**DATA RELATING TO THE BRITISH MACRO POLITY**

**ESRC AWARD NUMBER**

**R 000-22-2053**

**Introduction**

This document relates to three date sets created as a result of the ESRC funded project, The British Macro Polity.

The three data sets:

1. **The UK Preferences data base:** used in the paper John Bartle, Sebastian Dellepiane Avallaneda and James Stimson, ‘The Moving Centre: Preferences for government activity in Britain, 1950-2005’, *British Journal of Political Science* (2011), 259-85.
2. **The moving centre:** estimates of the political centre, causes of variations in the political centre and estimates of other political attitudes used to validate the estimates of the political centre as set out in Bartle et al ‘The Moving Centre’.
3. **Elections:** data used to produce the End of Award Report for ‘The Macro Polity’ 000-22-2053.
4. **Preferences data base**

This excel data set contains all the original raw preferences data collected during the period of the ESRC award and used to estimating the political centre in John Bartle, Sebastian Dellepiane Avellaneda ‘The moving centre: preferences for government activity in Britain, 1950-2001’, *British Journal of Political Science* (2011), 259-85.

The preferences data set is continually being updated and interested scholars should contact Dr John Bartle at the University of Essex ([jbartl@essex.ac.uk](mailto:jbartl@essex.ac.uk)) for updates.

The preferences data base contains three sheets.

**1. UK data.**

Variable Variable name.

Date Date that original raw data was collected. Note that the purpose of the original research was to provide annual estimates of the political centre. In some cases, where the data was collected over a period of several months (e.g., BSA or BHPS data) the date is the mid-point of the year.

House The polling organisation or research body that collected the original raw data.

Topic Issue topic (see Codes for topics, below). Note that in some cases a question covers more than one topic (e.g., welfare and taxation) so these codes need to be checked carefully.

0-10 Original data (either as percentages or raw numbers). The variables are scored from 0 to 10 to make allowance for the range of response categories that were offered to respondents. In every case a score of 5 is the assumed mid-point or ‘neutral’ score.

DK Don’t know and other non-substantive responses.

Polar The polarity (or direction) of the question, scored 1 if left and -1 if right.

Pcentleft Proportion of substantive responses coded as left measured by left/(left + right).

N Number of respondents. Note that where there was no indication of N in the original data source this is scored 0 and the wcalc algorithm assumes that the N=1000.

**2. Item**

This sheet contains either the full original question wording or sufficient information to enable readers to understand what the question is getting at.

In some cases the original question was pulled from a long list that was preceded by a preamble and this has not been included in order to save space.

**3. Codebook**

100 Government intervention versus free market110 Trade unions and industrial relations120 Welfare state and social benefits130 Public and private ownership140 Public services spending150 Tax and spending160 Poverty, inequality and redistribution180 Inflation and unemployment200 Crime and law and order210 Moral and social attitudes250 Post-materialist values300 Abortion400 Race relations and immigration500 Environment600 International affairs610 Defence spending620 Nuclear weapons650 Northern Ireland700 Europe800 Monarchy810 Constitutional reform (House of Lords)900 Left-right self-placement9999 Unclassifiable

Note that in Bartle et al ‘The Moving centre’, those items coded 600 (international affairs), 700 (Europe) and 900 (left-right self-placement) are excluded from the data used to estimate the political centre.

1. **The moving centre: the policy mood**

This data set contains a corrected version of the data used to estimate the policy mood (unemployment, government expenditure and average income taxes) in table 4 of ‘The moving centre’. There are slight but non-substantive differences to the figures reported in that publication.

Year Year

MoodThe political centre estimated using the preferences database (A) and wcalc package.

Europe The policy mood relating to Europe estimated using the wcalc package.

Self-left Left-right self-placement estimated using the wcalc package.

Mood\_lag Mood lagged one year.

Avg\_tax Average portion of income taken by income tax, based on data provided by Frances Lynch, the University of Westminster.

Unemployment Annual percentage unemployed.

Govt Government expenditure as a proportion of GDP, estimated using the wcalc algorithm (see government spending below).

Inflate Annual inflation rate.

Incumbent. Incumbent, scored 1 if Labour and 0 if Conservative.

**Government spending as a proportion of GDP**

In footnote 64 of ‘The moving centre’ it was noted, “We were unable to find a single measure of government expenditure as a proportion of GDP for the whole period 1950–2005. Therefore, we collected a series of overlapping indicators from a variety of sources and used the extraction algorithm to estimate a single series. The longest single-source period was found in G. White and H. Chapman, ‘Long-term Trends in Public Expenditure’, Economic Trends, 408 (1987), pp. 124–8; but we also used HM Treasury, OECD and Eurostat. These resulting series explained: 86.85 per cent of the variation in the data had a mean of 39.64 and a standard deviation of 3.42. The complete original dataset, together with the extraction output, is available from the authors on request.”

**The walc estimation report file**

Period: 1945 to 2006 62 Time Points

Number of Series: 6

Exponential Smoothing: On

Iteration History: Dimension 1

Iter Convergence Criterion Items Reliability AlphaF AlphaB

1 .6675 .001 6 .976 1.000 1.000

2 .0140 .001 6 .977 1.000 1.000

3 .0056 .001 6 .978 1.000 1.000

4 .0023 .001 6 .978 1.000 1.000

5 .0009 .001 6 .978 1.000 1.000

1 "White\_chap" N = 42 Correlation = .988 Mean: 40.1 STD: 5.5

2 "TME" N = 43 Correlation = .950 Mean: 42.9 STD: 3.6

3 "PUBSECTOR" N = 43 Correlation = .829 Mean: 37.2 STD: 3.4

4 "EUROSTAT" N = 11 Correlation = .998 Mean: 41.9 STD: 1.8

5 "EUROSTAT2" N = 12 Correlation = .978 Mean: 38.8 STD: 1.8

6 "OECD" N = 7 Correlation = .875 Mean: 35.5 STD: 4.7

Eigen Estimate 2.21 of possible 2.55

Pct Variance Explained: 86.85

Weighted Average Metric: Mean: 39.64 St. Dev: 3.42

1. **Elections**

The data is used in the vote analyses set out in John Bartle, End of Award Report, *The British Macro Polity*, 000-22-2053. (Swindon: ESRC, 2009).

Con Conservative share of vote.

Lab Labour share of vote.

Lib Labour share of vote.

Labshare Labour share of Conservative plus Labour vote.

LLshare Labour lagged share.

mood The political centre estimated using the UK preferences database (A) and wcalc package.

pip Party in power, scored 1 if Labour -1 if Conservative.

lmp Labour identifiers/(Labour + Conservative identifiers).

labman Labour manifesto left-right score (RILE).

ldman Liberal manifesto left-right score (RILE).

conman Conservative manifesto left-right score (RILE).

manmid Manifesto mid-point of Labour and Conservative manifestos.

labpos Labour manifesto left-right position (alpha=0.2)

ldpos Liberal manifesto left-right position (alpha=0.2).

conpos Conservative manifesto left-right position (alpha=0.2).

posmid Manifesto mid-point of Labour and Conservative manifestos.

labdis Labour distance from median voter.

condis Conservative distance from median voter.

netdist Labour distance from median voter minus Conservative distance from median voter.