

The Representative Democracy Data Archive (REPDEM)

Notes on coding principles

An Appendix to the Codebook

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How to cite

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In this appendix, we elaborate on some of the variables and their definitions, and provide information on how they have been operationalized and calculated.

General Definitions

Government coalition: Defined as a multi-party government where more than one party is represented in the cabinet with full voting rights.

Party: Defined as running in the relevant parliamentary election under a distinct label and/or forming an independent parliamentary party group (PPG) consisting of three or more MPs after the election (disregarding national rules of recognizing and privileging PPGs).

Coalition party: Defined as a political party that has a minimum of one seat with full voting rights in the cabinet (i.e., the Prime Minister, Vice Prime Minister, cabinet minister).

Change of cabinets: A change of cabinet is recorded when any of the following events occur:

- Any change in the set of parties holding cabinet membership.
- Any change in the identity of the Prime Minister.
- Any general election.

(The variable *newgov_type* can be used to distinguish between the different types of changes in cabinets.)

Non-partisan and “caretaker” cabinets: Non-partisan cabinets (if existent) are in the dataset. However, no new cabinet is formed when a regular cabinet resigns but remains in office as an acting cabinet.

General information on the cabinets

- **Date for the formation of the new cabinet (date_in):**
 - Definition: the date that the PM/cabinet was inaugurated by the head of state, alternatively, the date of the investiture
 - Counting rule *"Date in is the date that the PM/Cabinet was inaugurated by the Head of State (in Sweden the date of the investiture vote in the Riksdag) or, if that is not applicable, the date of the general election."* (Strøm, Müller and Bergman 2008: 139):
 - Operationalization – we use the following rank order:
 - The date of inauguration by the head of state
 - The date of the investiture vote
 - The date of the general election¹
 - Other technical criteria
- **Date for termination of a cabinet, "date out" (date_out)**
 - Definition – "date out": date of formal resignation or date of general election (or when applicable, the date of presidential if it is required or customary for governments to resign at the time of presidential elections), whichever comes first (cf. Strøm, Müller and Bergman 2008).
 - Operationalization: for resignation, we use:
 - The date for acceptance of the resignation from the head of state
 - The date for a vote of no confidence
 - The date of the general election
 - Other technical criteria. Date of resignation, which includes a change in party composition, the death of the PM, etc., which might not have been officially recorded in the national tradition, but ended the cabinet.²
- **Maximum possible cabinet duration (cab_duration_max)**
 - Counted in days
 - Represents the period from 'Date-in' (a) until the next constitutionally mandated date of parliamentary elections or (b) until the date of presidential elections if it is required or customary for governments to resign at the time of presidential elections. In the case of two-round elections, we take the second-round election date. Similarly, in the case of one-round elections held over several days, we use the last day of the elections.

¹ If a second ballot is employed, we use the date for that ballot. Also note that if a cabinet continues after an election, we use the election date as the start of the cabinet although it might be officially inaugurated later.

² Concerning priority between methods used there is a such but only on the last criteria e.g., we might have a cabinet that ends because of changes in party composition where there is no formal resignation of the PM and therefore no acceptance of such resignation by the head of state, and formal acceptance by the head of state might instead occur much later when the government is ended according to the country traditions. In this case we record the date when changes in party composition occurred.

- **Absolute cabinet duration (cab_duration_days)**
 - The number of days in office, that is, the number of days between a cabinet's start date and its end date.
- **Relative cabinet duration (cab_duration_relative)**
 - The empirically observed duration divided by the potential maximal duration. That is the proportion of the term of office spent in office, or in other words, the time elapsed between the cabinet's appointment and termination as a percentage of its maximum feasible duration. A 'relative cabinet duration' of 1 means that a cabinet serves the full term, and 0 that the cabinet terminates the first day in office. This is a useful measure for comparing the duration of governments across countries with different CIEPs (constitutional inter-electoral periods).
- **Full cabinet duration for technical terminations (cab_duration_full)**
 - A dummy variable indicating if (1) a cabinet terminated due to technical reasons, principally regular elections, and (2) if it did so after an effectively full term. The cut-off has been set to a relative duration of 90 percent to account for countries that do not use fixed-term elections.
- **Cabinet composition (cab_composition1 and cab_composition2)**
 - A list of the cabinet parties, beginning with the party of the PM, and the remaining government parties ordered according to the number of portfolios held.
- **Government type (govtype)**
 - This categorical variable distinguishes between the following types of governments:
 1. Minority cabinet (coalition or single-party cabinet): Holds less than 50 % plus one seat in parliament.
 2. Single-party majority cabinet: Holds 50 % plus one seat in parliament or more.
 3. MWC - Minimal winning coalition: A coalition that is turned into a losing coalition by the subtraction of any of the coalition parties, i.e., if it loses a coalition party, it holds less than 50 % plus one seat.
 4. Surplus majority coalition: Can lose a coalition party and still be winning, i.e., control 50 % plus one seat or more in the parliament. A surplus majority coalition is sometimes called an oversized coalition, as it contains more parties than necessary for a parliamentary majority.
 5. Non-partisan cabinet, e.g., appointed by a president to hold an election.
- **Post-electoral cabinet (post_election_cab)**
 - Measure the first government formed after a parliamentary election.

- **Technocrat ministry majority (techno_maj)**
 - Tracks partisan or technocrat status majority among full voting ministers. A technocrat minister is defined as “one if, at the time of his/her appointment to government, he/she:
 - has never held public office under the banner of a political party;
 - is not a formal member of any party;
 - is said to possess recognized non-party political expertise which is directly relevant to the role occupied in government.” (McDonnell & Valbruzzi 2014: 657-658).
 - A majority is considered as 50% + 1 of cabinet ministers.

The political parties and the party system

- **Party seats (seats_partyX, upper_seats_partyX)**
 - The general rule applied for a new party to be recorded is that it needs to gain 3 seats; otherwise, groups with seats (1 or 2) are encoded as “other”. When a party has been registered, seats in future elections will always be coded for that party, even if it just gains 1 or 2 seats.
 - Exceptions from this general rule:
 - Parties with cabinet posts are always coded.
 - In some cases, when, according to country experts, a party had an important impact on the party system, whether this is due to its impact on the left-right placement of parties or institutionally related aspects such as acting in a small parliament, like in Luxembourg or Iceland, where few seats might correspond to a substantial proportion of the vote.
- **Polarization (cab_polarX, cab_wpolarX, parl_polarX)**
 - To calculate the polarization in the cabinet (varieties of cab_polar and cab_wpolar) and parliament (parl_polar) we use the standard deviation from the (weighted) mean position first proposed by Taylor and Herman (1971). Polarization is calculated as $P = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i (p_i - \bar{p})^2}$, where w_i is the seat share of party i , p_i is the position of party i , and $\bar{p}$ is the weighted (based on seat shares) mean general left-right position. For the unweighted measures of cabinet polarization (cab_polar), $P = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{(p_i - \bar{p})^2}{n}}$, and $\bar{p}$ instead corresponds to the unweighted mean position in the cabinet. Positions are based on estimates from the Manifesto Project data, either using the included RILE measure, or a scale constructed based on code categories suggested by Prosser (2014), which are enumerated below. Moreover, each measure is also presented as an additive scale, $p_i^A = R - L$, where R is the number of right-coded quasi-sentences and L is the number of left-coded quasi-sentences, and logit-scaled (Lowe et al. 2011), where a given party's position is scaled using the empirical logit $p_i^L = \log(R + 0.5) - \log(L + 0.5)$.
 - The code categories suggested by Prosser (2014) for constructing a general left-right scale are:

Left		Right	
105	Military: Negative	109	Internationalism: Negative
106	Peace	401	Free Enterprise: Positive
107	Internationalism: Positive	407	Protectionism: Negative
108	European Integration: Positive	414	Economic Orthodoxy: Positive
202	Democracy	505	Welfare State limitation: Positive
301	Decentralisation	507	Education Limitation: Positive
303	Governmental and Administrative Efficiency	601	National Way of Life: Positive
403	Market Regulation: Positive	603	Traditional Morality: Positive
408	Economic Goals	608	Multiculturalism: Negative
411	Technology and Infrastructure	702	Labour Groups: Negative
412	Controlled economy: Positive		
413	Nationalisation: Positive		
416	Anti-growth Economy		
501	Environmental Protection		
502	Culture		
503	Social Justice		
504	Welfare State Expansion: Positive		
506	Education Expansion: Positive		
602	National Way of Life: Negative		
604	Traditional Morality: Negative		
701	Labour Groups: Positive		
705	Underprivileged Minority Groups		
706	Non-economic Demographic Groups		

- **Cabinet ideological center of gravity (cab_gravityX)**
 - To calculate the cabinet's ideological center of gravity, we follow Gross and Siegelman (1984) and calculate it as the weighted mean position of the cabinet parties, using their share of seats in the cabinet as the weight. Party positions are estimated from the Manifesto Project data, with versions using the RILE scale and Prosser's (2014) suggested general left-right scale. Both are available where positions have been estimated using an additive scale and logit-scaled (Lowe et al. 2011).
- **Effective number of parliamentary parties - ENPP (enpp, upper_enpp)**
 - The Laakso and Taagepera (1979) index is used. Thus, the ENPP is calculated using the following equation: $N=1/\sum s_i^2$, where s_i is the proportion of seats of the i^{th} party.

- **Party of the median legislator on first/second/third dimension in lower chamber (dim_first_median; dim_second_median; dim_third_median).**
 - Before 2010, the positions are mainly based on Kenneth Benoit & Michael Laver's (2006) expert survey, including results from 47 Countries, 2003-2004. After 2010, the main data source to order the parties along the dimension is the Chapel Hill expert survey (Jolly et al 2022).
- **Ideologically connected cabinet (cab_connected)**
 - Connected cabinet on economic left-right placement of political parties using "Taxes versus spending" based on Kenneth Benoit & Michael Laver's (2006) expert survey up to 2010. After 2010, the Chapel Hill expert survey has been used. In a connected cabinet, the parties are next to one another along a policy dimension. If a coalition has jumped a party, it does not constitute a connected cabinet party; the government is not connected (say a cabinet consisting of parties B, D, E, and jumping party C in table 1 below). Single-party cabinets are, by definition, considered connected.
- **Minimal Winning Connected Coalition (cab_mwcc)**
 - Technically, MWCC must be a subset of connected cabinets, but it need not be a subset of MWC. A cabinet is a MWCC if (i) it is connected, and (ii) it cannot remain winning AND connected by dropping a party. In other words, it can be a surplus majority coalition if the surplus party is needed to make the coalition connected.
 - Example:

Table 1. A surplus majority cabinet that is a Minimal Winning Connected Coalition

	Left-right placement 1 st dimension							
Party	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Seats	10	24	5	6	15	14	5	79

- The sitting coalition cabinet (B-E) is in bold. Note that this cabinet is a surplus majority government, i.e., for a majority, 40 seats are needed, and this cabinet holds 50 seats and could drop either party C or D and still be winning. It is also connected as no party is jumped.
- **Minimal Winning Connected Coalition (cab_mwccs)**
 - Minimal Winning Connected Coalitions including single-party majority governments.

Bargaining over government

- **Number of days required for cabinet formation (form_duration; form_duration_alt)**
 - Time between the end of the previous cabinet (date_out) and the official starting date of the new (actual) cabinet (date_in), i.e. the number of days required in government formation. The 'form_duration_alt' variable count the number of days since the general election for the first governments formed after that election. Thus, the first variable measures

the time without a regular government, the second, alternative variable measures the number of days required for cabinet formation after parliamentary elections (for post-election cabinets, otherwise it is identical to the first).

- **Final vote of investiture (form_invest_pro, form_invest_con, form_invest_abs)**
 - The voting results (pro/abstention/contra) of the successful investiture vote.
 - When there are multiple investiture votes in a country, we focus on the investiture vote that directly leads to/means that the new government can assume the powers of the state (and e.g., can propose a huge tax reform, start a military conflict, or the like).

Ministries/ministers

- **Number of cabinet members (ministers) (num_ministers)**
 - All cabinet members with voting rights in the cabinet are counted (PM, Vice-PMs, cabinet ministers) but not junior ministers.

Coalition agreements

- **All agreements (coal_size_agreement_all, coal_genrules_all, coal_polspec_all, coal_distoff_all, coal_distcomp_all, coal_pol_all)**
 - These variables summarize the full content of all extant coalition agreements. For coal_size_agreement_all, this amounts to the sum of all coal_size_agreement_docN variables. For the content variables (coal_genrules_all, etc.), we first calculate the approximate number of words per individual agreement devoted to each content category by multiplying the variable with coal_size_agreement_docN, e.g., multiplying coal_genrules_doc1 with coal_size_agreement_doc1, and take the sum for all agreements. We then divide the approximate number of words devoted to the content category with the total number of words of all coalition agreements (i.e., coal_size_agreement_all).

Termination events

- **Discretionary termination (term_disc)**
 - This variable describes the events of cabinet termination for political reasons that are at the coalition partners' discretion. In contrast to technical termination, when one reason can be coded, there are several reasons that can be considered discretionary, as they are not mutually exclusive.
 - Discretionary termination can be coded as strategically timed early elections, a loss in a parliamentary vote of confidence, or when a cabinet ends because one of its members (a party) leaves or a new one joins the coalition, policy or personnel conflicts between coalition parties (these two are not mutually exclusive)

- **Early parliamentary election (term_disc_earlyelec)**
 - In order to code elections as an early one, a deliberate cutting-short of the legislative term, we do not count reductions by less than 10 % of the maximum legislative term as early elections.
- **Other voluntary reason (term_disc_voluntary)**
 - All those instances that do not fall into any of the existing discretionary termination categories, for example voluntary resignation of the PM, may be coded as 'other voluntary reason'.
- **Conflict between coalition parties policy or personnel**
 - Policy conflicts emerge from dispute over policies. Personnel conflicts are on the election or appointment of office holders. Note that the 'policy' and 'personnel' categories are not mutually exclusive.
- **Conflict between coalition parties: Parties Involved (term_disc_conflict_parties)**
 - This variable describes parties that are involved in a conflict.
- **Intra-party conflict (term_disc_intra)**
 - This variable describes conflict that occurred within a party or parties.
- **Intra-party conflict: Type of conflict (term_disc_intra_conflict)**
 - This variable describes a type of conflict that has occurred.
 - This variable distinguishes following types of intra party conflict:
 - Conflict in national party leadership (national executive committee, cabinet, parliamentary party leadership) (NB: This is conflict contained in the leadership.);
 - Conflict between united national party leadership (national executive committee, cabinet, parliamentary party leadership) and non-leaders (party activists, party congress delegates, backbench MPs, regional leaders, etc.);
 - Conflict in national party leadership (national executive committee, cabinet, parliamentary party leadership) including grass-roots mobilization (i.e. conflict is not confined to the top level).
- **Description of dominant policy area (term_descr)**
 - This variable describes the cabinet portfolio(s) with which possible policy conflicts were associated. Otherwise, it should be left blank

Institutions

- **Bicameralism (inst_bicam)**
 - The weaker chamber must at least have a temporary suspensive veto.
- **Positive parliamentarism (inst_posparl)**
 - A new PM/cabinet comes to power only if it wins a majority vote (positive investiture) in the parliament.
- **Constructive No-Confidence (inst_convote)**

- Parliament is only allowed to withdraw confidence from a PM/cabinet if there is an absolute majority for a chosen successor as PM.
- **PM powers (inst_pmpower)**
 - Additive index of PM powers that ranges from 1 to 8, with an increasing number indicating an increasingly more powerful PM.
- **Semi-Presidentialism (inst_semipres)**
 - The president is (i) popularly elected and (ii) can have direct influence on cabinet formation.

References

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