Codebook for datasets for "Can Elites Escape Blame by Explaining Themselves?"

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This codebook details the contents of the three .dta files associated with "Can Elites Escape Blame by Explaining Themselves?" Variable names are typically given in lowercase (to match their capitalization in the data files).

Experiment 1

Filename: "exp1_cleaned.dta"

- **Treatment Variables**
  - conditions: Indicator for which condition respondent assigned to;
    - 1 Base: Dem; 2 Base: Rep; 3 Vote: Rep; 4 Vote: Dem; 5 Expl: Dem; 6 Expl: Rep; 7 LT: Rep; 8 LT: Dem; 9 NP: Rep; 10 NP: Dem; 11 Partisan: Dem; 12 Partisan: Rep
    - Base = No information baseline
    - Vote = voted for policy without explanation
    - Dem/Rep = Democratic or Republican politician
    - LT = local teachers; NP = non-partisan source
  - cond_info: 1 = Baseline, 2 = Vote (no expl.), 3 = Justification, 4 = Just w/LT counter, 5 = Just w/NP counter, 6 = Just w/Partisan counter
  - cond_party: 0 = Dem legislator, 1 = Republican legislator
  - cond_party1: 1 = Co-Partisan, 2 = Opposing Partisan, 3 = Independent Respondent
  - cond_info1: 1 = Baseline, 2 = Vote, 3 = Explanation, 4 = High Credibility Counter, 5 = Low Credibility Counter
- **Outcome Variables**
  - therm & therm01: Politician feeling thermometer, either on 0-10 or 0-1 scale
  - therm_timing: Time in seconds reading information and answering thermometer item
  - credit: How much credit the politician deserves for vote (1 = no credit, 5 = a great deal of credit)
  - blame: How much blame the politician deserves for the vote (1 = no blame, 5 = a great deal of blame)
  - agree & agree1: Agreement with vote; For agree: 1 = disagree, 2 = neither, 3 = agree; for agree1: -1 = disagree, 0 = neither, 1 = agree
  - Motives
    - Respondents were asked how important a series of goals were in explaining the politician's behavior. Each of these items ranges from 1 = very unimportant, 3 = neither, 5 = very important.
      - mot_reelect: re-election
      - mot_pander: Pandering to voters
      - mot_special: special interests
      - mot_values: politician's values
      - mot_pref: politician's policy preferences
      - mot_ideol: ideological reasons
      - mot_all: desire to help all state residents

        - mot_const: desire to help constituents
        - mot_policy: desire to make good policy
    - Indices were formed from these items:
        - motives_rep_factor, motives_political_factor, motives_principles_factor: created via factor analysis
        - *_mean: created via averaging across items
  - satisfaction: respondent satisfaction with the justification offered by the politician; 1 = extremely dissatisfied, 2 = moderately, 3 = somewhat, 4 = neither, ... 7 = extremely satisfied
  - corr_party: Respondents were asked which party the politician belonged to. 1 = Correct, 0 = Incorrect/DK
  - corr_position: also asked whether the politician voted for or against the amendment described in the information. 1 = correct, 0 = incorrect/dk
- **Respondent Characteristics**
  - interest: Respondent political interest; 1 = not at all, 4 = moderately, 7 = extremely
  - Ideology
    - ideol_gen, ideol_social, ideol_econ: Ideological self-placements either in general, on social issues, or on economic issues. 1-7 scales: 1 = extremely liberal, 2 = moderately, 3 = slightly, 4 = moderate, ... 7 = extremely conservative
  - Partisanship
    - pid: 7-pt pid scale; 1 = str dem, 2 = not str dem, 3 = lean dem, 4 = pure independent, ... 7 = strong rep
    - pid_3: 1 = Democrat, 2 = Independent, 3 = Republican
    - pid_2: 0 = Democrat, 1 = Republican
    - pid_ext: Folded PID scale: 1 = Pure Ind, 2 = Leaner, 3 = Not Str., 4 = Str.
    - PID Identity Strength:
        - pid_imp: Importance of partisan identity; 1 = not at all imp, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = very, 5 = extremely
        - pid_describe: How well the partisan label describes you; 1 = not at all, 2 = not very well, 3 = very well, 4 = extremely
        - pid_think: How much one things of self through partisan label; 1 = not at all; 2 = very little; 3 = somewhat; 4 = a great deal
        - pid_moral: How much one connects partisanship to moral values; 1 = not at all; 2 = slightly; 3 = moderately; 4 = much; 5 = very much
        - pid_idstr_factor & pid_idstr_alpha: PID Id strength index. The former formed via a factor analysis (M=0, SD=1), the latter via the alpha command. correlation = 0.997.
  - Cynicism
    - cyn_listens, cyn_intent, cyn_bought, cyn_promises, cyn_crooked
        - Respondents were asked to agree/disagree with five statements.
        - What politicians say depends on who is listening (cyn_listens)
        - Politicians generally have good intentions (cyn_intent)
        - Many politicians can be bought (cyn_bought)
        - Despite what some say, most politicians try to keep their promises (cyn_promises)
        - Quite a few of the people running government are crooked (cyn_crooked)
        - All items range from 1-5 with higher answers indicating more cynicism
    - cyn_mean & cyn_factor: Index created from the five items either via averaging across them or via factor analysis. Alpha for five items: 0.78. Correlation between indices: 0.999.
  - Demographics
    - age: Age in years
    - age_cat: categorical version of age: 1 = 18-29, 2 = 30-44, 3 = 45-64, 4 = 65+
    - educ_full: 1 = < HS; 2 = HS; 3 = Some College; 4 = Associate Degree; 5 = BA; 6 = MA; 7 = PhD; 8 = Professional Degree
    - educ: 1 = < HS, 2 = HS, 3 = Some College, 4 = BA, 5 = Post-BA
    - gender: 0 = male, 1 = female
    - hispanic: 0 = not hispanic, 1 = hispanic

* race: 1 = White, 2 = Black, 3 = Asian, 4 = Other
* race_eth: 1 = White, non Hispanic; 2 = Black, non Hispanic; 3 = Asian; 4 = Hispanic/Latino; 5 = Other
* income: 1 = < 10,000; 2 = $10,000 to $19,999; 3 $20,000 to $29,999; 4 $30,000 to $39,999; 5 $40,000 to $49,999; 6 $50,000 to $59,999; 7 $60,000 to $69,999; 8 $70,000 to $79,999; 9 $80,000 to $89,999; 10 $90,000 to $99,999; 11 $100,000 to $149,999; 12 $150,000 or more
* inc_cat (Household income): 1 = < 10,000; 2 = 10,000-39,999; 3 = 40-69,999; 4 = 70-99,999; 5 = 100,000-149,999; 6 = 150,000+

Experiment 2

Filename: "exp2_cleaned.dta"

- **Treatment Variables**
  - treat_party: 0 = Dem legislator; 1 = Rep legislator
  - copartisan: 1 = copartisan; 2 = opposing partisan; 3 = Independent respondent
  - copartisan_1: 0 = opposing partisan; 1 = copartisan
  - treat_expl: 1 = No Explanation, 2 = Explanation, 3 = High Credibility Counter, 4 = Low Credibility Counter
  - treat_expl_1: 1 = No Explanation, 2 = Explanation, 3 = Counter-Explanation
- **Outcome Variables**
  - therm_pre & therm_pre01: "Pre-test" or initial evaluation (0-10; 0-1)
  - therm_post & therm_post01: Post-test evaluation (0-10; 0-1)
  - therm_diff, therm_diff_1, therm_diff01: Post Test - Pre Test (original scale; rescaled to range between 0-1; difference between 0-1 scaled items)
  - therm_change: 1 = negative change in evaluations; 2 = no change in evaluation; 3 = positive change
  - legislator_timing: time spent reading the pre-test legislator profile information
  - timing_expl: time spent reading the treatment materials
  - policy: approval of policy in vignette (1 = str. disapprove, 2 = moderately disapprove, 3 = slightly, 4 = neither... 7 = strongly approve)
  - credit: How much credit the politician deserves for vote (1 = no credit, 5 = a great deal of credit)
  - blame: How much blame the politician deserves for the vote (1 = no blame, 5 = a great deal of blame)
  - cred_blame: Relative credit (credit - blame)
  - Motives
    - 1 = very unimportant, 3 = neither, 5 = very important
      - winning: Winning re-election
      - ambition: Political ambition
      - interests: The influence of special interests
      - loyalty: Loyalty to higher-ups in his political party
      - values: Personal values
      - helpall: A desire to help all state residents
      - helpcons: A desire to help constituents
      - goodpolicy: A desire to make good public policy
    - posmot & negmot: index of motive items following factor analysis (positive = values to good policy; negative = winning to loyalty)
    - motdiff = posmot - negmot
    - posmot_cfa, negmot_cfa, motdiff_cfa: The same but now using CFA rather than EFA to generate the index. Key difference is that the EFA analyses are rotated and hence yields uncorrelated dimensions. The CFA allows the two to be correlated (r = -0.56).
  - recall: Could the respondent correctly recall the legislators partisanship; 1 = Correct, 2 = Incorrect, 3 = Can't Recall
- **Respondent Characteristics**
  - id: Respondent id
  - Ideology
    - ideol_gen, ideol_social, ideol_econ: Ideological self-placements either in general, on social issues, or on economic issues. 1-7 scales: 1 = extremely liberal, 2 = moderately, 3 = slightly, 4 = moderate, ... 7 = extremely conservative
  - Partisanship
    - pid: 7-pt pid scale; 1 = str dem, 2 = not str dem, 3 = lean dem, 4 = pure independent, ... 7 = strong rep
    - pid_3: 1 = Democrat, 2 = Independent, 3 = Republican
    - pid_2: 0 = Democrat, 1 = Republican

    * pid_ext: Folded PID scale: 1 = Pure Ind, 2 = Leaner, 3 = Not Str., 4 = Str.
- Need for Affect & Cognition
    * Three items on Need for Affect, each an agree/disagree item; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither, ... 5 = str. agree
        · feelings: important for me to be in touch with my feelings
        · emotional: I am a very emotional person
        · str_emotions: Strong emotions are generally beneficial
    * Three items tapping Need for Cognition; 1 = extremely uncharacteristic, 2 = somewhat, 3 = uncertain, 4 = somewhat characteristic, 5 = extremely characteristic
        · complex: I would prefer complex to simple problems
        · deliberating: I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me
        · thinking: Thinking is not my idea of fun (reverse coded here, so higher = more nfc)

    * nfa and nfc: indices of the respective items, formed from a confirmatory factor analysis.
- Demographics
    * gender: 0 = male, 1 = female
    * age: Age in years
    * age_cat: categorical version of age: 1 = 18-29, 2 = 30-44, 3 = 45-64, 4 = 65+
    * hispanic: 0 = not hispanic, 1 = hispanic
    * race: 1 = White, 2 = Black, 3 = Asian, 4 = Other
    * race_eth: 1 = White, non Hispanic; 2 = Black, non Hispanic; 3 = Asian; 4 = Hispanic/Latino; 5 = Other
    * educ_full: 1 = < HS; 2 = HS; 3 = Some College; 4 = Associate Degree; 5 = BA; 6 = MA; 7 = PhD; 8 = Professional Degree
    * educ: 1 = HS or Less; 2 = Some College; 3 = BA; 4 = Post-BA
    * income: 1 = < 10,000; 2 = $10,000 to $19,999; 3 $20,000 to $29,999; 4 $30,000 to $39,999; 5 $40,000 to $49,999; 6 $50,000 to $59,999; 7 $60,000 to $69,999; 8 $70,000 to $79,999; 9 $80,000 to $89,999; 10 $90,000 to $99,999; 11 $100,000 to $149,999; 12 $150,000 or more
    * inc_cat (Household income): 1 = < 10,000; 2 = 10,000-39,999; 3 = 40-69,999; 4 = 70-99,999; 5 = 100,000-149,999; 6 = 150,000+
    * vermont: Vermont resident? 1 = yes (n=8), 0 = no

Experiment 3

Filename: "exp3_cleaned.dta"

- **Treatment Variables**
  - gil_treat & corker_treat: Embedded data capturing the randomization to respective treatment conditions.
  - treat_order: 0 = received Corker experiment first, 1 = received Gillibrand experiment first
  - gil_exp & corker_exp: 1 = No explanation condition, 2 = justification condition, 3 = left-wing counter condition, 4 = right-wing counter condition
  - gil_exp_1 & corker_exp_1: 1 = no explanation condition, 2 = justification condition, 3 = counter-explanation condition
  - gil_prox & corker_prox: 1 = gain proximity from politician action, 2 = lose proximity, 3 = no respondent issue attitude
  - gil_partisan & corker_partisan: 1 = co-partisan to politician, 2 = opposing partisan to politician, 3 = Pure Independent respondent
- **Outcome Variables**
  - gil_article_timing, gil_opinion_timing, gil_motive_timing: response times for reading the article, providing an opinion, and responding to the motive items for Gillibrand
    - gil_post, gil_post01, corker_post, corker_post01: Post-test evaluations for the politicians, either on a 0-10 or 0-1 ("01") scale.
  - Motives
    - Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of a variety of motives for the politicians, as captured in the politician_motive variables. Responses range from 1 = very unimportant, 2 = unimportant, 3 = neither... 7 = very important. Versions on a 0-1 scale are also provided (i.e. gil_reelection01).

    - *_reelection: win re-election
    - *_ambition: political ambition
    - *_interests: influence of special interests
    - *_persgain: personal gain
    - *_helpcons: help constituents
    - *_policy: make good policy
    - gil_neg_*, gil_pos_*, corker_neg_*, and corker_pos_*: Negative and positive motive indices of these items, formed via factor analysis (_fac) or via averaging (_mean). Rescaled to range from 0-1 in the _01 items (gil_neg_fac_01).
- **Respondent Characteristics**
  - Pre-Test Politician Evaluations
    - gil_pre; sanders; pelosi; corker_pre; mcconnell; kasich
      - Favorability ratings for Gillibrand (pre-test), Bernie Sanders, Nancy Pelosi, Bob Corker (pre-test), Mitch McConnell, John Kasich.
      - 1 = Favorable, 2 = Unfavorable, 3 = No Opinion
    - gil_pre_1 & corker_pre_1: -1 = unfavorable, 0 = no opinion, 1 = favorable
  - Ideology
    - Operational Ideology
      - q14: grant legal status to illegal immigrants; 1 = agree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure
      - q15: should be stronger restrictions on guns; 1 = agree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure
      - q16: implement a universal healthcare program; 1 = agree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure
      - q17: employers should be able to refuse birth control for religious reasons; 1 = agree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure
      - immigration, guns, health, birthcontrol: recoded versions of above where -1 = liberal attitude, 0 = no opinion, +1 = conservative attitude

      - taxcuts: How much respondent opposes/supports Trump/Republican tax cuts. 1 = strongly oppose, 2 = somewhat oppose, 3 = somewhat support, 4 = strongly support

- taxcuts_binary: 0 = oppose, 1 = support Trump/Republican tax cuts
- taxcuts_wdk: -2 = str. oppose, -1 = somewhat oppose, 0 = no opinion given, +1 = somewhat support, +2 = str. support for Trump/Republican tax cuts
- taxcuts_3: -1 = oppose, 0 = no onion given, +1 = support Trump/Republican tax cuts

* Symbolic Placements
  - self_ideol: dem_ideol; rep_ideol: Respondent self placement and placement of the two parties. 1 = very liberal, 2 = somewhat liberal, 3 = closer to liberals, 4 = neither liberal nor conservative, ... 7 = very conservative
  - self_ideol_3: 1 = liberal, 2 = moderate, 3 = conservative
  - ideol_ext: 1 = neither liberal/conservative, 2 = closer to liberal or conservative, 3 = somewhat liberal or conservative, 4 = very liberal or conservative
  - dem_prox & rep_prox: perceived ideological proximity (|Self Ideology - Party Ideology|)

– Need for Cognition
* The following items asked respondents how well the description fit them with a response scale of 1 = extremely well to 5 = not well at all. Higher values on the original scale thus indicate more NFC on thinkingfun and littlethought while lower values on the next two items should reveal less NFC. "deliberating" and "abstract" thus provide the responses to these final two questions reversed so that higher values indicate the theoretically expected finding of higher NFC (with q24 and q25 giving the originally scaled responses). However, the rescaled items actually *negatively* correlate with thinkingfun and littlethought.
  - thinkingfun: thinking is not my idea of fun
  - littlethought: prefer doing something with little thought
  - q24: I usually end up deliberating about issues when they do not affect me personally (higher = less NFC)
  - q25: the notion of thinking abstractly is appealing to me (higher = less NFC)
  - deliberating: I usually end up deliberating about issues when they do not affect me personally (higher = more NFC)
  - abstract: the notion of thinking abstractly is appealing to me (higher = more NFC)

– Political Knowledge
* Original Questions
  - q77: What percentage of the House and Senate is needed to override a Presidential veto; 1 = a bare majority, 2 = two-thirds, 3 = three-fourths, 4 = ninety percent, 5 = not sure
  - q78: In the case of a tied vote in the US Senate, is the deciding vote cast by the Vice President, the President, the Senate Majority Leader, or the Senate Parliamentarian? 1 = Vice President, 2 = President, 3 = Senate Majority Leader, 4 = Senate Parliamentarian, 6 = Not sure
  - q79: Which political party currently has more members in the US House of Representatives? 1 = Democratic Party, 2 = Republican Party, 3 = Not Sure
* Rescaled:
  - veto, tiebreaker, majority: 1 = correct, 0 = incorrect/dk
  - partyplace: 1 = placed Democratic Party to the left of the Republicans; 0 = placed Democrats equal to or to the right of the Republicans (missing data on either placement not counted)
* Scales:
  - knowl_irt: based on IRT model
  - knowl: mean correct

– Partisanship & PID
* Party Evaluations
  - dem_therm and rep_therm: 0-100 pt. feeling thermometers for the two parties
  - rep_extreme & dem_extreme: Is the party in question too extreme (=1), not too extreme (=2), don't know (=3)
  - rep_extreme_text & dem_extreme_text: open-ended responses for why the party is too extreme (if party too extreme = 1)
  - rep_extreme_text_timing & dem_extreme_text_timing: how long the respondent wrote

about party extremity
        - rep_extreme_1 & dem_extreme_1: 0 = party not too extreme/DK, 1 = party too extreme
        - both_extreme: 1 = neither party too extreme, 2 = Dems too extreme, Reps not, 3 = Reps too extreme, Dems not, 4 = Both parties too extreme
        - party_order: 0 = asked thermometer items first, 1 = asked extremity items first
    * Respondent partisanship
        - pid & leaner: embedded data capturing (in string form) respondents answer to the first PID question and, for leaners, their response to the 'which party do you lean to' follow up
        - partyid: 1-7 pt PID scale (1 = strong dem, 2 = not strong dem, 3 = lean dem, 4 = Pure ind, ... 7 = str. rep)
        - pid_3: 1 = Democrat, 2 = Republican, 3 = Pure Independent
        - pid_2: 0 = Republican, 1 = Democrat
        - pid_ext: Folded PID scale (1 = pure Independent, 2 = leaner, 3 = not strong, 4 = strong partisan)
        - pid_imp: How important is being a Republican/Democrat to you? 1 = not important at all, 2 = not very important, 3 = very important, 4 = extremely important
        - pid_describe: How well does the term Republican/Democrat describe you? 1 = Not at all, 2 = not very well, 3 = Very well, 4 = Extremely Well
        - pid_idstr: Average of pid_imp and pid_describe (which are correlated at r = 0.75)
- Opinionation
    * gil_pre_dk, sanders_dk, pelosi_dk, corker_pre_dk, mcconnell_dk, kasich_dk, taxcuts_dk, q14_dk, q15_dk, q16_dk, q17_dk: 0 = no opinion/don't know response, 1 = provided attitude
    * opinionation: mean of the _dk items, i.e. proportion of answers giving substantive response
- Demographics
    * birthyear: year of birth
    * age & age01: Age in years
    * age_cat: 1 = 18-24, 2 = 25-34, 3 = 35-44, 4 = 45-54, 5 = 55-64, 6 = 65+
    * gender: 0 = male, 1 = female
    * educ_full: 1 = <HS, 2 = HS, 3 = Some College, 4 = Associate Degree, 5 = BA, 6 = Master's, 7 = Doctoral, 8 = Professional
    * educ_trunc: 1 = <HS, 2 = HS grad, 3 = Some college, 4 = BA, 5 = Post-BA
    * hispanic: 0 = not Hispanic, 1 = Hispanic
    * race_full: 1 = White, 2 = Black, 3 = American Indian, 4 = Asian, 5 = Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 6 = Other
    * race_eth: 1 = White, Non Hispanic, 2 = Black, non Hispanic, 3 = Hispanic, 4 = Asian, 5 = Other
    * house_income (household income): 1 <10,000; 2 10-19,999; 3 20-29,999; 4 30-39,999; 5 40-49,999; 6 50-59,999; 7 60-69,999; 8 70-79,999; 9 80-89,999 10 90-99,999; 11 100-149,999; 12 150,000 or more
    * state: state of residence
    * gil_state & corker_state: 1 = from state of the politician, 0 = not
    * endingcomments: open-ended text entry at end of survey