

# Request Form: Special Coder-Level Data

General ethics principles and Swedish Law, Personal Data Act (1998:204), requires us to make sure that identities or personal identifying information[[1]](#footnote-1) of the *Country Expert Coders* participating in *Varieties of Democracy’s* (V-Dem) surveys and contributing with data are not revealed. Since certain combinations of variables from the post survey questionnaire could be used to identify individual Country Experts, only a selection of these variables are released publicly.

In order to request data on variables that are not in the public release, please fill in the form below. For each request received, the V-Dem Principal Investigators make a risk assessment to estimate the likelihood of the applicant being able to use the requested selection of indicators to identify the Country Experts.  
  
By submitting this form you are also agreeing to the terms of use, where you legally oblige not to use this data as a means to, in any way, with intent or not, deanonymize the real identity of any Country Expert that provide their services to V-Dem.

~~This form is relevant for the following variables: v2zzemploy, v2zzempcnt, v2zzyrsout, v2zztimein, v2zzreside, v2zzansecreas, v2zzbornin, v2zzgender, v2zzreasatisf, v2zzborn, v2zzedcnt, v2zzcurred, v2zzanfirstreas, v2zzdate, v2zzedlev, v3zzmajdem, v3zzedcnt, v3zzborn, v3zzbornin, v3zzreside, v3zztimein, v3zzyrsout, v3zzempcnt, v3zzemploy, v3zzfremrk, v3zzelcdem, v3zzlibdem, v3zzcondem, v3zzprtdem, v3zzdeldem, v3zzegldem, v3zzrole, v3zzdate, v3zzgender, v3zzedlev, v3zzcurred.~~

We are not requesting post-survey questionnaire data. We are requesting only the comments on certain questions, which are listed in 1.3 below.

Please let us know the following (by typing it in this document):

1. **Requested data**
   1. List requested variables from the post-survey questionnaire.

Please provide zz-question tag and title.

Not applicable.

* 1. For which countries would you like data?   
     For all countries or a selection, if a selection, please provide a list.

Colombia

* 1. For which survey/variables would you like the ~~zz-variables~~ comments variables to apply to?

I.e, if you specify ‘v2clacfree’, you would request zz-data for Country Experts that have coded ‘v2clacfree’. If you specify the survey ‘Exclusion’, you would request zz-data for all Country Experts that have coded at least one variable in the 'Exclusion’ survey.

* Surveys: Civil Liberties; Sub-national elections; Elections in general; in particular, we wish to have the comments made by country experts who submitted answers for variables v2elsnless, v2elsnlfc, v2elsnmore, v2elsnmrfc, v2clrgstch, and v2clrgwkch.
* The comments variables are: v2clcommnt, v2elcomsn,v2elcomcom. (The last two of these are not listed in the v13 codebook, but we expect that is an oversight because they are listed in the v6-v8 codebooks.)
  + Historical: v3clcommnt, v3elcomsn,v3elcomcom

1. **Purpose/usage of the requested data, please be as specific as possible (max 1 page in total).**
   1. Describe the hypotheses to be tested.

Do subnational characteristics of democracy correlate with development outcomes? Development outcomes in subnational areas may be correlated with free and fair elections, or with pressure from a mobilized civil society (civil liberties).

* 1. Describe why these variables are important to include.

There is scant reliable data on subnational levels of democracy. We propose to explore the possibility of converting the coder-level responses to the text questions v2elsnless and v2elsnmore, and to the 20 overlapping geographic and demographic categories in v2elsnlfc, v2elsnmrfc, v2clrgstch, and v2clrgwkch into summary measures of the geographic distribution of strong/weak civil liberties protection and more or less fair subnational elections. However, the coder-level responses are probably ambiguous and inconsistent across coders. We would like to see whether the comments on these questions help clarify what the coders meant by, for example, North/South/East/West, “Areas that are less economically developed,” “Areas of civil unrest,” and so on. These values can provide insight into favorable democratic factors for subnational development outcomes.

* 1. Elaborate on what kind of analysis will be done.

Coder-level information around subnational election fairness and civil liberties can be used to assign weighted values to regions identified in various ways in reflecting the proportion of country experts who identified a given region as being more or less democratic. We plan to create polygons to represent each of the 20 categories and use them to map the proportion of coders who chose each one. Many of these polygons overlap. For instance, experts believing that civil liberties were less respected in Cali, Colombia, may have expressed this belief by identifying the West, areas outside the capital city, areas with civil unrest, areas where illicit activity is widespread, or urban areas. By summing the proportions of coders choosing any of these categories, assigning those proportions to polygons, and then aggregating the proportions in the zones where the polygons overlap, we hope to roughly identify more specific regions that possess these strengths or weaknesses in democracy. Once created, these responses can be mapped onto the regions of the country of interest using a choropleth/heat map to identify overlapping aspects of democracy that may be beneficial for development outcomes, such as education or health. Census data could be merged to gain more detail within regions. Having the comments would increase the reliability of these classifications or serve as information for validation

* 1. Describe what are you planning to do with the findings.

Findings will provide insight into subnational democracy according to V-Dem data. The analysis may provide a pipeline for collating subnational V-Dem data from qualitative responses, including coder comments. This text-based analysis can be used to write a report for V-Dem which would assess success, obstacles, or potential follow-up tasks.

What we are proposing is a pilot analysis for just one country, to explore whether this kind of data could be used in this way to yield more fine-grained and reliable information, and for getting a sense of whether the comments actually contain any personally identifiable information. The latter possibility is the main reason that V-Dem does not routinely make these variables publicly available. The comments are highly desirable for making this assessment. Having Coppedge, a V-Dem PI, on this project will ensure that the data will be used responsibly. If the results of this exploratory analysis seem promising, we may want to extend the exercise to other Latin American countries.

1. Would you agree to sign a non-disclosure agreement, i.e., not to share this special data with anyone, beyond who may be involved in the project you apply for here?

\_✓\_: Yes \_\_: No

1. Please state here any other information relevant to the request.  
   This research will form part of McQuestion’s PhD requirements for Research Assistance. It will be carried out under the guidance of Prof. Michael Coppedge.
2. Do you have any connections to a government or state agency in any country?

No.

1. Personal Information

Name: Patrick McQuestion

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Affiliation: Kellogg Institute

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Name, affiliation, and title of co-authors:

Michael Coppedge

Email: [Coppedge.1@nd.edu](mailto:Coppedge.1@nd.edu)

Title: Co-Principal Investigator, Varieties of Democracy project; Professor of Political Science, University of Notre Dame; Faculty Fellow, Kellogg Institute for International Studies

Date and signature:

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December 14, 2023 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Personal identifying data is information that can be used on its own or with other information to identify, contact, or locate a single person, or to identify an individual in context. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)