

Data Sources for Political & Social Research

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February 24, 2025

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1 Introduction

This document contains a long (but still not exhaustive!) list of datasets and databases that are commonly used in political science, economics, and sociology. The focus is obviously on quantitative datasets, but there are a number of databases that you can use in a qualitative case study. Links to the datasets' websites are usually provided. The sources without links should be easy to find. If a link happens to not work anymore (which can happen!), try Google and please let me know!

You may still find it difficult to get an idea of what types of data are out there and which dataset or indicator is the most appropriate for your particular purposes. If that is the case, you could do two things:

1. As always: read, read, and then read some more! Check what other people have been doing and which datasets they have been using. This should also give you a good idea about the strengths and weaknesses of each dataset or indicator, and about possible pitfalls and how to avoid them.
2. Start with some of the larger data repositories to orient yourself, for instance:
 - The [Data Set of Political Datasets](#) (very comprehensive, recommended!)
 - The [GESIS](#) survey data repository for survey data
 - In Norway:
 - *Norsk senter for forskningsdata (NSD)*: <https://www.nsd.no/>
 - SSB: <https://www.ssb.no/>
 - Datafabrikken: <https://datafabrikken.norge.no/>
 - The [Macro Data Guide](#) for cross-national comparative data
 - See Gabel, Hix and Schneider (2002) for European Union data
 - The International Federation of Data Organizations for Social Science ([IFDO](#))

2 Survey Data

2.1 General social survey data

- European Social Survey (ESS)
- Eurobarometer: Public attitudes toward large range of topics; see <https://www.gesis.org/en/eurobarometer-data-service/search-data-access/topics>
- [GESIS Archive](#): Survey data repository including data from the Eurobarometer, European Values Survey, Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, International Social Survey Program, Studies from Eastern Europe, various German survey datasets); see also the GESIS [Historical Time Series](#) repository
- Arab Barometer: Public opinion data from MENA countries (<https://www.arabbarometer.org/>)
- World Values Survey (WVS)
- US General Social Survey (GSS)
- IPSOS [Norsk Monitor](#)
- PEW polling data (partly available for free, after registration): <https://www.pewresearch.org/tools-and-resources/>; see also [this post](#) for more details.

2.2 Election/voter survey data

- Comparative Study of Electoral Systems ([CSES](#)): Standardized election surveys from several countries and elections

- [American National Election Study](#)
- Norwegian National Election Study/Norsk Valgundersøkelser (available via NSD)
- US [VOTER](#) survey data: Unique longitudinal survey data allowing for deep exploration of public opinion on the issues and values that drive voter behavior.

2.3 Societal safety & crisis preparedness

- US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [National Household Survey](#): Representative survey data on the American public's preparedness actions, attitudes, and motivations.
- Several Special Eurobarometer surveys from different years look at attitudes toward disaster prevention and civil protection: See <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/browse/all>; search in *Keywords* for “Civil protection”; access data via GESIS' ZACAT Data Archive (see above)
- The 2016 round of the International Social Survey Program ([ISSP](#)) included questions on attitudes toward national security and anti-terror measures such as video surveillance or detention of terrorist suspects.

2.4 Other

- [IPUMS International](#): Census microdata on population trends around the world; access possible via [ipumsr](#) R package.
- Luxembourg Income Study (LIS)
- Australian Data Archive ([ADA](#))

- The *Public Opinion Quarterly* provides reviews of recent polling data on specific topics (e.g. on unemployment: De Boer 1983); search for ‘The Polls’ or ‘Poll Reviews’
- [Eurostat survey data](#): Includes e.g. the European Labour Force Survey (ELFS), European Community Household Panel (ECHP), European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC),...
- Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe ([SHARE](#))
- Evidence for Equality National Survey ([EVENS](#)): Survey data on the experiences of ethnic minorities in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic (see also Finney et al. 2023)
- Various national & international panel surveys (German SOEP, British BHPS, Swiss SHP, Swedish LNU, U.S. PSID, Japanese JHPS,...)

3 Cross-National Comparative Data

3.1 General & Socio-Economic Data

- International organizations:
 - [OECD](#)
 - [World Bank](#)
 - [International Monetary Funds](#)
 - [International Labour Organization](#)
 - [Eurostat](#)
 - [United Nations](#)
 - [UNESCO](#)
 - [UNHCR](#)
 - [World Health Organization](#)
- [Comparative Political Data Set I-III](#)
- [Quality of Government Datasets](#)
- [Macro Data Guide](#)
- [International Data Resource Center](#)
- [Harvard Dataverse Network](#)
- [KU Leuven HERCULES Interdisciplinary Database](#)
- [The Humanitarian Data Exchange](#)

3.2 Comparative politics: Governments, parliaments, parties, institutions, elections

- [Manifesto Project Database](#): Ideological positions of political parties
- [Polidoc.net](#): Historical party manifestos, coalition agreements, declarations, and other political documents from 20 European countries
- Integrated Party Organization Dataset ([IPOD](#))
- [PARTY FACTS](#): Repository of comparative and historical data on political parties in around 200 countries
- Parliament and government composition ([ParlGov](#)) database
- [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#): Qualitative descriptions of parliaments and electoral systems, and key statistics on the composition of parliaments in most countries of the world.
- [European Representative Democracy Data Archive](#): Composition, duration, fates of governments in Europe
- Veto player data: George Tsebelis' [homepage](#); see also Jahn (2010)
- [POLCON](#): Index of political constraints, information about heads of states, governments, government parties
- [Database of Parties, Elections, and Governments](#)
- World Bank [Database of Political Institutions](#)
- Varieties of Democracy ([V-Dem](#)): Indicators of democracy, very detailed and for 177 countries between 1900 and today
- [U.S. Policy Mood](#): Overall 'policy mood' of the US public and its change between conservative and liberal since the 1950s; see also Stimson, Mackuen and Erikson (1995). Bartle, Dellepiane-Avellaneda and Stimson (2011) have similar data for the UK

- [Constituency-Level Elections Archive \(CLEA\)](#): Detailed election results at the constituency level for lower house legislative elections from around the world.
- [Executive Approval Project](#): Cross-country comparative data on public support for political executives.
- [Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946-2011](#); see also Golder (2005) and Bormann and Golder (2013).
- [European Journal of Political Science Political Data Yearbook](#): Qualitative info on elections, government composition, important issues in national politics
- [Electoral Studies](#) Election notes/Notes on recent elections (see journal contents online)
- [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance \(IDEA\)](#): Comparative (often qualitative) data on electoral systems, campaign finance rules, direct democracy, gender quotas, voter turnout,...
- [Global Leadership Project \(GLP\)](#): data on government leaders throughout the world - including legislators, members of the executive branch, members of the judiciary, and other decisionmakers whose power may be formal or informal. The database currently covers 160 countries and will eventually include virtually every sizable country in the world.
- [Cline Center Historical Phoenix Event Data](#): Machine-generated data on historical events between 1945 and 2015 extracted from 14 million news stories. It documents the agents, locations, and issues at stake in a wide variety of conflict, cooperation and communicative events.
- [Liberalization Data Set](#): Data on public policy reforms in 13 areas for 37 countries, 1973-2013.
- [The Electoral Integrity Project](#): Data from expert surveys on the integrity of elections in countries around the globe

- [PPEG Database](#) on political parties, presidents, elections, and governments around the world
- [Congress in Data](#): *Congressindata* provides users with information about the characteristics of US Congress Members, their legislative activities, and their social connections over five US Congress cycles: from the 109th to the 113th (2005-2015)
- [Comparative Legislators Database \(CLD\)](#): Rich, diverse and integrated individual-level data on national political representatives. The database contains information for over 67,000 contemporary and historical legislators from 16 countries (see also Göbel and Munzert 2022).
- [WhoGov](#): Information (e.g., gender, party affiliation) on cabinet members in July every year in the period 1966-2021 in all countries with a population of more than 400,000 citizens (see also Nyrup and Bramwell 2020).
- [Parliaments Day-By-Day](#): Open-source data on MPs' membership in parties, parliaments, and party groups (see also Turner-Zwinkels et al. 2022).

3.3 Welfare state policies

- The Social Policy Indicators ([SPIN](#)) database
- Global Welfare State Information System ([WeSIS](#)): comprehensive data to describe and explain social policy worldwide
- Comparative Welfare Entitlements Project ([CWEP](#)): Comparative data on pension, unemployment, and sickness insurance generosity
- CSB Minimum Income Protection Indicators Database ([CSB-MIPI](#))
- Moira Nelson's and my comparative [Unemployment Benefit Conditionality Dataset](#): Comparative data on job-search requirements, the definition of suitable work, and sanctions for unemployment benefit claimants in 21 OECD countries between 1980 and 2012. See also the OECD's [dataset on benefit eligibility requirements](#) for more recent data
- John Stephens & Evelyne Huber's [homepage](#): Comparative Welfare States & Social Policy in Latin America Datasets
- [Leiden Budget Incidence Fiscal Redistribution Database](#): Comparative data on redistribution via taxes and social transfers in 36 OECD countries between 1970 and 2006.
- [MISSOC](#): Qualitative information on social security and assistance schemes in EU countries
- [MISCEO](#): Qualitative information on social security and assistance schemes in member states of the Council of Europe
- [OECD Benefits & Wages](#): Qualitative information on social security and social assistance schemes in OECD countries
- [LIS data repository](#): Some other datasets, e.g. on maternal/parental leave schemes

- [International Network on Leave Policies & Research](#): Qualitative reports on maternal, paternal, and parental leave schemes
- U.S. Social Security Administration ‘[Social Security Programs Throughout the World](#)’: Qualitative description of the main social insurance programs (pensions, health care, unemployment, and sickness insurance) in all countries worldwide
- IMF [Narrative Database of Major Labor and Product Market Reforms in Advanced Economies](#): A database of major labor and product market reforms covering 26 advanced economies over the period 1970-2013. The focus is on large changes in product market regulation in seven individual network industries, employment protection legislation for regular and temporary workers, and the replacement rate and duration of unemployment benefits. The main advantage of this dataset is the precise identification of the nature and date of major reforms.
- European Trade Union Institute [ReformsWatch](#): Individual EU country dossiers with fact-based information on the state of labour market reforms, the state of pension reforms, developments in legislation on strikes and data on strike activities.
- [UNESCO Institute of Statistics](#): Data on public spending and enrollment in education, spending on R&D, culture, communication & information
- [WHO Global Health Observatory](#): Data on healthcare policies, public health indicators, diseases,...
- The Population Europe Resource Finder and Archive ([PERFAR](#)): Data on demographic and socio-economic trends (life expectancy, migration, working life, housing, health,...)
- The Italian Fondazione Rodolfo DeBenedetti and the IZA have a joint [database on labor market reforms](#); see also their [other datasets](#) (on political institutions, enrollment in education, etc.)

- [TransJudFare](#): Research on the effects of European case law on the eligibility of non-economically active EU nationals to non-contributory welfare services (possibly also relevant for those interested in [European Union Politics](#) or [Immigration](#)).
- [Comparative Family Policy Database](#): Data on cash benefits and parental leave programs in 22 OECD countries between 1960 and 2010.
- [Social Assistance in Developing Countries Database](#): Summary information on social assistance interventions in developing countries
- [Global Welfare \(GLOW\)](#) dataset: The database includes 381 variables on 61 countries from years between 1989 and 2015. The database has four main categories of data: welfare, development, economy and politics
- Education Policies and Systems across Modern History [EPSM](#) dataset: measures on compulsory education, ideological guidance and content of education, governmental intervention and level of education centralization, and teacher training covering 157 countries with populations exceeding 1 million people from 1789 to the present (see also Del Río, Knutsen and Lutscher 2024).
- Global Tax Expenditures Database [GTED](#): Information on preferential tax treatments such as exemptions, deductions, credits, deferrals and reduced tax rates that are implemented by governments worldwide to promote different policy goals.
- See also Clasen and Siegel (2007), Clasen, Clegg and Goerne (2016), and a special issue in the *Journal of European Public Policy* (e.g. Danforth and Stephens 2013; Scruggs 2013; Wenzelburger, Zohlnhöfer and Wolf 2013) on the ‘dependent variable problem’ in comparative social policy research.
- ifo Education Survey 2014–2021: A dataset on public preferences for education policy in Germany (Freundl et al. 2022)

- See Cruz-Martínez, Pellissery and Leyer (2023) for an overview over qualitative & quantitative data on how countries responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- See also Grünewald (2014) for an overview of data on social security systems, in particular outside of the ‘core-OECD’ world

3.4 Immigration & immigrant integration

- [Citizenship rights of immigrants](#); see also Koopmans, Michalowski and Waibel (2012)
- Migrant Integration Policy Index ([MIPEX](#))
- fRDB [Inventory of migration policies](#) (1990–2005)
- [IMPOL](#) Database: Indicators on labour migration and especially temporary mobility
- [Migration Data Portal](#): information on the degree of restrictiveness of immigration policies in 33 OECD countries for the period 1980–2010
- [Immigration Policies in Comparison](#): Quantitative indices to measure immigration policies in all OECD countries and for the time period 1980–2010. See also Helbling (2013) and Helbling and Michalowski (2017).
- [Immigration in Party Manifestos Dataset](#)
- [Migrants access to welfare benefits in European countries](#): describes and compares the social protection policies and highlights the conditions under which migrants can access social benefits across five core policy areas: family, guaranteed minimum resources, healthcare, pensions, and unemployment.
- See also Dražanová (2020) and Fearon and Laitin (2003) for comparative data on ethnic diversity

3.5 European Union Politics

- [PFxEU tracker dataset](#): Financial donations received by European Union political parties; see Katsaitis (2023) for details.
- [European Legislative Politics Research Group](#)
- [CEPS EurLex dataset](#): 142.036 EU laws from 1952-2019 with full text and 23 variables
- Thomas König’s [replication data](#)
- Data on “soft” vs. “hard” EU law: Cappellina et al. (2022)
- [Vitrine Démocratique](#): Structured text data on speeches made by members of the European Parliament (see also Tremblay-Antoine et al. 2024).
- See also Sebők et al. (2023) and Gabel, Hix and Schneider (2002) for overviews over available data sources on EU politics and politics in EU member states.

3.6 Technology & technological change

- OECD [Risks that Matter surveys](#): Cross-country comparative survey data, incl. questions on perceived vulnerability to technological change (used by e.g., Busemeyer et al. 2023)
- [EU KLEMS](#): Economic dataset that includes data on ICT investment for many countries and years (used by e.g., Gallego, Kurer and Schöll 2022).
- [AI exposure indicators](#): Indicators measuring exposure to AI at the occupational, industry, and regional (for US) level; see Felten, Raj and Seamans (2021) for details.

3.7 Social media

- [TweetsKB](#): A database of annotated tweets, containing data for nearly 3.0 billion tweets between February 2013 - August 2022. Metadata information about the tweets as well as extracted entities, sentiments, hashtags and user mentions are exposed in RDF using established RDF/S vocabularies (see also Fafalios et al. 2018).
- [The Twitter Parliamentary Database](#): a database consisting of parliamentary names, parties and twitter ids from the following countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Poland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, New Zealand, Turkey, United States, Canada, Australia, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Latvia and Slovenia. In addition, the database includes the European Parliament.

3.8 Industrial relations/unions

- Database on Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts ([ICTWSS](#))
- [Golden-Wallerstein-Lange industrial relations data](#)
- European Observatory of Working Life ([EurWORK](#))
- [Reports on Industrial Relations in Europe](#)
- [European Works Councils Database](#): Information on works councils in European and multinational companies, on EU and national-level works council legislation, and on relevant court cases (EU and national level)
- [European Company Survey](#): Comparative survey on businesses in Europe (see also Lehr, Jansen and Brandl 2023).
- See also Siaroff (1999) and Jahn (2016)

3.9 Peace & conflict

- Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset ([ACLED](#)): A disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project. ACLED collects information on the dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events around the world (see also Raleigh et al. 2010).
- [International Conflict Data Project](#): Collection of datasets that identify all threats, displays, and uses of force between states from 1816 to 2014 (see also Gibler and Miller 2023; Jones, Bremer and Singer 1996)
- [Correlates of War Dataset](#)
- [Uppsala Conflict Database](#)
- [Peace Research Institute Oslo \(PRIO\)](#)
- [Global Contentious Politics Dataset \(GLOCON\)](#): multi-country protest event database for the Global South that uses local sources for automated data collection
- [Center for Systemic Peace](#)
- [SIPRI Military Expenditure Database](#)
- [UNHCR](#): Data on refugees, asylum-seekers, returned refugees, internally displaced and stateless people. Provides detailed information on country of asylum, place of origin, gender, age, location and legal status of refugees

3.10 Environmental politics

- [ENVIPOLCON](#): Environmental governance in Europe
- [CONSENSUS](#): Measuring environmental policy change
- [World Bank Environmental Data](#)

- Environmental Performance Index ([EPI](#))
- International Environmental Agreements ([IEA](#)) Database Project
- [ECOLEX](#): Archive of environmental legislation
- Center for International Earth Science Information Network ([CIESIN](#)): Repository of various environmental datasets
- See also Fiorino (2011)
- Data may also be available from Lyle Scruggs (see e.g. 2001, 2003)

3.11 Development & Aid

- AidData (<https://www.aiddata.org/>); see also Tierney et al. (2011)
- OECD *Creditor Reporting System* ([CRS](#))

3.12 Science, media & political control

- [V-Indoc](#): A global dataset on the politicization of education and the media in 160 countries from 1945-2021. It presents a wide array of unique indices and indicators on indoctrination efforts in education and the media.
- [Academic Freedom Index](#): Quantitative indicators of academic freedom worldwide and since 1900 (Spannagel and Kinzelbach 2022).

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