Scottish Election Study 2021
Panel Dataset Beta Release, May 2022

Project Reference: **ES/V01000X/1**

Codebook

Contents

1 Introduction

The 2021 Scottish Election Study (SES) panel survey was carried out as a collaboration between the University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Essex, and Royal Holloway, University of London. Professor Ailsa Henderson served as Principal Investigator, with Professors Rob Johns, Christopher Carman, and Christopher Hanretty serving as Co-Investigators. Dr Fraser McMillan and Dr Jac Larner served as Research Associates. The wider 2021-2025 Scottish Election Study project, including all survey data collection, is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

The survey questionnaires were designed by the SES team, with some contributions from other academics who proposed specific questions. The panel survey was administered online by YouGov to a sample of Scottish voting-age adults (aged 16+) in two waves - one before and one after the 5th May 2021 Scottish Parliament election - with the same respondents interviewed in each wave.

Wave 1: Pre-election wave (08/04/2021 - 05/05/2021). 4,524 respondents completed Wave 1. The completion rate - the % of respondents who began the survey and completed it - was 92%.

Wave 2: Post-election wave (13/05/2021 - 28/05/2021). Of the 4,524 respondents who completed Wave 1, 3,355 respondents completed Wave 2, a retention rate of 74.2%. The completion rate for Wave 2 was 94%.

- 1,951 respondents who completed wave 1 previously completed the 2019 SES, and 1,795 completed the 2016 SES [LINK]

- 1,031 respondents who completed wave 1 previously completed the 2014 Scottish Referendum Study [LINK]

- These data can be merged using the unique identifiers w1ID_SES2019 w1ID_SES2016 w1SRS2014_ID

2   Package Contents

This packet contains the following items:

- **SES_21_codebook.dta** - This document

- **SES_21_panel.dta** - Waves 1 & 2 combined

- **SES_21_pre_questionnaire.pdf** - Wave 1 questionnaire

- **SES_21_post_questionnaire.pdf** - Wave 2 questionnaire

3   Dataset

The dataset is provided in Stata format, with labels attached to variable values. Full labels, variable values and questions can be found in the attached questionnaires, which are presented largely as they were run by YouGov. Some experiments conducted by team members have been stripped out for user convenience.

In the combined dataset, variable names have been prefixed with "w1" or "w2" to distinguish between pre- and post-election variables. Aside from this, the variable names are as they were administered in the original survey.

4   Weights

When conducting nationally representative internet-based surveys, YouGov uses 'Active Sampling' to draw a targeted sample from its panel of registered users. Using targeted quota sampling as opposed to random probability sampling, all respondents from the panel are placed into specific groupings based on a combination of factors including age, gender, education level, and social grade. The resulting sample is specifically designed to deliver results that are representative of the adult population as a whole, and not simply of YouGov's pool of respondents or the general internet population. For political research, the sample is made to be politically representative as well as nationally representative in terms of both past voting behaviour and political interest.

For political projects in Scotland, YouGov as standard weights its data by age interlocked with gender and education level, social class, region, birthplace, 2019 election vote, 2014 independence referendum vote and attention paid to politics.

Sampling and weighting targets are drawn from various sources, including:

- The census

- Large-scale random probability surveys, such as the Labour Force Survey, the National Readership Survey and the British Election Study

- The results of the 2019 General Election and 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum

- Official ONS population estimates

5   Routing and Modules

Throughout the surveys we made use of "routing", diverting respondents to different questions depending on their earlier answers. For example, in Wave 2, respondents who indicated that they *did not vote* are given different questions to those who indicated that they *did vote*. The questionnaires show the routing as "if" statements after the variable names.

There was one routing error in Wave 1, with the party identification strength variable [w1pi2c] administered only to respondents who initially said they did not identify with a party [pi2a] but selected one they are "a little closer to" in the follow-up "squeeze" option. To the best of our knowledge, this is the only such oversight across the two questionnaires. Please contact team members if you spot any more anomalies.

In some cases, the sample was randomly "split" into two or more parts to be assigned different questions or question formats, sometimes in specific sequences known as "modules". This is common practice in survey questionnaires and is mostly used to conduct experiments or maximise the amount of relevant information gathered about public attitudes or behaviours.

In both waves, groupings based on a randomised sample split-half was created at the beginning of each survey, placing respondents on one of two tracks in each questionnaire. Effort was made to match the questions administered to each track within each questionnaire; for instance, the Wave 1

retrospective pledge fulfilment questions were administered to Group B, who also received a question about whether the parties can be trusted to keep their promises. However, the groups were *not* maintained between waves, meaning the Wave 2 respondents were placed into newly randomised groupings. The unique questions administered on each track are listed in square brackets below, beside short descriptions of the modules they comprised.

6 Split Sample Structure

Wave 1

Group A

- **Vote decision level module A**
  [w1vi13a]

- **Most important issue at UK level module**
  [w1miiUK] [w1miiUKBest]

- **Trust party to handle issues module**
  [w1is4gConservativesa] [w1is4gConservativesb] [w1is4gConservativesc] [w1is4gConservativesd] [w1is4gConservativese] [w1is4gConservativesf] [w1is4gConservativesg] [w1is4gConservativesh] [w1is4gConservativesi] [w1is4gConservativesj] [w1is4gLaba] [w1is4gLabb] [w1is4gLabc] [w1is4gLabd] [w1is4gLabe] [w1is4gLabf] [w1is4gLabg] [w1is4gLabh] [w1is4gLabi] [w1is4gLabj] [w1is4gSNPa] [w1is4gSNPb] [w1is4gSNPc] [w1is4gSNPd] [w1is4gSNPe] [w1is4gSNPf] [w1is4gSNPg] [w1is4gSNPh] [w1is4gSNPi] [w1is4gSNPj]

- **Salmond module**
  [w1salmondScandalBlame] [w1salmondScandalSturgeon]

- **Alba party indy movement module A**
  [w1salmondAlbaHelpa]

- **Public policy performance and blame module**
  [w1is3a] [w1is3b] [w1is4a] [w1is4b] [w1is5a] [w1is5b]

Group B

- **Vote decision level module B**
  [w1vi13b]

- **Voter and party issue positions module**
  [w1is81] [w1is8a] [w1is8b] [w1is8c] [w1is91] [w1is9a] [w1is9b] [w1is9c]
  [w1is101] [w1is10a] [w1is10b] [w1is10c] [w1is101x] [w1is10ax] [w1is10bx]
  [w1is10cx]

- **Alba party indy movement module B**
  [w1salmondAlbaHelpb]

- **Party characteristics module**
  [w1ap6a21] [w1ap6b21] [w1ap6c21] [w1ap7a21] [w1ap7b21] [w1ap7c21]
  [w1ap8a21] [w1ap8b21] [w1ap8c21]

- **Retrospective pledge fulfilment module**
  [w1pledgeRetroOpen] [w1pledgeRetroKept]

Wave 2, First Split

Group C

- **Campaign evaluations module**
  [w2de4a] [w2de4b] [w2de4c] [w2de4d] [w2de4e] [w2de4f] [w2campPosNegCon]
  [w2campPosNegGreen] [w2campPosNegLab] [w2campPosNegLD] [w2campPosNegSNP]

- **Constitutional preferences module A**
  [w2ssaConstitutionPref]

- **Culture war module A**
  [w2cultureWar]

Group D

- **Leader debates retrospective module**
  [w2debatewatch3] [w2leaderDebate]

- **Party looks after group interest module**
  [w2groupInterestConWorking] [w2groupInterestConMiddle] [w2groupInterestConBusiness]

[w2groupInterestConYoung] [w2groupInterestConOld] [w2groupInterestConWomen]
[w2groupInterestLabWorking] [w2groupInterestLabMiddle] [w2groupInterestLabBusiness]
[w2groupInterestLabYoung] [w2groupInterestLabOld] [w2groupInterestLabWomen]
[w2groupInterestSNPWorking] [w2groupInterestSNPMiddle] [w2groupInterestSNPBusiness]
[w2groupInterestSNPYoung] [w2groupInterestSNPOld] [w2groupInterestSNPWomen]

- **Constitutional preferences module B**
  [w2indyEUPref]

- **Subjective social class scales module**
  [w2classIDa] [w2classIDb] [w2classIDbx]

- **Culture war module B**
  [w2cultureFigures]

Wave 2, Second Split

Group E

- **Indyref mandate experiment module A**
  [w2indyMandate2control]

Group F

- **Indyref mandate experiment module B**
  [w2indyMandate2treat2]

Group G

- **Indyref mandate experiment module C**
  [w2indyMandate2treat3]

Wave 2, Non-voter Split

Group H

- **Non-voter list vote experiment module A,** *non-voters only*
  [w2vb8a]

Group I

- **Non-voter list vote experiment module B,** *non-voters only* [w2vb8b]