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Companion PIP Minister

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Introduction

The PIP (Parties – Institutions – Preferences) dataset combines information about political parties, party ideology, governments, parliaments and presidents in a unique way which allows for the estimation of actors' policy positions. Beyond the PIP main dataset, we provide a second version (pip_ts_minister) that applies a slightly different coding procedure for the categorization of ministries. They diverge in two respects:

- the coding for the minister variables (variable name range p200) only takes the most important minister per portfolio and cabinet into account;
- the categories (variables) "Justice" (p206), "Education" (p210), "Industry/Trade" (p214), "Public Works" (p217), and "Other" (p218) are **not** present in the PIP Minister dataset.

For practical reasons, we separated the data file into pip_ts (categorical coding; the default) and pip_ts_minister (for the minister coding). Otherwise, both datasets are identical, so please consult the Codebook for all information about the PIP dataset. In this companion, we exemplify the differences in the minister coding.

Two Ways of Coding Ministerial Responsibility

The PIP provides data for two different ways of coding ministerial responsibilities. The first coding is based on the categorization of Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge (2000) and codes ministers according to their responsibilities. If two minister are coded in the same category, the categorical coding assumes that both ministers have an influence on the respective policy field. This, in turn, affects the final score of the government if one applies the minister model, and both ministers come from different parties. In this case, the government position is the average of the two ministerial positions. Since all ministers are weighted equally, this procedure is sometimes misleading as the following examples will show, although for certain research questions it is the right way to go. To reduce ambiguity, we introduced a new coding procedure for the Minister PIP in which *only the most important minister in a field, that is one category, is coded per cabinet.* This procedure may be better suited for analytical analyses because by definition no two ministers can influence the focal

policy field. The tables below show an example from the raw data collection before its aggregation to the party level for better understanding the differences.

In Germany 2018, in the Merkel IV government Peter Altmeier from the CDU/CSU was "Minister of Economics and Energy" while Hubertus Heil from the SPD was "Minister for Labour and Welfare" according to the EJPR Yearbooks. Given our adjusted minister coding scheme for Germany, this translates into Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge's (2000) categories "Economic" and "Public Works" for Minister Altmeier, and "Labour" and "Social Affairs" for Minister Heil respectively. In addition, Franziska Giffey (SPD) was Minister for "Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth", also coded as "Social Affairs", Andreas Scheuer (CDU/CSU) as Minister of "Transport and Digital Infrastructure" is coded as "Public Works", and Gerd Müller (CDU/CSU) being Minister for "Economic Cooperation and Development" is coded as "Economic".

Table: Default coding of ministers

Cabinet No.	Date of Appointment	Cabinet Name	Name	Party	Economic	Labour	Social Affairs	Public Works
33	14.03.2018	Merkel IV	Altmeier	CDU/CSU	1			1
33	14.03.2018	Merkel IV	Scheuer	CDU/CSU				1
33	14.03.2018	Merkel IV	Müller	CDU/CSU	1			
33	14.03.2018	Merkel IV	Heil	SPD		1	1	
33	14.03.2018	Merkel IV	Giffey	SPD			1	

This way of coding ministries into categories inevitably introduces some noise because it "equalizes" the responsibility and does not distinguish whether a certain portfolio is more important than the other e.g., "Economics and Energy" over "Economic Cooperation and Development" or "Labour and Welfare" over "Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth". For this reason, in the second dataset a unique minister coding is applied where we re-checked the portfolio allocation and only coded the major minister within one portfolio, that is one category per cabinet.

Table: Unique coding of ministers

Cabinet No.	Date of Appointment	Cabinet Name	Name	Party	Economic	Labour	Social Affairs	Public Works
33	14.03.2018	Merkel IV	Altmeier	CDU/CSU	1			1
33	14.03.2018	Merkel IV	Scheuer	CDU/CSU				
33	14.03.2018	Merkel IV	Müller	CDU/CSU				
33	14.03.2018	Merkel IV	Heil	SPD		1	1	
33	14.03.2018	Merkel IV	Giffey	SPD				

Applying the unique coding rule means that Ministers Giffey, Scheuer and Müller do not receive a coding for the categories "Economy," "Labour," "Social Affairs" and "Public Works". Only Altmeier represents "Economy" and "Public Works", and Heil the "Labour" and "Social Affairs" portfolios, respectively. When modelling the government according to the minister model and using the default codings, the ministries of economic, social affairs and public works would receive the mean of all ministers.

However, the two procedures can have a significant impact if ministers from different parties or with different positions "share" a portfolio category. An example from the Dutch government Rutte III in 2020 makes this clear: According to the default coding, the interior portfolio is shared by Mark Rutte ("Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs") from the VVD, Kaja Ollengreen ("Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Interior and Kingdom Relations") from D66, and Ferdinand Grapperhaus ("Minister for Justice and Security") from CDA. Using the unique ministerial coding, only Kaja Ollengreen is assigned the category "Interior". Instead of the mean of the three parties, the government score now represents the D66's ideological position. This is equal to a change from a left value of -2.27 for the categorical coding on the left-right dimension (LR; Jahn 2011) to -9.62 for the ministerial coding. Looking at the RILE (Budge et al. 2001), the left-right government position would even change from a right (2.68) to a left position (-6.51).

Table: Effect of coding on final government score

Party	Name	Interior	LR (ja10o)	GG (ja20o)	RILE (bu01o)
VVD	Rutte	1	2.93	-3.94	10.95
CDA	Grapperhaus	1	-0.13	-3.73	3.60
D66	Ollengreen	1	-9.62	-7.65	-6.51
		Mean for default coding	*-2.27*	*-5.11*	*2.68*

Thus said, the two coding procedures may affect the scores used in subsequent analyses. When applying the ASPM framework[1] one can easily switch between the two versions by specifying which one to use. In short, depending on one's research question, one or the other coding is preferrable, and the PIP allows to choose the proper dataset accordingly.

[1] https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/S0UGDC

References

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