NEVER DISCUSS POLITICS - General Target Variables Report (GVR)

1. General Information

The target variable T_NEVER_DISCPOL measures respondents' assessment of never having discussed politics with their social network, e.g., with friends, family, neighbors, or colleagues. The measure is dichotomous. It takes the value 1 when respondents report that they have never discussed politics with their social network, otherwise 0 (see Table 1.1).

The target variable T_NEVER_DISCPOL is accompanied by harmonization control variables (see Table 1.1 and Section 3.3) specifying: non-standard source question wording (C_NEVER_DISCPOL_NONSTANDARD); members of the social network (C_NEVER_DISCPOL_WITH); scale length, i.e. number of answer options (C_NEVER_DISCPOL_NUMBER); and level of politics (C_NEVER_ DISCPOL_LEVEL).

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

- The Detailed Variable Report (DVR): T_NEVER_ DISCPOL_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;
- A Crosswalk Table (CWT): T_NEVER_DISCPOL_CWT_SDR2.xlsx.
  CWT Excel files in SDR2 contain details about mapping of source values to target values.

Table 1.1. NEVER DISCUSS POLITICS: Description of the target, source, and control variables.

	Variable description	**Variable name**	**Variable values**[a]
Target variable	Respondent reports to have never discussed politics with others	T_NEVER_DISCPOL	1 = never discuss politics 0 = otherwise
Source variables			See: T_NEVER_DISCPOL_DVR_SDR2.xlsx T_NEVER_DISCPOL_CWT_SDR2.xlsx.
Control variables	Nonstandard wording of source question about 'discussing politics'	C_NEVER_DISCPOL_NONSTANDARD	1 = discuss politics and current affairs 2 = discuss (national) affairs/ problems 3 = discuss party politics or party leaders

			0 = standard question: discuss politics/political matters (also national)
	Source question is about discussing 'national politics'	C_NEVER_DISCPOL_LEVEL	1 = national, selected from set of questions 2 = national, only one question available 0 = level not specified (discussing politics/current affairs in general)
	Source question specifies discussion partners for politics	C_NEVER_DISCPOL_WITH	1 = friends 2 = friends or family/relatives 3 = friends or neighbors 4 = friends, relatives or fellow workers 0 = with whom unspecified
	Number of answer options in source question 'discussing politics'	C_NEVER_DISCPOL_NUMBER	3 = 3 options 4 = 4 options 5 = 5 options 7 = 7 options 10 = 10 options

[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_NEVER_DISCPOL appear in 18 international survey projects: ABS, AFB, AMB, ASES, CB, CDCEE, CNEP, EB, ESS, ISJP, ISSP, LB, NBB, PA1, PA2, PPE7N, VPCPCE, WVS, 83 waves and 1352 national surveys. The data cover 131 countries and years from 1966 to 2017.

3. General Rules and Procedures

3.1. Source data description

To construct the target variable T_NEVER_DISCPOL, we use source items about respondents' retrospective assessment of having discussed politics with their social network, e.g., with friends, family, neighbors, or colleagues. We rely on the English language questionnaires and codebooks describing the source survey data.

Typical questions on discussing politics in the source surveys are:

- *When you get together with your friends, relatives or fellow workers how often do you discuss politics?* (ISSP/2004);
- *How often do you talk about politics with other people?* (NBB/1-6);

- *When you get together with your friends, would you say you discuss political matters frequently, occasionally or never?* (WVS/1-6).

3.2.Rules of transformation of source variables into target variable

For ex-post harmonization, we select source variables that refer to respondents' reported retrospective assessment of discussing politics with their network. We do not harmonize questions about how often respondents follow politics in the news, how much interest the respondents have in politics, and interviewers' assessments of respondent's interest in politics.

If respondents report that they have never discussed politics with their social network, we assign the value 1 to T_NEVER_DISCPOL. In a few surveys, respondents are asked about their *intention* to discuss politics. Whenever the respondent's answer indicates that s/he has not discussed politics with their social network (although s/he might do so in the future, e.g. "no, but would do if there is a chance" (AFB/2), we code T_NEVER_DISCPOL=1. When respondents report that they have discussed politics with anyone from their network, we assign the target value 0.

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_NEVER_DISCPOL

The target variable T_NEVER_DISCPOL is accompanied by four harmonization control variables (see also Table 1.1):

C_NEVER_DISCPOL_NONSTANDARD captures deviations from the most frequently used (i.e. standard) wording of source questions in source data files: discussing *politics / (national) political matters* (e.g., AMB/2008, EB/77). If the source question wording is standard, C_NEVER_DISCPOL_NONSTANDARD takes the value 0. The measure takes the value 1 if respondents are asked about discussing *politics and current affairs* (e.g., CB/2012, EB/62, ESS/1). It takes the value 2 if the question refers to discussing *national affairs/problems* (e.g., PPE7N Nigeria). It takes the value 3 if the question specifies discussing *party politics or party leaders* (e.g., ASES).

C_NEVER_DISCPOL_LEVEL indicates if the source measure asks about discussing national politics, or politics in general, and if the 'national politics' question was part of a set of source questions on discussing politics in a given survey, or the only question available. C_NEVER_DISCPOL_LEVEL takes the value 1 if the question asks about discussing national politics and it is selected from a set of source questions (e.g., ASES). It takes the value 2 if the question asks about discussing national politics and is the only available question (e.g., NBB/1-6). If the source question asks about discussing politics in general, C_NEVER_DISCPOL_LEVEL takes the value 0.

C_NEVER_DISCPOL_WITH specifies members of social network the respondents discuss politics with. When the question is about discussing politics with *friends,* we assign the value 1 (e.g., WVS/1-6); with *friends or family/relatives*, we assign the value 2 (e.g., ABS/2); with *friends or neighbors*, we assign the value 3 (e.g., AFB/2); with *friends, relatives or fellow workers*, we assign the value 4 (e.g., ISSP/2014). When members of social networks are not specified, we assign the value 0 to C_NEVER_DISCPOL_WITH (e.g., LB/2006).

C_NEVER_DISCPOL_NUMBER indicates the number of source answer options (i.e. scale length). The control takes the values 3, 4, 5, 7 or 10, corresponding to how many response options a given the source question uses. Answer options in the source data vary in terms of:

(a) frequency of political discussions taking place. Here we encounter source answer options that list (and label) the precise number of times such discussions take place per week/month, e.g., '*daily*', '*a few times a week'*, '*a few times a month'*, '*rarely*', '*never*' (AMB/2008); and answer options that provide a frequency scale with only the endpoints labeled: 1 'never' to 10 'always' (only in CB/2012, 2013, 2015);

(b) frequency and intention to discuss politics, e.g., '*no, would never do this*', '*no, but would do it if had the chance*', '*yes, once or twice*', '*yes, several times*', '*yes, often*' (AFB/2).

4. Special cases

1. AFB/1 has a different formulation of a question on a national survey level that influences our coding of C_NEVER_DISCPOL_WITH and C_NEVER_DISCPOL_NUMBER for this project wave. For example, in some countries the question is "When you get together with friends, would you say you discuss political matters…?", yet in other countries of the same AFB/1 survey wave, the wording is "How often do you discuss politics and government with other people?".
2. In AFB/2 the question asks not only about the fact of discussing politics, but also about the intention to discuss: "Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year. If not, would you do this if you had the chance: Discussed politics with friends or neighbors?" The answer options are: "0|No, would never do this, 1|No, but would do if had the chance, 2|Yes, once or twice, 3|Yes, several times, 4|Yes, often." We code 'No, would never do this' and 'No, but would do if had the chance' = 1, the rest as 'Otherwise' = 0.
3. ASES `V0171` asks whether the respondent talks "about [JAPANESE] party politics or party leaders with family and friends". The response categories include "1|Have often done, 2|Have done once or twice, 3|Might do, 4|Would never do". We code 'Would never do' and 'Might do' = 1, the rest as 'Otherwise' = 0.
4. In CNEP/4 Spain the variable label for `p2` source variable is absent from the data dictionary. We assume that this variable corresponds to the question on discussing politics from the source questionnaire for two main reasons: (1) the number of the variable in the

questionnaire and variable name in the data dictionary are identical and (2) value categories are the same. Note: the variable comes from the pre-election questionnaire.

5. CNEP/4 Spain `p2`: response option captures both “never and almost never” (“Nunca o casi nunca”). We code it as 1 = never discuss politics.
6. PPE7N Austria `V39`: response option captures both “Scarcely or never”. We code it as 1 = never discuss politics.

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.