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Notification of the ethics commission (CER-SDS-7-2018)
Geneva School of Social Sciences – University of Geneva

Based on the information provided by Frédéric Varone and Luzia Helfer for the study **" Do MPs have accurate perceptions of public preferences ? ",** the commission considers that ethical issues have been adequately anticipated by the applicants. The project investigates to what extent MPs have correct perceptions regarding the electorate's preferences, and why heterogeneity in the accuracy of such perceptions exists among MPs. These questions are addressed by exploiting survey data on Swiss citizens and MPs. While the latter stakeholder is unproblematic, since providing opinions on publicly relevant issues is customary for MPs, individual data on Swiss citizens will be managed by FORS (Lausanne), who has previous experience with sensible data, and made available to the researchers in an anonymized form only. This implies that potentially sensible information, such as income, place of residence, etc. will be stored and treated with caution.

The aim and objectives of the project will be exposed to both categories of stakeholders prior to data collection and there is no evidence of any form of deception strategy. Recording is expected to take place during interviews with MPs, but only after express consent of the interviewee. It also seems the applicants have paid adequate attention to the sampling strategy and ensured all precautions to store and use the data correctly. Finally, no conflicts with regard to the funding are visible at this stage.

On this basis, the ethics commission of the Geneva School of Social Sciences considers that this project conforms to established ethics standards.

C. Burton-Jeangros

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