# REPRESENTATIONAL INEQUALITY DATA CODING

## 1 - Policy Outcome Coding

(for variables OUTCOME and SWITCHER)

1. Combine categories “neither favor nor oppose” “DK” “no opinion” “haven’t heard enough” etc. into one category called “DK.”

2. If political decision makers completed their task (which might be congress *and* president) within a given time frame but the policy was not yet implemented it still counts as the change having occurred at that time.

3. Partial satisfaction of a proposed change:

A.
If close to the proposed change (80%) counts as change.
If far from the proposed change (20%) counts as no change.
If middle amount of change, add a “.5” to the year code of when change occurred
(e.g., if half of proposal occurred in year 3, code 3.5)

B.
If question asks about a specific dollar amount then
1. Judge whether a different specific amount would lead to a different response
(this might be a very different amount—e.g., a 1 billion dollar increase might generate the same survey response as a 10 billion dollar increase)
2. Consider the political context (e.g., if President purposes a specific level of increase which the question addresses and it does not pass, then code 0 unless the level that does pass is at least 80% of the proposed amount). If there is no specific proposal on the table, then revert to principle B1 above.

4. On issues that are generally dealt with at state or local level,

Keep question in data set if legislation including the proposed change or related kinds of policy changes was proposed by US congress or President (e.g., abortion restrictions were passed (late term) and proposed (parental consent)).

If entire policy area is just never dealt with at the federal level, drop question from data set .

5. Timing of policy change

If not within 4 years code 0
If within 2 years code 2
If within 3 years code 3
If within 4 years code 4

If change occurs but later reverts to status quo ante, still code as change having occurred
(within the time period of the original change)

6. Switcher

For most survey questions, "support" or "favor" means support for a proposed change in the status quo. For these questions switcher=0. But if the question asks about support (or "favor") for current policy or support for a change that has already occurred, switcher=1.

The critical thing is that the survey answer of "favor" or "support" must mean favor a change if switcher=0 and must mean favor the status quo if switcher=1.

If the survey question options are "favor change" and "favor status quo" (or something to that effect) then code switcher=2.

The questions will be analyzed as follows:

| | Respondents favors change | Respondent Opposes change |
|---|---|---|
| Switcher=0 | "Favor" or "Support" | "Oppose" |
| Switcher=1 | "Oppose" | "Favor" or "Support" |
| Switcher=2 | "Favor change" | "Favor status quo" |

Most of the switchers have an implicit comparison. For example, "Do you favor keeping American troops in South Korea?" or "Do you favor the recent increase in gasoline tax from 8 to 15 cents a gallon?" In these cases, look at the 4 years after the date of the question. if the existing policy was changed in the direction of the implicit comparison then the outcome should be coded as a change. (In these examples, if at least 20% of American troops were withdrawn from South Korea or if the gas tax was reduced by at least 20% of the previous change.)

Switchers without an explicit comparison should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

**2- Intuitional Responsibility Coding**
(for variable INSTRESP)

1=Congress acting along could bring about the proposed policy change, but the president acting alone could not (this includes ordinary legislation since the congress can override a presidential veto).

2=President acting along could bring about the proposed policy change, but not Congress.

3=Clear that either Cong or the pres could bring about the proposed policy change acting alone.

4=unclear whether Cong or pres could bring about the proposed policy change acting alone.

5=Constitutional amendment would be needed to bring about the proposed policy change. (Note: many questions ask whether the respondent would favor a proposed constitutional amendment.)

6=unclear what actor could bring about the proposed policy change.

7=combo of pres and Cong (ex. budget)

8=New Supreme Court ruling could bring about the proposed policy change. (Note: many questions directly ask whether the respondent would favor/oppose a past or possible future court ruling.)

**3 - Interest Group Alignment Coding**

(for variables INTGRP_STFAV, INTGRP_SWFAV, INTGRP_STOPP, and INTGRP_SWOPP)

Interest group coding was based on a list of 33 lobbying organizations identified on *Fortune's* "Power 25" surveys and the 10 industries not among those lobbying organizations with the highest lobbying expenditures according to opensecrets.org. See chapter 5 and appendix table A5.1 in *Affluence & Influence* for details.

The objective in coding the interest group alignments was not to identify all industry/interest groups that might have had an interest in a particular policy change but rather to identify only those industry/interest groups that would have enough stake in the proposed policy change to actively devote resources to making the change occur or preventing the change from occurring.

Coders used the numbered list of industry groups (1-129) from http://opensecrets.org/lobbyists/list_indus.asp but excluded groups 69, 72, 74, 77, and 80 because those groups are too broad or simply channel the preferences and resources of the individual members of the public that support the groups.

Coders identified each interest group as strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed to the policy change. To make these judgments, they considered both the magnitude of the impact of the policy change on the group or industry in question and also the extent to which the breadth of individual members of the group or industry would be affected. If the impact was BOTH broad across the group and substantial in affecting the group members' interests, it was coded as *strong*. If the impact was broad but would not strongly impact the group members interest, OR the impact was strong but was only likely to affect a portion of the group members, it was coded as *somewhat*, if the impact was not strong and only affected a portion of the members the group as not coded as favorable or opposed.