Do Politicians Outside the United States Also Think Voters are More Conservative than they Really Are? A Comparative Study of the Conservative Bias in Elites' Perception of Public Opinion

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Information on ethics certificate

The study was conducted in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations in place in the countries where the interviews of politicians were conducted. For European universities involved, compliance with regulations was verified by Data Protection Officers (in line with the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

In addition, data collection, analysis and storage procedures were verified by the relevant ethics board for each country under study. In Belgium, we obtained ethical approval from the *Ethische Adviescommisse Sociale en Humane Wetenschappen of the University of Antwerp* (Flanders, Belgium) on 10 Feb 2017. In Canada, we obtained ethical approval from the *University of Toronto's Social Sciences, Humanities & Education REB* on 27 Nov 2018. In Switzerland, we obtained ethical approval from the *Ethics Commission of the Geneva School of Social Sciences* (University of Geneva) on 16 April 2018. In Germany, the *Ethics Committee (IRB) of the University of Konstanz* judged that approval by the IRB or any regulatory body was not required for this project (but note that the university more generally enforces the proper adherence to ethics guidelines).

All ethics certificates are provided next to this document.

Here are the main elements of the research design that were presented to those ethics committees regarding the ethical aspects of the project.

1. *Population surveyed and contact*

The study was conducted in 2018 and 2019 in Belgium, Canada, Germany and Switzerland. The population under study is composed of all sitting members of national and of some state-level (respectively Regions, Provinces, Länders, and Cantons) assemblies. They are all public figures and their contact details (as well as some basic biographical information like age, gender, party information, past elected positions) are publicly available on the assemblies' website.

We retrieved contact information from the assemblies' websites and have then sent an information e-mail to all members of assemblies, inviting them for an in-person interview with one of the researchers from our teams. The invitation e-mail provided in attachment further information on the purpose of the study, the consent procedure (and their rights for withdrawal) and the data use and storage procedures. After 2 weeks, we have called those members of assembly who had not replied to the e-mail using the phone number they indicated on the assembly' website. Participation was entirely voluntary. If a politician was willing, a date, time and place was set for the interview.

The interview was then a computer-assisted face-to-face interview. MPs were given a laptop on which they can fill in the questionnaire. A researcher was present for any question or remark that the interviewee could have. Such a design was made to avoid the risk of the questionnaire being filled in by the politician's assistant.

2. *Information and consent*

Before starting the interview, politicians had received and read an *information sheet* (containing: (1) a description of the study and its general goals, (2) the appointing authority (i.e. the respective university), (3) the duration of the study, (4) information about voluntary participation, (5) the responsible ethics committee, (6) details on the use and processing of confidential information, and (7) contact details of the local researchers and of the local data protection officer (DPO).

Having had the opportunity to read the information sheet, MPs must give their *informed consent* before taking the interview. A written consent form was provided and signed before each interview.

3. *Deception and debriefing*

There was no question that could induce deception among participants.

The survey contained mostly traditional survey questions on political attitudes and politicians' perceptions of public opinion on a series of issues that were salient in the country. Participants were fully informed that their evaluations of public opinion would then be matched with actual survey data with representative samples of the country population. There was also, at the end of the survey, a survey experiment based on a ultimatum game (not use in the article submitted here). But the situation was purely fictional and presented as such in the questionnaire.

At the end of the interview, participants were fully debriefed about the goals of the study and about the purpose of the questions posed, especially for those questions related to politicians' evaluations of public opinion and for the ultimatum game experiment.

4. *Confidentiality*

After the interview, all data were recoded and cleaned to be made fully confidential. Participant responses are assigned a unique identifier that is used to identify the data. The code identifies the data, but the subject's identities are kept separate from the data and code. In case of publication an anonymized version of the data will be shared, using the unique identifiers. No personally identifiable data will be shared.

5. *Harm and impact*

There was no specific risk associated to the study for participants.

The participants have contributed to the advancement of scientific knowledge on a highly relevant topic – democratic responsiveness - (which was emphasized in the information sheet) and they were encouraged to reflect on political issues which they may not have considered before.

Within six months after taking the survey, a report with descriptive results was shared with all participants. We also committed to provide them with a summary of the articles that would be published from the survey.

6. *Compensation*

The subjects of the study are public figures (elected politicians). They are completing the study voluntarily. Accordingly, we did not provide compensation