MEMBERSHIP IN POLITICAL PARTY - General Target Variable Report (GVR)

1. General Information

The target variable T_MEMBER_PARTY measures respondents' self-reported current membership (i.e. at the time of the interview) in political parties or groups. T_MEMBER_PARTY is a dichotomous variable (see Table 1.1). It takes the value 1 whenever respondents report that they are currently members of political parties or groups. The variable takes the value 0 whenever respondents indicate that they are not members of political parties or groups. The target variable T_MEMBER_PARTY is accompanied by a harmonization control variable C_MEMBER_PARTY_EXTEND, which flags survey items that ask not only about a party but also other political groups within the same question.

The target variable report for T_MEMBER_PARTY is accompanied by the following Excel documents:

- one Detailed Variable Report (DVR): T_MEMBER_PARTY_DVR_SDR2.xlsx. DVR Excel files in SDR2 systemize all information about source variables that were used for harmonization into a given target variable of the SDR2 database;
- one Crosswalk Table (CWT): T_MEMBER_PARTY_CWT_SDR2.xlsx. CWT Excel files in SDR2 contain details about mapping of source values to target values.

Table 1.1 Membership in political party: Description of the target, source, and control variables

	Variable description	**Variable name**	**Variable values**[a]
Target variable	Being a member of a political party or political group at the time of the interview	T_ MEMBER_PARTY	0 = Currently not member 1 = Currently member
Source variables			See: T_MEMBER_PARTY _DVR_SDR2.xlsx T_MEMBER_PARTY_CWT _SDR2.xlsx
Control variable	Extended definition of membership in party (group)	C_MEMBER_PARTY _EXTEND	0 = Membership in party 1 = Membership in party or political group

[a] Missing values are assigned according to the SDR2 missing codes schema, provided in the Appendix.

2. Survey Projects

Source variables that we used for T_MEMBER_PARTY appear in 16 international survey projects: ABS, AMB, ARB, CDCEE, CNEP, EB, ESS, EVS, ISJP, ISSP, LB, LITS, NEB, PA2, PPE7N, WVS, 45 waves and 785 national surveys. The data cover 108 countries and years from 1966 to 2016.

3. General Rules and Procedures

3.1. Source data description

To construct the target variable T_MEMBER_PARTY, we use source items providing information about respondents' membership in political parties and groups at the time of the interview. We rely on the English language and Spanish language questionnaires and codebooks describing the source survey data.

The majority of source surveys provide a list of organizations for respondents to mark membership in (e.g. CNEP/3 Spain `Z.Sp.F.AsoNA`: "To which of the following organizations do you belong? SHOW CARD") or ask respondents an open-ended question with answer options categorized by the interviewer (e.g. ABS/4 Philippines `q21`: "On the following card, we have listed various types of organizations that many people belong to. Could you identify the three most important organizations or formal groups you belong to. You can also tell us the name of the organizations that you belong to and we can identify the appropriate categories for you").

We define as 'political' those organizations described as political parties (e.g. ARB/3 `q501b`), political parties or groups, political parties or organizations (EB/62.2 `v287`), political clubs or societies (EB/8 `v94`), and the League of Communists / the Socialist Alliance (PPE7N Yugoslavia `V133` and `V139`; see Special Cases).

Source items exhibit some variation in terms of value labels. Some surveys only ask about the fact of membership or belonging, providing binary answer options such as 'yes' and 'no'; 'belongs' and 'does not belong'; 'mentioned' and 'not mentioned' (e.g. CNEP/3, EB/8, WVS/1-6). Others enable respondents to mark whether they are active or inactive members (e.g. PPE7N Yugoslavia `V133` and ISSP/2014 `V27`), which parties are they members of (as in ISJP/1-2 `v13034`), or if these are in government or opposition (LB/2013 `PERPART`).

3.2. Rules of transformation of source variables into target variable

For ex-post harmonization, we select only source variables that refer to respondents' membership in a political party or group at the time of the interview. We do not harmonize variables about past membership/belonging.

We assign the target value 0 whenever respondents state that they are not a member of a political party or political group (e.g. ‘no’, ‘not a member’, ‘does not belong to any organization’, ‘not marked’, ‘not mentioned’, ‘other’).

We assign the target value 1 whenever respondents report membership in a political party or political group (such as ‘yes’, ‘member’, ‘belong’, ‘mentioned’, ‘marked’, ‘active member’, ‘inactive member’). This rule applies to dummy source variables, as well as to source variables asking about intensity of belonging to a party (LB/2007 `p65na`, and PPE7N Yugoslavia `V133` and `V139`), or active or passive membership (e.g. in ISSP/2014 `V27` “1|Belong and actively participate” and “2|Belong but don't actively participate” were both coded as 1).

When source questions are open, as in CNEP/3 Taiwan (“Could you please tell me if you belong to any of the types of organizations?”), or when they ask respondents to write down three of the most important organizations or formal groups they belong to (as in ABS/2-4), we code T_MEMBER_PARTY and C_MEMBER_PARTY_EXTEND, respectively, depending if a respondent indicates membership in a political party or political group.

Missing values and different situations that warrant to be treated as missing data are coded according to the SDR2 missing codes schema, provided in Table A.1 in the Appendix.

3.3. Methodological variables that accompany T_MEMBER_PARTY

The target variable T_MEMBER_PARTY is accompanied by a harmonization control variable C_MEMBER_PARTY_EXTEND. It takes the value 0 when a source question asks about “political party” only. It takes the value 1 if a source question asks not only about membership in “political party” but also some other organizations, e.g. “political parties or groups,” “political parties or organizations” or “political clubs or societies” (as in EB/8 `v94`).

4. Special Cases

- We assigned the target value 1 to positive answers about belonging to the League of Communists and to membership in the Socialist Alliance (PPE7N Yugoslavia `V133` and `V139`), for the following reason: In 1978 (i.e. when the survey was conducted), the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, affiliated with the umbrella mass organization Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia, was the only legal political party in the country controlling all the seats in Federal Assembly of SFR Yugoslavia. The question, therefore, does not refer to one specific party among many, but measures formal party membership in Yugoslavia at that time. The Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia, on the other hand, was not formally a political party.

Appendix: Codes for missing values in SDR2

In the SDR database v.2 we identify different situations that warrant to be treated as missing data. Table A.1 lists all SDR2 missing value codes:

Table A.1. Codes for missing values in SDR2

SDR tag [a]	SPSS (STATA) codes	Label
		Standardized source codes for missing values
DK	-1 (.a)	Don't know
NA	-2 (.b)	No answer
REF	-3 (.c)	Refusal
DU	-4 (.d)	Don't understand the question
DNR	-5 (.e)	Any combination of DK, NA, REF, DU
INAP	-6 (.f)	Inapplicable
NEC	-7 (.g)	Not elsewhere classified
		SDR created codes for missing values
UNFIT	-8 (.h)	Source value does not fit to target
ERR	-9 (.i)	Errors in source data and undocumented source values
COMBI	-10 (.j)	Different missing codes on multiple sources taken for a target
CINAP	-11 (.k)	For control variables only: inapplicable
INSUF	-12 (.l)	For survey: Insufficiently defined response categories
QNA	-20 (.t)	For survey: Question not available

[a] Abbreviations for the labels corresponding to the SDR2 codes for missing values. These tags are used in the Crosswalk Table (CWT) files (Excel) that accompany documentation of SDR2 target variables.

In exceptional situations when codes for missing data listed in Table A.1 cannot be used, we apply a system missing <null> value.