
Plan Overview

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Title: Piloting Democratic Profiles: A Cross-National Survey of Citizens' Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Democracy in Spain and the United Kingdom

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Project abstract:

Surveys consistently show that over 80% of citizens consider it very important to live in a democracy, across European countries. Yet anti-democratic parties and leaders have mobilised citizens in the streets, gained striking electoral support, risen to power, and eroded institutions. How can societies remain committed to democracy while tolerating its dismantling?

This project addresses this paradox by piloting a new approach to measuring and classifying citizens' attitudes toward democracy. While most studies treat democratic support as a unidimensional measure, this study uses a battery of survey questions covering multiple components of democracy. Based on these items, the project will build a typology of democratic profiles capturing the diversity and contradictions in how citizens understand democracy.

The project will conduct nationally representative online surveys in Spain and the UK, two established European democracies where this paradox manifests in contrasting ways. Using statistical classification techniques and state of the art statistical methods, the study will identify groups of citizens with similar patterns of democratic attitudes and examine how these profiles relate to their policy preferences, media consumption, and political participation.

The findings will generate the pilot data needed to support an application to the European Research Council Starting Grant (ERC StG).

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Piloting Democratic Profiles: A Cross-National Survey of Citizens' Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Democracy in Spain and the United Kingdom

Data Collection

What data will you collect or create?

The project will generate quantitative survey data from nationally representative online surveys conducted in Spain and the United Kingdom, with approximately 2,000 adult respondents per country (4,000 total). The dataset will contain responses to a 17-item battery on democratic attitudes, questions on policy preferences, media consumption, political participation, and standard sociodemographic variables. No qualitative data will be collected. The data will be in structured tabular format (e.g., CSV, SPSS .sav, or Stata .dta).

How will the data be collected or created?

Data will be collected via online surveys administered by a professional survey company. The company will recruit respondents from their existing panels using stratified quota sampling to ensure national representativeness by age, gender, education, and region. The questionnaire will be developed in English and translated into Spanish following a translation and back-translation protocol with native expert review. The survey company will handle programming, piloting, and fieldwork, and will deliver a cleaned dataset to the PI.

Documentation and Metadata

What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?

The dataset will be accompanied by a codebook documenting all variables, response scales, coding decisions, and any derived variables. A technical report will describe the sampling design, quotas, response rates, fieldwork dates, quality screening procedures, and post-stratification weighting applied. The questionnaire in both languages will also be deposited alongside the data.

Ethics and Legal Compliance

How will you manage any ethical issues?

Ethical approval will be obtained from the City St George's Research Ethics Committee before data collection begins. All participants will provide informed consent prior to completing the survey. Participation is voluntary and respondents may withdraw at any time. The survey does not involve

deception, vulnerable populations, or any risk of harm. No personally identifiable information will be retained by the research team. The delivered dataset will contain only anonymised responses.

How will you manage copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues?

The PI will retain intellectual property rights over the research outputs, including the dataset, codebook, and publications, in accordance with City St George's IPR policy. The survey company will be contracted to deliver data to the PI with full rights for academic use, archiving, and open sharing.

Storage and Backup

How will the data be stored and backed up during the research?

During the project, data will be stored on the City St George's secure institutional servers, which are backed up daily. Working copies will be stored on the PI's university-managed device, which is encrypted and password-protected. No data will be stored on personal devices or external cloud services outside the university's infrastructure.

How will you manage access and security?

Access to the dataset during the research period will be restricted to the PI and his potential collaborators. The data will be stored in password-protected folders on university servers. As the dataset is fully anonymised (containing no names, addresses, IP addresses, or panel identifiers), the risk of re-identification is negligible. No sensitive personal data as defined under UK GDPR will be collected or retained.

Selection and Preservation

Which data are of long-term value and should be retained, shared, and/or preserved?

The anonymised survey dataset, codebook, technical report, and questionnaire (in both languages) are of long-term value and will be preserved and shared. These materials will enable replication of the analysis and re-use by other researchers studying democratic attitudes, political participation, or comparative European politics.

What is the long-term preservation plan for the dataset?

The dataset and accompanying documentation will be deposited in a trusted public repository, after a two-year embargo period. The dataset will be attached to a persistent identifiers (DOI).

Data Sharing

How will you share the data?

The anonymised dataset, codebook, technical report, and questionnaire will be deposited in a public repository, after the period of embargo, and made openly accessible under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC-BY) licence.

Are any restrictions on data sharing required?

No restrictions on sharing are required. The dataset will be fully anonymised at the point of delivery by the survey company, and no personally identifiable information will be retained. The CC-BY licence permits unrestricted re-use with attribution.

Responsibilities and Resources

Who will be responsible for data management?

The PI (Felipe González Santos) will be solely responsible for data management throughout the project, including oversight of the survey company's data handling, storage on university servers, quality assurance, documentation, and deposit in a public repository.

What resources will you require to deliver your plan?

No additional resources beyond the project budget are required.