden</u> the project received approval from the Ekprövningsmyndighetens in April 2022(reference number 2022-00734-01). In <u>Switzerland</u> the project (locally known as REP) obtained clearance from the University of Geneva Ethics Commission (CUREG) in October 2022 (reference number CUREG-2021-10-10*).* The data management plan was approved by the Government of the Canton of Geneva in February 2022 (Arrêté du Conseil d'Etat 379-2022).

3. Fieldwork approach

3.1 Contacting approach

Contact with members of parliament was initiated in each country through a formal e-mail sent by the respective PI of the project. Around one week after sending out the first emails, the PIs/ researchers started contacting politicians by telephone, personal emails, and/or via other contacts (such as party elites, personal connections, and parliamentary staff). If a politician could be reached, three responses were common: (1) acceptance to cooperate, (2) hard or soft refusal, and (3) a request for more information. In the first case, a (preliminary) time and date were scheduled and a personal follow-up confirmation email was sent. In the latter case, a short description of the project was shared. While in case of a hard refusal to cooperate no further contact attempts were made, a soft refusal (e.g., "I am too busy now") was followed up by counterarguments highlighting the one-hour survey/interview time and flexible scheduling possibilities. We re-contacted these soft-refusing politicians four to six weeks after first contact. If a politician did not respond to the first e-mail, reminder e-mails were sent and follow-up phone calls were made. On average, it took around three contact attempts to convince politicians to participate in our research. Another strategy that was used in some countries was to be present in parliament during plenary session days and to reach out directly to politicians (for instance during plenary meetings) and schedule interviews ad-hoc.

3.2 Survey approach

Participating politicians were asked to answer a thirty-minute questionnaire programmed in Qualtrics. The questionnaire dealt with different topics, amongst them the evaluation of public opinion and inequality, and country teams could decide which question modules to include in their questionnaire (hence, the survey is not entirely the same in all countries: some questions are asked to politicians in all thirteen countries, others included in just a few of the countries).

In all countries, we made sure that surveys were taken by politicians in the presence of a researcher. This is why the surveys (and interviews, see further) were all done either *in person* or *online (video chat)*--or occasionally by phone). This way we made sure that staff members or others did not respond on the politician's behalf. And, this researcher's presence was useful for consultation purposes if the politician had urgent/practical questions about completing the survey. Note that in some cases, politicians' staffers were physically present during the meeting, typically just working in the background but we ensured that they didn't intervene in the research. In total, 43% of the surveys were completed in an online meeting/over the phone, 57% in person.

- *In-person* meetings predominantly took place in the parliamentary building (or, occasionally, in a city hall or at a politician's home). We made arrangements with parliaments to have wireless internet access in all countries and, as a backup, we could use cellular wifi or a paper version of the survey should the wifi connection fail. The meetings started with researchers explaining the general purpose of our project and stressing that their responses would never be made public in an identifiable format. Next, politicians were asked an open question about the evaluation of public opinion (see further). After the open interview, politicians filled in the thirty-minute (+-)

Qualtrics survey on a laptop that was brought by the interviewer. Some countries ended the meeting by asking other semi-structured interview questions at the end.

- *Online* meetings took place on Zoom/Teams/Webex. The set-up was very similar to the in-person meetings: politicians answered open questions first, were then sent the link to the Qualtrics survey, and answered the survey on their own. The researcher was present online the whole time to ensure that the politician filled in the survey completely and could ask for clarification if needed.

4. Survey participants

4.1 Response rates

All country teams (except for Germany) made efforts to reach out to all national members of parliament, no sampling was used. In addition, some federalized countries such as Belgium and Canada also included regional politicians in their target population. Note that in both countries the regional level is equally important as the national one, with substantial competencies dealt with by regional parliaments and governments. Moreover, in Australia, Israel, and Sweden an election was called during the fieldwork. Therefore, in these countries, politicians who did not get re-elected are asked to participate in our research as well. See **Table I** for an overview of response rates, timing of fieldwork, and survey mode for each country separately.

Table I. Response rates and fieldwork approach by country

Country	Timing Fieldwork	Target population*	# responses/total (Response rate)	Survey mode
Australia	November 2022 – March 2023	- 151 Members of House of Representatives - 76 Senators - 46 Representatives that were not re-elected in 2022 Total Australia: 273	58/273 (21% response)	- 36 online/phone (62%) - 22 in person (38%)
Canada	October 2022 – February 2023	- 337 federal MPs - 87 British Columbia MLAs - 86 Alberta MLAs - 124 Ontario MPPs - 124 Quebec MNAs Total Canada: 758	87/758 (12% response)	- 86 online (99%) - 1 in person (1%)
Czechia	April 2022 – 26 October 2022	- All 200 Deputies from the Chamber of Deputies in the Czech parliament Total Czechia: 200	64/200 (32% response)	- 0 online (0%) - 64 in person (100%)
Denmark	March 2022 – August 2022	- All 179 national Members of Parliament Total Denmark: 179	48/179 (27% response)	- 20 online (41%) - 28 in person (50%)
Flanders (Belgium)	March 2022 – August 2022	- 89 Federal Dutch-speaking MPs (second chamber only) - 11 Federal Dutch-speaking government members (not in parliament) - 124 Flemish MPs - 9 Flemish government members (not in parliament) - 17 Brussels Dutch-speaking MPs - 3 Brussels Dutch-speaking government members (not in parliament) - 7 Flemish party leaders (six were in parliament) Total Belgium (FL): 254	215/254 (85% response)	- 24 online (11%) - 191 in person (89%)
Francophone Belgium	April 2022 – October 2022	- 62 Federal French-speaking MPs (second chamber only) - 79 Walloon MPs - 73 Brussels French-speaking MPs Total Belgium (WAL): 214	148/214 (69% response)	- 26 online (18%) - 122 in person (82%)
Germany	May 2022 – March 2023	- A sampled population of members of parliament at the national level (because of parliament size). Sampling was in four waves, ensuring representativity of parliament in terms of gender, party, and incumbent status. Total Germany: 658	178/658 (27%)	- 167 online (94%) - 11 in person (6%)
Israel	May 2022 – February 2023	- 120 Members of Parliament - 28 Ministers (7 were in parliament) - 26 Ex-MPs (not reelected in Nov '22 but served > 1 year) Total Israel: 174	55/174 (32% response)	- 12 online (22%) - 43 in person (78%)
Luxembourg	November 2022 – January -2023	- 60 National Members of Parliament Total Luxembourg: 60	21/60 (36% response)	- 1 online (5%) - 20 in person (95%)
Netherlands	May 2022 – September 2022	- All 152 national Members of Parliament	38/152	- 22 online (58%)

			Total Netherlands: 152	(25% response)	- 16 in person (42%)
Norway	June 2022 - February 2023	- All 169 national Members of Parliament Total Norway: 169	36/169 (21% response)	- 36 online (100%) - 0 in person (0%)	
Portugal	July 2022 - December 2022	- All 230 national Members of Parliament Total Portugal: 230	70/230 (30% response)	- 10 online (14%) - 60 in person (86%)	
Sweden	October 2022 - February 2023	- All 353 national Members of Parliament - 21 Ex-MPs (not reelected in '22 elections) Total Sweden: 374	67/374 (19% response)	- 67 online (100%) - 0 in person (0%)	
Switzerland	May 2022 – December 2022	- 200 National Council (first chamber) - 46 Council of States (second chamber) Total Switzerland: 246	103/246 (42% response)	- 0 online (0%) - 103 in person (100%)	
		Total: 3912	**1,188/3,941** **30% response**	**- 507 online (43%)** **- 681 in person (57%)**	

* **Note.** The total number of politicians in each assembly may be above the official number of seats in those assemblies because some politicians resigned and were replaced by new MPs during fieldwork.

4.2 Representativity

We compare the characteristics (gender, age, and seniority) of participating politicians with those of the population in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Representativity of MPs who cooperated compared with the MP population for gender, age and seniority

	Australia		Canada		Czechia	
	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population
Total N	58 (21.%)	273	87 (11.5%)	758	64 (32%)	200
Female	20 (34.5%)	109 (39.9%)	25 (29%)	267 (35%)	21 (33%)	52 (26%)
Age in years (SD)	53.6 (9.6)	52.3 (9.6)	51 (11)	52 (10.7)	48.45 (9.6)	52.13 (9.5)
Seniority in years (SD)	7.7 (7.4)	8.7 (7.7)	6.5 (4.9)	7 (5.5)	4.8 (5.15)	5.7 (4.7)

	Denmark		Flanders (BE)		Francophone BE	
	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population
Total N	48 (27%)	179	215 (85%)	254	148 (69.2%)	214
Female	23 (48%)	72 (40%)	89 (41%)	115 (45%)	60 (40.5%)	86 (40.2%)
Age in years (SD)	51.92 (11.7)	49.94 (11.4)	47.5 (9.2)	47.4 (8.95)	47.4 (9.8)	49.0 (10.5)
Seniority in years (SD)	9.98 (9.3)	10.9 (8.4)	9.0 (7.4)	9.1 (7.4)	6.4 (6.1)	7.5 (7.0)

	Germany		Israel		Luxembourg	
	Cooperated	*Population	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population
Total N	178 (27%)	738	55 (32%)	174	21 (36%)	60
Female	72 (41%)	258 (35%)	17 (47%)	36 (21%)	7 (33%)	21 (35%)
Age in years (SD)	46.8 (12.0)	48.5 (11.1)	55 (10.2)	54.4 (10.9)	52.7	53.8
Seniority in years (SD)	6.2 (6.5)	8.6 (7.8)	6.3 (7.2)	8.2 (7.9)	9.95	12.15

*Actual number of contacted politicians = 658 (sampling)

	Netherlands		Norway		Portugal	
	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population
Total N	38 (25%)	152	35 (21%)	169	70 (30%)	230
Female	21 (55%)	59 (39%)	11 (31%)	76 (45%)	27 (39%)	85 (37%)
Age in years (SD)	45.2 (7.5)	46.4 (9.2)	47.6 (12.7)	47.5 (11.4)	47.0 (12.6)	49.5 (11.1)
Seniority in years (SD)	4.2 (3.5)	6.4 (5.7)	4.9 (4.6)	7.5 (7.1)	4.3 (6.0)	6.0 (7.8)

	Sweden		Switzerland	
	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population
Total N	67 (19%)	374	102 (41%)	246
Female	31 (46%)	178 (48%)	42 (43%)	98 (40%)
Age in years (SD)	48.8 (11.5)	46 (11.2)	52.11 (9.5)	52.57 (9.8)
Seniority in years (SD)	4.6 (5.1)	5.8 (5.8)	6.87 (4.91)	7.99 (5.56)

Next, we check whether our sample of participating politicians resembles the population in terms of ideology in **Table 3**. We rely on the most recent Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES)[1] for data about parties' positions on ideology and policy issues ranging from 0 to 10. Left-wing parties have a score ranging from 0 to 3, center parties from 4 to 6, and right-wing parties from 7 to 10. Note that we cannot show the cooperation rates for each party because we promised participating politicians full confidentiality with regard to which parties participated in the project.

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[1] There is no CHES data available about Australian parties but local researchers classified parties on the same axis. Politicians coded as centrists are either independents or members of a few minor parties. Based on their background (previously running for a larger party) and first speech in parliament a few of those politicians could be considered as leaning towards centre-left or centre-right. In any case, these instances balance themselves out so it can be argued that all belong to a group of centrist independent and minor party elected officials.

Table 3. Representativity of MPs who cooperated compared with the population for party ideology

	Australia		Czechia	
	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population
Total N	58 (21.3%)	272	64 (32%)	200
Left (CHES 0-3)	24 (41.4%)	129 (47.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Centre (CHES 4-6)	4 (6.9%)	16 (5.9%)	45 (70%)	132 (66%)
Right (CHES 7-10)	30 (51.7%)	127 (46.5%)	19 (30%)	68 (34%)
Other	/	/	/	/

	Denmark		Flanders (BE)		Francophone BE	
	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population
Total N	48 (27%)	179	215 (85%)	254	148 (69.2%)	214
Left (CHES 0-3)	9 (19%)	34 (19%)	61 (28%)	67 (26%)	94 (63.5%)	126 (58.9%)
Centre (CHES 4-6)	31 (65%)	113 (63%)	62 (29%)	75 (30%)	22 (14.9%)	33 (15.4%)
Right (CHES 7-10)	5 (10%)	23 (13%)	89 (41%)	108 (43%)	31 (20.9%)	52 (24.3%)
Other	3 (6%)	9 (5%)	3 (1%)	4 (2%)	1 (0.7%)	3 (1.4%)

	Germany		Israel		Luxembourg	
	Cooperated	*Population	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population
Total N	178 (27.1%)	738	55 (32%)	166	21 (35%)	60
Left (CHES 0-3)	103 (57.9%)	364 (49.3%)	17 (31%)	63 (38%)	2 (10%)	2 (3%)
Centre (CHES 4-6)	46 (25.8%)	245 (33.2%)	7 (13%)	23 (14%)	12 (57%)	33 (55%)
Right (CHES 7-10)	28 (15.7%)	125 (16.9%)	31 (57%)	80 (48%)	7 (33%)	25 (42%)
Other	1 (0.01%)	4 (0.01%)	/	/	/	/

*Actual number of contacted politicians = 658 (sampling)

	Netherlands		Norway		Portugal	
	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population
Total N	38 (25%)	152	35 (21%)	169	70 (30%)	230
Left (CHES 0-3)	11 (28.95%)	34 (22.4%)	15 (43%)	72 (43%)	2 (2.9%)	13 (5.7%)
Centre (CHES 4-6)	16 (42.11%)	51 (33.6%)	19 (54%)	75 (44%)	60 (85.7%)	197 (85.6%)
Right (CHES 7-10)	11 (28.95%)	67 (44%)	1 (3%)	21 (12%)	8 (11.4%)	20 (8.9%)
Other	/	/	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	/	/

	Sweden		Switzerland	
	Cooperated	Population	Cooperated	Population
Total N	67 (19%)	374	102 (41%)	246
Left (CHES 0-3)	30 (45%)	156 (42%)	42 (42%)	80 (33%)
Centre (CHES 4-6)	9 (13%)	45 (12%)	26 (26%)	61 (25%)
Right (CHES 7-10)	28 (42%)	173 (46%)	32 (32%)	104 (42%)
Other	/	/	0 (0%)	1 (0%)

	Canada	
	Cooperated	Population
Total N	87 (11.5%)	758
Conservative Parties	32 (37%)	352 (46%)
Green Parties	3 (3%)	5 (1%)
Liberal Parties	26 (30%)	214 (28%)
NDP Parties	18 (21%)	138 (18%)
Other Parties	7(8%)	15 (2%)

5. Data handling (pseudonymization of biodata)

Outside of the survey additional biodata were collected (e.g. on politicians' gender, seniority, age and so on). These variables were subject to a pseudonymization process to make sure that a single politician participating in our research is not identifiable with 100% certainty among the total population of politicians. To ensure that politicians are not individually identifiable, some of these biodata variables are set to "missing" (only where it was really necessary, given that we want to avoid data loss). More information about the pseudonymization process and loss of data can be found here: https://medialibrary.uantwerpen.be/files/6881/b539eccb-baa0-406c-bb72-73850ac26c58.pdf

6. Open interviews

Before and after politicians filled in the closed survey, they were (in most countries) asked some open-ended questions. A semi-structured interview approach was followed and politicians' answers were recorded (we asked for permission first). The set of open questions that was asked in each country differs a lot between countries, an overview can be found in **Table 4**.

When fieldwork was finished, local researchers uploaded the audio files of each interview in Sonix, a program for the automatic transcription of audio files which was available in all languages of our project. Transcription was supported by Stefaan Walgrave's ERC Advanced Grant at the University of Antwerp (agreement ID: 101018105). Next, local teams were responsible for hiring students to check the transcriptions, 1) to ensure the automatic transcription matches what the politicians actually said, and 2) to ensure that identifiable information (their names, references to where they live, etc.) was deleted.

	Australia	Canada	Czechia	Denmark	Belgium (FL)	Belgium (FR)	Germany	Israel	Lux	Netherlands	Norway	Portugal	Sweden	Switzerland	Total
Q1 (Criteria for public opinion evaluation)	58	69	55	33	98	58	0	34	0	23	0	10	63	47	548
Q2 (Mechanisms of unequal representation)	45	0	44	13	106	71	31	0	21	0	0	10	59	32	432
Q3 (conservative bias)	0	0	0	0	71	44	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	182
Q4 (Role of scientific evidence)	43	0	49	0	76	67	127	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	362
Q5 (Moral convictions versus public opinion)	40	0	0	0	84	64	128	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	316
Q6 (Dealing with pressure)	57	0	0	0	82	69	127	0	0	0	0	10	52	0	397
Q7 (Conspiracy theories)	0	0	46	0	80	96	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	222
Q8 (Use of social media)	0	0	0	0	100	96	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	0	247
Q9 (Breaking election promises)	56	0	0	0	101	66	0	0	21	0	0	0	0	45	289
Q10 (Media bias)	0	0	0	0	128	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	203
Q11 (Opinion updating)	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
Q12 (Government formation)	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Q13 (Course change)	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Q14 (State of our democracy)	8	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31

Note. Q11-Q14 were only asked to high-level politicians such as ministers and party leaders