Executive Approval Database 2.0

Released August 15, 2019

The Executive Approval Database (EAD) 2.0 represents the most comprehensive, publicly available collection of time-series indicators of public support for political executives in the world. It contains 46,008 survey marginals from 761 unique (input) time series in 47 countries. We harnessed these data to create 69 measurement (output) series of presidential, prime ministerial, governmental, and executive approval. Note that the latter refers to a summary measure of presidential, prime ministerial, and government approval for systems in which politically relevant heads of state are directly elected in competitive elections and heads of governments are indirectly elected by the legislature.

EAD 2.0's measurement series were created in the following formats. Conceptually, we distinguish three measures: "approval" (the percentage of positive responses), "net approval" (the percentage of positive responses minus the percentage of negative responses), and "relative approval" (the percentage of positive responses divided by the sum of the percentage of positive responses and the percentage of negative responses).

Temporally, the EAD 2.0 comes in quarterly and annual varieties. While the EAD 1.0 included monthly measures, they were not provided in EAD 2.0 due to questions surrounding data scarcity/richness that can only be answered by the researcher. Nevertheless, monthly measures can be constructed via the aggregation tool at the bottom data visualizations produced at executiveapprovaldata.org which implements James Stimson's dyads-ratio algorithm (see details here) or downloaded and aggregated by other aggregation techniques.

Please cite the EAD 2.0 as follows:

Carlin, Ryan E., Jonathan Hartlyn, Timothy Hellwig, Gregory J. Love, Cecilia Martinez-Gallardo, and Matthew M. Singer. 2019. Executive Approval Database 2.0. Available for download at www.executiveapproval.org.

Table 1 lists the output series included in the EAD 2.0 in the first column. The input series refer to one or, at most, two of the following subjects listed in the second through fourth columns: Prime Minister (PM), Government (Gov), and President (Pres). The last two, "unspecified," columns refer to series in which the survey questions do not specify the leader's job title and/or name. These often ask respondents to evaluate the country's "leaders." With a few exceptions (noted below) unspecified input series make up a small percentage of the total number of inputs.

Table 2 shows the number of input series and the number of survey marginals for each output series by measures positive approval and negative approval (with produce the net and relative approval measures). The table also shows the temporal coverage for the output series for the quarter and annual datasets.

Finally, WCALC produces analytical log files for each output series that report the number of input series and marginals, their relative weighting, and the percent of variance explained. All the log files for the annual and quarterly EAD 2.0 series can be downloaded (as a zip file) from http://www.executiveapproval.org/datasets.

Table 1. Nature of Input Series by Country/Output Series

Country	PM	Gov	Pres	# Unspecified	% Unspecified
Argentina			x	9	0.65%
Australia	x			8	0.62%
Austria	x	x		7	7.87%
Bolivia			x	9	1.92%
Brazil			x	10	1.12%
Bulgaria_Exec	x		x	7	1.72%
Bulgaria_PM	x			0	0.00%
Bulgaria_Pres			x	0	0.00%
Canada	x	x		8	1.40%
Chile			x	9	0.98%
Colombia			x	9	1.07%

Costa Rica			x	9	2.14%	
Czech Republic_Exec	x	x	x	7	1.88%	
Czech Republic_Gov		x		7	12.07%	
Czech Republic_PM	x			0	0.00%	
Czech Republic_Pres			x	0	0.00%	
Denmark	x	x		9	5.23%	
Dominican Republic			x	9	4.84%	
Ecuador			x	9	0.60%	
El Salvador			x	9	2.67%	
France_Exec	x		x	0	0.00%	
France_PM	x			0	0.00%	
France_Pres			x	0	0.00%	
Germany	x	x		10	0.81%	See Notes
Greece	x	x		51	15.41%	See Notes
Guatemala			x	9	4.13%	
Honduras			x	9	4.55%	
Hungary	x			8	1.81%	
Iceland		x		3	0.71%	
Ireland_PM	x			0	0.00%	
Italy	x			67	22.56%	See Notes
Japan	x	x		12	0.92%	See Notes
Korea			x	8	0.99%	

Kosovo		x		7	21.88%
Macedonia_Exec	x	x		7	20.00%
Macedonia_PM	x	x		0	0.00%
Mexico			x	10	0.44%
Montenegro		x		7	20.59%
New Zealand	x	x		7	1.65%
Nicaragua			x	9	4.62%
Palestine		x		10	6.54%
Panama			x	9	2.18%
Paraguay			x	9	5.88%
Peru			x	9	1.27%
Philippines			x	9	4.13%
Poland_Exec	x		x	9	0.68%
Poland_PM	x			0	0.00%
Poland_Pres			x	0	0.00%
Portugal_Exec	x	x	x	0	0.00%
Portugal_Gov		x		0	0.00%
Portugal_PM	x			0	0.00%
Portugal_Pres			x	0	0.00%
Russian Federation_Exec	x	x	x	0	0.00%
Russian Federation_Gov		x		0	0.00%
Russian Federation_PM	x			0	0.00%
Russian Federation_Pres			x	0	0.00%
Spain	x	x		23	3.28%

Turkey_Exec	x	x	x	10	8.00%	
Turkey_Gov		x		10	43.48%	See Notes
Turkey_PM	x			0	0.00%	
Turkey_Pres			x	0	0.00%	
Ukraine_Exec	x	x	x	8	7.08%	
Ukraine_Gov		x		8	100.00%	See Notes
Ukraine_PM	x			0	0.00%	
Ukraine_Pres			x	0	0.00%	
United Kingdom	x	x		9	0.22%	
United States			x	0	0.00%	
Uruguay			x	0	0.00%	
Venezuela			x	0	0.00%	

Table 2. Input Series, Input Marginals, and Time Coverage by Country

Top: *Positive Approval*. Bottom: *Negative Approval*

	Positive Approval					
Country	**# Input Series**	**# Input Marginals**	**Beginning Quarter (Q)**	**Ending Quarter (Q)**	**Beginning Year (A)**	**Ending Year (A)**
Argentina	58	1376	1983q4	2018q3	1983	2018
Australia	8	1290	1968q3	2018q4	1968	2018
Austria	12	89	1987q2	2019q1	1987	2019
Bolivia	17	468	1998q3	2018q3	1998	2018
Brazil	15	891	1979q2	2019q4	1979	2019
Bulgaria_Exec	6	406	1990q1	2018q2	1990	2018
Bulgaria_PM	3	221	1990q1	2018q2	1990	2018
Bulgaria_Pres	2	178	1990q1	2018q2	1990	2018
Canada	22	571	1978q2	2018q4	1978	2018
Chile	28	914	1990q2	2019q2	1990	2019
Colombia	18	840	1994q1	2018q4	1994	2018
Costa Rica	17	420	1978q3	2019q1	1978	2019
Czech Republic_Exec	9	373	1990q1	2018q1	1990	2018
Czech Republic_Gov	5	58	1998q1	2018q1	1991	2018
Czech Republic_PM	2	35	1998q1	2018q1	1998	2018
Czech Republic_Pres	2	280	1990q1	2018q1	1990	2018
Denmark	10	172	1946q1	2014q4	1946	2014
Dominican Republic	16	186	2000q4	2019q1	2000	2019
Ecuador	19	1500	1979q3	2018q3	1979	2018

El Salvador	19	337	1986q2	2019q1	1986	2019
France_Exec	7	2193	1958q3	2019q1	1958	2019
France_PM	3	1071	1959q1	2019q1	1959	2019
France_Pres	4	1122	1958q3	2019q1	1958	2019
Germany	21	1242	1950q1	2019q1	1950	2019
Greece	11	331	1989q2	2019q1	1989	2019
Guatemala	15	218	1987q4	2019q1	1987	2019
Honduras	16	198	1986q2	2019q1	1986	2019
Hungary	11	441	1998q3	2018q1	1998	2018
Iceland	7	423	1987q2	2018q4	1987	2018
Ireland_PM	5	373	1978q1	2018q4	1978	2018
Italy	17	297	1989q2	2018q2	1989	2018
Japan	11	1304	1960q2	2019q1	1960	2019
Korea	7	812	1988q2	2018q1	1988	2018
Kosovo	2	32	2007q1	2018q2	2007	2018
Macedonia_Exec	2	28	2006q2	2016q2	2006	2016
Macedonia_PM	3	35	2006q2	2016q2	2006	2016
Mexico	40	2283	1989q1	2019q1	1989	2019
Montenegro	4	34	2004q2	2018q1	2004	2018
New Zealand	5	425	1990q4	2019q1	1990	2019
Nicaragua	13	195	1989q4	2018q4	1989	2018
Palestine	17	153	1995q2	2018q3	1995	2018
Panama	15	412	1990q3	2019q4	1990	2019
Paraguay	18	153	1996q4	2018q3	1996	2018
Peru	20	708	1981q1	2019q1	1981	2019

Philippines	5	218	1986q2	2018q4	1986	2018
Poland_Exec	9	1315	1989q3	2019q2	1989	2019
Poland_PM	5	668	1992q4	2019q2	1992	2019
Poland_Pres	5	647	1989q3	2019q2	1989	2019
Portugal_Exec	9	1439	1986q2	2018q3	1986	2018
Portugal_Gov	3	364	1986q2	2018q3	1986	2018
Portugal_PM	3	537	1986q2	2018q3	1986	2018
Portugal_Pres	3	538	1986q2	2018q3	1986	2018
Russian Federation_Exec	1	520	1996q3	2019q3	1996	2019
Russian Federation_Gov	1	228	2000q1	2019q1	2000	2019
Russian Federation_PM	1	256	1996q3	2019q3	1996	2019
Russian Federation_Pres	1	264	1996q3	2019q3	1996	2019
Spain	20	701	1984q3	2019q2	1984	2019
Turkey_Exec	12	125	2002q2	2018q4	2002	2018
Turkey_Gov	4	23	2002q2	2014q4	2002	2014
Turkey_PM	6	59	2002q2	2016q3	2002	2016
Turkey_Pres	2	43	2014q4	2018q4	2014	2018
Ukraine_Exec	4	113	2000q2	2017q2	2000	2017
Ukraine_Gov	1	8	2008q2	2015q2	2008	2015
Ukraine_PM	1	11	2014q1	2017q2	2014	2017
Ukraine_Pres	2	94	2000q2	2017q2	2000	2017
United Kingdom	14	4079	1938q4	2019q1	1938	2019
United States	47	7687	1941q1	2019q2	1941	2019
Uruguay	12	462	1987q4	2018q4	1987	2018
Venezuela	28	521	1987q1	2019q1	1987	2019

	Negative Approval					
Country	**# Input Series**	**# Input Marginals**	**Beginning Quarter (Q)**	**Ending Quarter (Q)**	**Beginning Year (A)**	**Ending Year (A)**
Argentina	54	1028	1984q2	2018q2	1984	2018
Australia	8	997	1985q1	2018q4	1985	2018
Austria	11	87	1987q2	2019q1	1987	2019
Bolivia	12	360	1998q3	2018q3	1998	2018
Brazil	13	845	1979q2	2019q4	1979	2019
Bulgaria_Exec	6	406	1990q1	2018q2	1990	2018
Bulgaria_PM	3	221	1990q1	2018q2	1990	2018
Bulgaria_Pres	2	178	1990q1	2018q2	1990	2018
Canada	20	567	1978q2	2018q4	1978	2018
Chile	26	858	1990q2	2019q2	1990	2019
Colombia	18	754	1994q1	2018q4	1994	2018
Costa Rica	15	345	1978q3	2017q4	1978	2017
Czech Republic_Exec	9	373	1990q1	2018q1	1990	2018
Czech Republic_Gov	5	58	1998q1	2018q1	1991	2018
Czech Republic_PM	2	35	1998q1	2018q1	1998	2018
Czech Republic_Pres	2	280	1990q1	2018q1	1990	2018
Denmark	9	167	1946q1	2014q4	1946	2014
Dominican Republic	9	66	2003q4	2018q1	2003	2018
Ecuador	16	1290	1988q3	2018q2	1988	2018
El Salvador	17	263	1986q2	2018q2	1986	2018
France_Exec	7	1263	1993q2	2019q1	1993	2019

France_PM	3	572	1993q4	2019q1	1993	2019
France_Pres	4	691	1993q2	2019q1	1993	2019
Germany	20	518	2008q3	2019q1	2008	2019
Greece	8	36	n/a	n/a	2009	2015
Guatemala	11	136	1987q4	2018q1	1987	2018
Honduras	14	156	1986q2	2018q2	1986	2018
Hungary	4	120	n/a	n/a	2015	2017
Iceland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ireland_PM	2	63	2011q3	2018q4	2011	2018
Italy	12	51	2004q4	2018q2	2005	2018
Japan	11	751	1998q2	2019q1	1998	2019
Korea	7	812	1988q2	2018q1	1988	2018
Kosovo	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Macedonia_Exec	2	28	2006q2	2016q2	2006	2016
Macedonia_PM	3	35	2006q2	2016q2	2006	2016
Mexico	40	2245	1989q1	2019q1	1989	2019
Montenegro	4	34	2004q2	2013q2	2004	2013
New Zealand	5	425	1990q4	2019q1	1990	2019
Nicaragua	12	179	1989q4	2018q2	1989	2018
Palestine	17	152	1995q2	2018q3	1995	2018
Panama	14	342	1990q3	2017q4	1990	2017
Paraguay	15	73	2010q2	2017q3	2010	2017
Peru	17	610	2000q4	2019q1	2001	2019
Philippines	5	203	1986q2	2018q4	1986	2018
Poland_Exec	9	1315	1989q3	2019q2	1989	2019

Poland_PM	5	668	1992q4	2019q2	1992	2019
Poland_Pres	5	647	1989q3	2019q2	1989	2019
Portugal_Exec	9	1439	1986q2	2018q3	1986	2018
Portugal_Gov	3	364	1986q2	2018q3	1986	2018
Portugal_PM	3	537	1986q2	2018q3	1986	2018
Portugal_Pres	3	538	1986q2	2018q3	1986	2018
Russian Federation_Exec	1	520	1996q3	2019q3	1996	2019
Russian Federation_Gov	1	228	2000q1	2019q1	2000	2019
Russian Federation_PM	1	256	1996q3	2019q3	1996	2019
Russian Federation_Pres	1	264	1996q3	2019q3	1996	2019
Spain	18	644	1984q3	2019q2	1984	2019
Turkey_Exec	10	47	2002q2	2018q1	2002	2018
Turkey_Gov	4	23	n/a	n/a	2002	2014
Turkey_PM	4	17	n/a	n/a	2002	2016
Turkey_Pres	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ukraine_Exec	3	105	2000q2	2017q2	2000	2017
Ukraine_Gov	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ukraine_PM	1	11	2014q1	2017q2	2014	2017
Ukraine_Pres	2	94	2000q2	2017q2	2000	2017
United Kingdom	14	4066	1938q4	2018q4	1938	2018
United States	47	7687	1941q1	2019q2	1941	2019
Uruguay	10	409	1987q4	2018q4	1987	2018
Venezuela	23	400	1987q1	2018q2	1987	2018

Country Notes

This section describes a number of issues users should consider when analyzing the EAD 2.0 estimates of approval. These include places where data series breakdown, making time series modeling approaches unworkable. Other common issues are the inclusion of in the estimates of data from survey items in which the political executive is not clearly specified. For example, some input series are based on survey questions like, “Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of this country?” We note the number of data points (survey marginals) in each country that derive from “unspecified” items. Our decision rule was to use input series from these “unspecified” questions in presidential and prime-ministerial approval estimates, respectively, in presidential and parliamentary systems. In semi-presidential countries (as defined by Hellwig and Samuels 2008 and Siaroff 2003), we include input series from “unspecified” items in government (GOV) approval estimates, where possible, and in executive (EXEC) estimates. Also included are descriptions of major idiosyncrasies in local polling industries that influence the way executive approval is gauged.

A note on data availability. Our online database at www.executiveapprovaldata.org includes data points -- typically at the beginning and ends of the time periods under study -- that were excluded from our estimates of approval. Typically, this is because of a scarcity of data upon which to base valid imputations of approval. Our decision rules, in these cases, were not to impute any more than 6 quarters in our quarterly estimates and no more than 2 years for our annual estimates.

All output series in the EAD 2.0 were calculated using an R implementation of Stimson’s dyads-ratios algorithm (via Patrick English’s version of Stimson’s original R code, here). A note of caution regarding exact replicability and the dyads-ratio algorithm. Adding to or removing observations from input series (i.e. extending/shortening temporally the series) produces different estimates of approval for all time points in the output series. Thus, values in EAD 1.0 and EAD 2.0 will not be identical but will be highly correlated. Similarly, the various implementations of the dyads-ratio algorithm (WCAL, MCALC, R) will produce slightly different estimates due to differing computational approaches and/or rounding approaches.

Note that the differently measures of approval are, empirically, highly correlated. In the quarterly data, smoothed and unsmoothed series correlate at .99 or higher. Approval and Net Approval correlated at .91. Approval and Relative Approval correlated at .91. Net and Relative Approval correlate at .97.

Germany

Politbarometer polled West and East Germany separately in the post-unification era. Here we combine these input series by weighting them by population (84% West, 16% East). The West German series is used prior to unification.

Greece

Some local polls ask about approval and/or opinion of political “leaders” or “politicians” without naming their post (i.e., Prime Minister).

Italy
Due to the dominant use of items tapping “confidence/trust” (*fiducia*) in the executive over items referencing “approval,” “evaluation”, or related terms, we have included them in our estimates of PM approval. We treat this as a local idiosyncrasy rather than a purely conceptual distinction between “trust” and the more affective “approval.” In doing this, we are assuming that PM trust is synonymous with PM approval in the Italian context. To our knowledge, this is not true in many (or any) other local contexts studied here.

Japan
A local idiosyncrasy is the dominance of polling on the performance of the “cabinet” or, most typically, “Prime Minister [NAME]’s cabinet.” Hence, we assume that PM approval is synonymous with the PM’s cabinet approval in the Japanese context. To our knowledge, this is not true in many (or any) other local contexts studied here.

Turkey_Gov
There are few surveys that directly ask about the performance of the “government” in Turkey. Half of the input survey marginals for this series comes from surveys that ask about the performance of the “government” or “leadership”.

Ukraine_Gov
There are no surveys that directly ask about the performance of the “government” in Ukraine. The input survey marginals for this series comes from surveys that ask about the performance of the “leadership”.