**Public Opinion Survey User Guide**

**April 2018**

**Background**

The overall objective of the survey is to offer insights about the foreign policy attitudes and security policy preferences of the general UK public.

Topics covered include:

* Identifying what participants consider should be important national foreign policy goals;
* Identifying what they identify as critical threats to the United Kingdom;
* Understanding perceptions regarding what the UK’s role in the world should be, including militaristic attitudes and support for national defence;
* Examining general dispositional approaches that security elites/the general public have towards foreign policy such as multilateralism, unilateralism, and isolationism.

**Questionnaire details**

To facilitate cross-national comparisons, some items closely mimic those asked by the American Chicago Council on Global Affairs Opinion Leaders Survey.[[1]](#footnote-1) Some items replicate scales used in research conducted by Jason Reifler (University of Exeter) and Thomas Scotto (University of Strathclyde), including the militaristic attitudes/militarism scale, and the multilateralism/unilateralism/isolationism scale. Other items were created by the researcher. When batteries of questions were used, the order of items within each battery of questions was randomized.

**Details of the sample**

The general UK public survey was carried out by YouGov in April of 2017 (prior to the announcement of the 2017 General Election). The survey was fielded with a representative sample of 2,000 UK adults. To achieve such a sample, YouGov draws a sub-sample of their online panel that is representative of British adults in terms of gender, age, social class and type of newspaper (upmarket, mid-market, red-top, no newspaper), and invites this sub-sample to complete a survey. Once this sample has been identified, email invitations are sent to respondents (only they may participate in the survey, they do not know ahead of time what the topic of the survey will be about, and each respondent can only ever answer each survey once).

Once the survey is complete, the data is then statistically weighted to the national profile of all adults (including people without internet access). The data is weighed by age, gender, social class, region, level of education, how respondents voted at the previous election, how respondents voted at the EU referendum and their level of political interest. Targets for the weighted data are derived from four sources:

1. The census;
2. Large scale random probability surveys, such as the Labour Force Survey, The National Readership survey and the British Election Study;
3. The results of the 2015 general election;
4. Official ONS population estimates.

**Structure of the dataset**

This is a cross-sectional dataset with 2002 observations. Variables are organised thematically by respondent demographic data, attitudes to international security threats and foreign policy. Further details can be found in the Public Opinion code book. The dataset is available in one file to download in STATA format.

**Ethical considerations**

The University of Exeter Ethics Committee has approved of the project. Participation in the survey experiment was completely anonymous. Data was processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The data will be embargoed for publication reasons until April 2019.

1. There are some differences however. The Chicago Council survey includes additional items, some of which didn’t seem pertinent in a European context (such as drug related violence in Mexico for instance). I also added one item to one of the batteries (Diseases and Pandemics), that was not included in the Chicago Council survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)