

Codebook

Second German survey - Group targeting and citizens' responses to electoral promises and their realization (GROUPTA)

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Introduction

This codebook documents the variables included in the dataset used in the EJPR article “Risky Appeals: The Electoral Consequences of Group-Targeted Campaign Pledges”. It describes the original survey items, coding decisions, and variable construction.

Derived variables used in the analysis are documented separately in the replication script.

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Survey information

Project name

Second German survey within the project “Group targeting and citizens’ responses to electoral promises and their realization (GROUPTA)”

Fieldwork period

January 24 – February 5, 2024 (including soft launch)

Funding

DFG, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

Polling institute

Bilendi & respondi

Universe

German residents aged 18 and older

Sampling

Quota sampling (age, gender, region, education) from the Mingle panel

Response rate

- Invited participants: 45,743
- Started survey: 7,188
- Completed surveys: 3,866
- Valid surveys: 3,500

Mode of data collection

Computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI)

Incentives

Respondents received 75 Mingle points upon successful completion. Screen-outs or quota terminations received 2 points. Points can be redeemed for various rewards.

Quotas

Category	Quota (%)	Sample (%)
Gender		
Male	50	50
Female	50	50
Age		
18–29	21	21
30–39	18	18
40–49	16	16
50–59	21	21
60–64	10	10
65+	14	14
Education		
Low	30	30
Medium	31	31
High	39	39
Region		
Baden-Württemberg	13	13
Bavaria	16	16
Berlin	4	4
Brandenburg	3	3
Bremen	1	1
Hamburg	2	2
Hesse	7	7
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	2	2
Lower Saxony	10	10
North Rhine-Westphalia	22	22
Rhineland-Palatinate	5	5
Saarland	1	1
Saxony	5	5
Saxony-Anhalt	2	2
Schleswig-Holstein	4	4
Thuringia	3	3

All figures in percent.

Variable description

Sociodemographic variables used for balance checks and descriptive analyses

gender

Respondent's gender

D: Bitte geben Sie Ihr Geschlecht an.

E: Please indicate your gender.

Values: - 1 = Male

- 2 = Female

- 3 = Other

Note: Recoded as **gender_rec** (Male, Female, Other).

age

Respondent's age (in years)

D: Ihr Alter?

E: Your age?

Values:

Continuous (in years)

Note: Recoded into **age_group**: - 18–29

- 30–39

- 40–49

- 50–59

- 60–64

- 65 and older

region

Respondent's primary residence (Bundesland)

D: Geben Sie bitte an, in welchem Bundesland Ihr Erstwohnsitz liegt.

E: Please indicate the state (Bundesland) in which your primary residence is located.

Values: 1 Baden-Württemberg

2 Bavaria

3 Berlin

4 Brandenburg

5 Bremen

6 Hamburg

7 Hesse

8 Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

9 Lower Saxony

10 North Rhine-Westphalia

11 Rhineland-Palatinate

- 12 Saarland
 - 13 Saxony
 - 14 Saxony-Anhalt
 - 15 Schleswig-Holstein
 - 16 Thuringia
 - 17 Not in Germany
-

edu

Respondent's educational attainment

D: Was ist der höchste Bildungsabschluss, den Sie erreicht haben?

E: What is the highest educational level you have achieved?

- Values:**
- 1 Still in school
 - 2 No school degree
 - 3 Lower secondary degree (Hauptschule)
 - 4 Intermediate degree (Realschule)
 - 5 Fachhochschulreife
 - 6 Abitur (higher education entrance qualification)
 - 7 University degree

Note: Recoded into **edu_rec**: - Low level (1–3)

- Intermediate level (4)

- High level (5–7)

healthsit

Self-reported health status

D: Wie würden Sie Ihren gegenwärtigen Gesundheitszustand beschreiben?

E: How would you describe your current state of health?

- Values:**
- 1 Very good
 - 2 Good
 - 3 Fair
 - 4 Poor
 - 5 Very poor
 - 99 Don't know

Note:

- Recoded into **healthsit_recoded** (factor)

- Binary variable **chronic_illness** = 1 if ≥ 4

Variable used to construct membership to the group of pensioners

This variable captures respondents' occupational situation and are used to identify membership in the "pensioners" group.

occupation

Respondent's occupational status

D: Welche der folgenden Optionen beschreibt Ihre berufliche Situation am besten?

E: Which of the following descriptions best describes your occupational situation?

- Values:** 1 Employed (full-time or part-time)
2 Marginal employment (mini-job)
3 Self-employed / freelancer
4 Unemployed
5 Retired
6 In education (school, vocational training, university)
7 Doing housework / caregiving
8 Other
-

Note (construction):

This variable is used to construct:

- `senior_member`:
 - 1 if `occupation == 5` (retired)
 - 0 otherwise

This operationalization is used to identify membership in the “pensioners” group in the analysis.

Variables used to construct membership to the group of rural residents

These variables capture respondents' type of residential environment and are used to identify membership in the “rural population” group.

livingenv

Type of residential area

D: Welche der folgenden Kategorien beschreibt am besten, wo Sie wohnen?

E: Which of the following categories best describes the area where you live?

- Values:** 1 A big city
2 Suburbs or outskirts of a big city
3 Medium-sized town
4 Small city
5 Country village
6 Farm or home in the countryside
-

livingenv2

Location in metropolitan area (filter variable)

Asked if livingenv = 3 or 4

D: Liegt Ihre Kommune im Ballungszentrum einer Großstadt?

E: Is your municipality located in a metropolitan area?

Values: 1 Yes

2 No

Note (construction):

These variables are combined into:

- **rural_member:**
 - 1 if livingenv >= 5
 - 1 if livingenv >= 3 and livingenv2 == 2
 - 0 otherwise

This operationalization is used to identify respondents living in rural areas in the analysis.

Variables used to construct membership to the group of parents

These variables capture the presence and age of children inside and outside the respondent's household.

age_child1 – age_child5

Age of respondent's children living in the household

Values:

Continuous (age in years)

ageout_child1 – ageout_child5

Age of respondent's children living outside the household

Values:

Continuous (age in years)

Note (construction):

These variables are combined into:

- `child_age_min`: minimum age across all children
- `parent_member`:
 - 1 if respondent has at least one child younger than 26
 - 0 otherwise

This operationalization is used to identify membership in the “parents” group in the analysis.

Subjective group identification

The following variables measure respondents’ subjective identification with selected social groups. All three items are part of the same item battery.

Introductory wording (German):

Wir alle haben unterschiedliche Vorstellungen davon, aus welchen sozialen Gruppen unsere Gesellschaft zusammengesetzt ist und wir alle können mehreren unterschiedlichen Gruppen angehören. Wie sehr fühlen Sie sich den folgenden Gruppen zugehörig oder nicht zugehörig?

Introductory wording (English):

We all have different ideas about the social groups that make up our society, and we can all belong to several different groups. To what extent do you feel you belong or do not belong to the following groups?

Response categories (all three items): - 1 = Not belonging at all - 2 = Rather not belonging - 3 = Rather belonging - 4 = Very much belonging - 99 = Don’t know

iden_parent

Subjective identification with parents.

German item wording:

... Eltern

English item wording:

... parents

Values: - 1 = Not belonging at all - 2 = Rather not belonging - 3 = Rather belonging - 4 = Very much belonging - 99 = Don’t know

Note: In the replication script, this variable is used to construct a binary indicator of group identification, where values 3 and 4 are coded as identification with the group.

iden_rural

Subjective identification with residents of rural areas.

German item wording:

... Bewohnerinnen und Bewohner ländlicher Gebiete

English item wording:

... residents of rural areas

Values: - 1 = Not belonging at all - 2 = Rather not belonging - 3 = Rather belonging - 4 = Very much belonging - 99 = Don't know

Note: In the replication script, this variable is used to construct a binary indicator of group identification, where values 3 and 4 are coded as identification with the group.

iden_senior

Subjective identification with pensioners / retirees.

German item wording:

... Rentner und Rentnerinnen

English item wording:

... pensioners / retirees

Values: - 1 = Not belonging at all - 2 = Rather not belonging - 3 = Rather belonging - 4 = Very much belonging - 99 = Don't know

Note: In the replication script, this variable is used to construct a binary indicator of group identification, where values 3 and 4 are coded as identification with the group.

Issue importance

The following variables measure the importance respondents attribute to selected policy domains. All six items are part of the same item battery.

Introductory wording (German):

Wie wichtig sind Ihnen die folgenden politischen Themen?

Introductory wording (English):

How important are the following political issues to you?

Response categories (all six items): - 1 = Very important - 2 = Important - 3 = Moderately important - 4 = Not so important - 5 = Not important at all - 99 = Don't know

Note: In the replication script, these variables are reverse-coded so that higher values indicate higher importance.

impage

Importance attributed to old-age provision / pensions.

German item wording:

... Altersvorsorge

English item wording:

... old-age provision / pensions

Values: - 1 = Very important - 2 = Important - 3 = Moderately important - 4 = Not so important - 5 = Not important at all - 99 = Don't know

impinfra

Importance attributed to infrastructure and public services.

German item wording:

... Infrastruktur und öffentliche Dienstleistungen

English item wording:

... infrastructure and public services

Values: - 1 = Very important - 2 = Important - 3 = Moderately important - 4 = Not so important - 5 = Not important at all - 99 = Don't know

impfam

Importance attributed to support for families.

German item wording:

... Unterstützung von Familien

English item wording:

... support for families

Values: - 1 = Very important - 2 = Important - 3 = Moderately important - 4 = Not so important - 5 = Not important at all - 99 = Don't know

imphealth

Importance attributed to the healthcare system.

German item wording:

... Gesundheitssystem

English item wording:

... healthcare system

Values: - 1 = Very important - 2 = Important - 3 = Moderately important - 4 = Not so important - 5 = Not important at all - 99 = Don't know

Perceived deservingness of social groups

The following variables measure respondents' views on whether the federal government should take the needs of selected social groups more or less into account. All items are part of the same item battery.

Introductory wording (German):

Inwiefern denken Sie, dass die Bundesregierung die Bedürfnisse folgender Gruppen mehr oder weniger berücksichtigen sollte? Bitte nutzen Sie die Skala von -5 bis +5, wobei -5 heißt, dass die Bedürfnisse der Gruppe viel weniger, und +5, dass sie viel mehr berücksichtigt werden sollten.

Introductory wording (English):

To what extent do you think the federal government should take the needs of the following groups more or less into consideration? Please use the scale from -5 to +5, where -5 means that the needs of the group should be considered much less and +5 much more.

Response scale

Respondents were presented with a scale ranging from **-5 (much less)** to **+5 (much more)**.

In the dataset provided by the survey institute, this scale is recoded to an **11-point numeric scale from 1 to 11**, where:

- 1 = -5 (Much less)
- 2 = -4
- 3 = -3
- 4 = -2
- 5 = -1
- 6 = 0 (Neither less nor more)
- 7 = +1
- 8 = +2
- 9 = +3
- 10 = +4
- 11 = +5 (Much more)
- 99 = Don't know

Note: In the replication script, these variables are used: - in their original 1–11 scale, and - in a binary recoding (`group_deservingness_binary`), where values ≥ 7 indicate that the group is seen as deserving of more consideration.

deserv_rural

Perceived deservingness of residents of rural areas.

German item wording:

... Bewohnerinnen und Bewohner ländlicher Gebiete

English item wording:

... residents of rural areas

deserv_seniors

Perceived deservingness of pensioners / retirees.

German item wording:

... Rentner und Rentnerinnen

English item wording:

... pensioners / retirees

deserv_parents

Perceived deservingness of parents.

German item wording:

... Eltern

English item wording:

... parents

Survey experiment: prospective voting

This section documents the variables used from the first part of the survey experiment. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of four campaign-poster conditions featuring a fictional party promise.

treat_exp1

Treatment assignment in the first experimental part.

German introductory wording:

Stellen Sie sich folgende hypothetische Situation vor: Wir befinden uns im Wahlkampf für die kommende Bundestagswahl. Gemäß den Umfragen haben die Parteien A, B, C und D realistische Aussichten auf eine Regierungsbeteiligung. Auf den Straßen sind Wahlplakate der verschiedenen Parteien zu finden. Das wichtigste Versprechen von Partei A ist auf diesem Wahlplakat abgebildet.

English introductory wording:

Imagine the following hypothetical situation: We are in the election campaign for the upcoming federal election. According to the polls, parties A, B, C and D have a realistic chance of entering government. Election posters for the various parties can be found on the streets. Party A's most important promise is depicted on this campaign poster.

Values: - 1 = Better infrastructure in rural areas - 2 = Higher child benefit - 3 = Higher pensions and retirement benefits - 4 = Better healthcare system

Note: In the replication script, this variable is recoded into the factor `group_exp1` with levels Rural, Parents, Pensioners, and Control.

Open-question recoding: perceived main beneficiary of the pledge

After exposure to the campaign poster, respondents were asked:

German wording:

Wem würde die Umsetzung des Versprechens von Partei A hauptsächlich zugute kommen?

English wording:

Who would mainly benefit from the implementation of Party A's promise?

The original answers were open-ended and manually recoded. The reduced replication dataset contains only the recoded variables.

exp1_group_rural_rec

Recoded open-ended answer for the rural-infrastructure treatment.

exp1_group_parents_rec

Recoded open-ended answer for the child-benefit treatment.

exp1_group_seniors_rec

Recoded open-ended answer for the pensions treatment.

exp1_group_control_rec

Recoded open-ended answer for the healthcare control condition.

Coding (all four variables): - -2 = Several groups - -1 = Other group - 0 = Other answer - 1 = Intended group

Note: In the replication script, these four treatment-specific variables are combined into a single variable (`open_group`) using `coalesce()`.

Perceived personal affectedness by the pledge

Respondents were asked how positively or negatively they would personally be affected by the policy measure shown in the campaign poster.

Response categories (all four variables): - 1 = Very negatively affected - 2 - 3 - 4 = Not affected - 5 - 6 - 7 = Very positively affected - 99 = Don't know

Note: In the replication script, these variables are combined into a single variable (`felt_affected`) using `coalesce()`, and further recoded into a binary indicator (`felt_affected_binary`), coded 1 for values 5 to 7 and 0 for values 1 to 4.

exp1_cons_rural

Perceived personal affectedness by an improvement in infrastructure in rural areas.

German wording:

Wie sehr positiv oder negativ wären Sie von einer Verbesserung der Infrastruktur im ländlichen Raum persönlich betroffen, unabhängig davon, ob Sie eine solche Maßnahme unterstützen würden?

English wording:

How positively or negatively would you personally be affected by an improvement in infrastructure in rural areas, regardless of whether you would support such a measure?

exp1_cons_parents

Perceived personal affectedness by an increase in child benefit.

German wording:

Wie sehr positiv oder negativ wären Sie von einer Erhöhung des Kindergeldes persönlich betroffen, unabhängig davon, ob Sie eine solche Maßnahme unterstützen würden?

English wording:

How positively or negatively would you personally be affected by an increase in child benefit, regardless of whether you would support such a measure?

exp1_cons_seniors

Perceived personal affectedness by higher pensions and retirement benefits.

German wording:

Wie sehr positiv oder negativ wären Sie von einer Verbesserung der Renten und Pensionen persönlich betroffen, unabhängig davon, ob Sie eine solche Maßnahme unterstützen würden?

English wording:

How positively or negatively would you personally be affected by higher pensions and retirement benefits, regardless of whether you would support such a measure?

exp1_cons_control

Perceived personal affectedness by a better healthcare system.

German wording:

Wie sehr positiv oder negativ wären Sie von einer Verbesserung des Gesundheitssystems persönlich betroffen, unabhängig davon, ob Sie eine solche Maßnahme unterstützen würden?

English wording:

How positively or negatively would you personally be affected by a better healthcare system, regardless of whether you would support such a measure?

Propensity to vote for Party A

Respondents were asked how likely they would be to vote for Party A after seeing the campaign poster.

German wording:

Wie wahrscheinlich wäre es, dass Sie diese Partei wählen würden?

English wording:

How likely would you be to vote for this party?

Response categories (all four variables): - 1 = Very unlikely - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 = Very likely - 99 = Don't know

Note: In the replication script, these four treatment-specific variables are combined into a single outcome variable (`vote_exp1`) using `coalesce()`.

`exp1_vote_rural`

Propensity to vote for Party A in the rural-infrastructure treatment.

`exp1_vote_parents`

Propensity to vote for Party A in the child-benefit treatment.

`exp1_vote_seniors`

Propensity to vote for Party A in the pensions treatment.

`exp1_vote_control`

Propensity to vote for Party A in the healthcare control condition.