

RESPONSIVEGOV PROJECT

Key aspects of the research design: selection of policy case studies and measurement of responsiveness

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INTRODUCTION

To what extent are democratic governments responsive to citizens' demands and preferences between elections? Are governments more likely to be responsive to the expression of public opinion through surveys or to collective and publicly voiced opinion – generally in the form of protests? When does one or the other type of expression prevail as a mechanism to foster governmental responsiveness? What happens when both forms of expression of the public mood are in clear contradiction? Are certain institutional and political configurations more likely to make governments more responsive to citizens' views between elections? And are certain political configurations more conducive to governments paying attention to opinion polls while others make them more receptive to collective action claims-making?

This project constitutes a long-term research effort that aims at adequately answering these research questions. It seeks to contribute in an innovative way to the study of democratic politics by paying close and careful attention to the dynamics of governmental responsiveness (or lack of it) to the views and preferences that the public expresses in two very different forms: through public opinion surveys and through collective action (protest, petitions, advocacy, etc.).

The main **objective** of this project is to study the dynamics by which governments become more or less responsive to different expressions of public opinion and to citizens' expressed preferences and demands between elections. Hence, the project primarily aims at analysing the linkage between the public's opinions, preferences and demands (as expressed in opinion polls and through collective action), on the one hand, and governmental decision-making and policy-making, on the other. A second, but closely related, objective is to ascertain whether certain institutional and systemic

factors make governments more inclined to respond to the public's mood, or to certain expressions of that mood.

Instead of analysing how responsive political parties and candidates are when making their electoral promises and platforms, or focusing on the extent to which electoral promises translate into policy-making, this project intends to concentrate on policy responsiveness to public opinion expressed during governmental terms. In other words, the focus of attention and the period of analysis is that between elections.

POLICY PREFERENCES, PLEDGES AND MANDATES

The ResponsiveGov project studies how governments respond to different expressions of the opinions of the public between elections. It focuses on how governments react when the public voices preferences and demands that are at odds with those of the government. The project, thus, rests on the assumption that — most of the time — governments have a 'preferred' policy, and this is the one they would enact if free of constraints. It goes on to analyse how governments react to public opposition from multiple sectors of the public. Do they stick to their initial policy position? Do they make symbolic concessions? Do they change their policy position somewhat? Do they make complete u-turns? The core questions of the project look at when and under what conditions different reactions from governments are more likely.

Following this logic, once electoral pledges have been made and the governing party/coalition has expressed their policy proposals and citizens have cast their votes, in most cases governments attempt to introduce (at least some of) the policy reforms they promised. Policy-making is, however, conflictual by nature and during their terms governments encounter constant opposition to their initiatives even if they (sometimes) can claim to have a democratic mandate to enact their preferred policies. In fact, governments will often use the notion of the electoral and democratic mandate to dismiss opposition to their policies.

The relationship between mandates, representation and responsiveness is, thus, crucial from a democratic theory perspective. In the presence of electoral mandates, between-

elections responsiveness might be viewed as detrimental to the process of democratic representation.¹ However, what happens when no mandate on specific issues or policy-making junctures can be claimed? How should governments act (and how do they act) when ‘unexpected’ situations or decision-making junctures emerge? In these situations, responsible governments have a choice between following their own policy preferences – as legitimate representatives of the citizenry – or following public opinion – the responsive choice. Furthermore, when the policy issues become publicly contested at these unexpected junctures, governments must choose which side to take or how to balance contending views.

The analysis of decision-making processes around these ‘unexpected’ junctures – and its comparison with ‘normal’ policy-making situations – constitutes a novel and promising avenue of research and should result very fruitful for studying the linkage between mass public opinion and policy-making, and of how institutional designs shape such linkage. This approach helps us overcome the problem of the role of responsiveness within democratic representation when mandates are present; at the same time, it should also help us limit the problems of endogeneity of public opinion with regard to policy-making. Unexpected junctures have the virtue of providing situations in which something closer to “true and independent” policy preferences emerge within public opinion. And they also limit the problems posed by politicians’ anticipation of public opinion (Jacobs and Shapiro 1996: 11).

Thus, in this project we pay special attention to what could be described as situations of ‘executive crisis management’ such as external shocks, unexpected wars, nuclear disasters, or sudden financial and economic crises. This novel approach, together with data collection strategies that allow to model the decision-making juncture as an ‘event’ dynamic or history will also contribute to reduce the problem of endogeneity.

Elements in the selection of the policy-making junctures

A first important aspect in the research design is the selection of the issues or policy domains in relation to which both ‘normal’ and ‘unexpected’ decision-making junctures will be chosen for analysis. Previous research indicates that different policy issues

¹ In any case, responsiveness between elections is only desirable for ‘delegate’ models of representation, and undesirable for ‘trustee’ models of representation (Pitkin 1967).

promote different levels of responsiveness. For example, foreign policy is a domain where governments are far less responsive to citizens' preferences and demands than might be the case with respect to domestic policy issues (Hobolt and Klemmensen 2005; Miller and Stokes 1963). This is so, according to Soroka and Wlezien (2010), because different issue domains are differently relevant for the public: citizens attribute more importance to certain policy areas than to others and, hence, they are not equally attentive to all of them.

These differences in attention are, consequently, reflected on how much feedback or 'signalling' the public sends to politicians about their preferences with regards to policy making in each domain; using Soroka and Wlezien's modelling metaphor, the public 'thermostat' is not equally sensitive to variations in policy 'temperature'. The implications of this different signalling of preferences and demands are that politicians will have more incentives to follow or listen to the public in those policy areas for which citizens care the most and are, hence, more likely to take into account when casting their votes. Thus, it will be essential to consider a wide range of policy domains in our analyses. A further important element of this choice of policy issues is that they must be 'positional' and not 'valence' issues, as at least two confronting or alternative positions need to be identified for the notion of governmental responsiveness to make sense. For example, human or natural catastrophes are not adequate for the type of analysis we are interested in, as they are usually valence issues for which judgements about capacity, authority and efficiency are more relevant than alternative visions around the issue.

Positional policy domains or issue areas are also much more adequate for the type of analysis of 'unexpected' and 'non-mandated' junctures that we will compare to 'normal' policy junctures. For example, war conflicts around which countries need to decide with whom to align, nuclear catastrophes, or sudden financial/economic crises are types of decision-making situations that spur alternative visions on the most desirable outcome and way of conduct by the government. In the face of a radical change of circumstances, electoral pledges or mandates (if they existed prior to the sudden situation) are often invalidated in the minds of voters — and often also of politicians. A priori, we would expect governments to be more inclined to act in a responsive way in such circumstances than during 'normal' decision-making junctures.

Thus, the main elements for the selection of the policy junctures to study are:

- They need to be positional and exclude any valence issues
- They need to cover a multiplicity of policy domains: e.g. environment-related, social-welfare related, moral issues and international affairs issues.
- They need to include cases of both ‘unexpected’ and ‘normal’ policy-making situations.

Policy case selection

Based on the aforementioned requirements, a number of cases of policy-making junctures have been selected (Table 1). These encompass cases from a multiplicity of policy areas, combine cases of unexpected and normal policy-making situations, and are all related to positional issues in which opposing interests and positions are evident.

Table 1. Classification of policy cases to study

Policy area	Unexpected situations	“Normal” situations
<i>Industry & Environment-related policies</i>	1. Nuclear energy after Fukushima (pilot) [Shock = Fukushima]	3. Regulations on genetically modified crops (GMCs)
<i>Economy-related reforms: productive sectors</i>	4. Mortgage laws regulations after 2008 crisis [Shock = banking crisis/recession]	2. Intellectual property and internet reforms (pilot)
<i>Welfare/social reform policies</i>	7. Pensions reform after 2008 crisis [Shock = banking crisis/recession] 11. Immigration reform after unexpected immigration/asylum seekers crisis [Shock = country-specific]	8. Pensions reforms pre-2008 crisis (and post-1996) 10. University fees reforms
<i>Moral policies</i>	(No unexpected cases found)	9. Same-sex marriage reforms
<i>Foreign affairs policy</i>	5. Participation in Afghanistan war [Shock = 9/11]	6. Participation in Iraq war/invasion (2003)

Note: The numbers rank-order temporal precedence in the data collection process. The lighter type font indicates case studies for which we might run out of time given delays in coding.

For each of these policy junctures, the research design steps to follow include:

1. For ‘unexpected’ situations, determining the date of the ‘shock’ that will serve as the starting point for data collection. Usually, this will be the same date for all

countries, but in some cases the dates will vary across countries because the nature of the shock is such that it is country-specific.

2. For ‘normal’ policy-making cases, determining the starting date for data collection on a country-by-country basis. The selection of the date is based on the formulation of a formal commitment or ‘pledge’ to enact a policy reform on the given issue. This might be an electoral pledge by the governing party or coalition (either in a manifesto, policy pamphlet or a formal campaigning pledge), or it might be the announcement of a reform proposal (in parliament, during a speech elsewhere, or in the form of a document). [See section below on the Initial Government Position and the Final Government Response for more details.] Country experts will be consulted, when necessary, for advice on difficult cases.

3. Once the starting point is determined, the coding of each case takes place until the end of the juncture is reached. The end of the juncture is determined by one of the following events: (1) the government changes substantially its policy position/reform (i.e. a responsive move to any actor of the public), (2) the policy/reform is approved or implemented, (3) the government is removed from office by an election or by a change in the parliamentary majority, (4) a general election meant to select the executive takes place (e.g. a legislative election in parliamentary systems, a presidential election in presidential systems). [See the document on the Initial Government Position and the Final Government Response for more details on the conditions that need to be met for an election to end the juncture as a whole or to trigger the start of a new case ID within the same juncture.]

Country case selection and type of data

The study covers a medium-N (up to 24) selection of western democracies between the 1980s and 2010s² (see Table 2 for the list), and merging different types of information into a single pooled dataset that will measure for each instance of ‘policy-making juncture’ the following aspects:

² However, access to newswires and newspaper databases is often limited to the 1990s onwards.

- (1) The **initial policy position** of the government on the given policy issue (or the status quo);
- (2) Public opinion reactions through **opinion polls** (extracted from newswire reports of polls and from existing survey archives around Europe and the US);
- (3) Public reactions through different forms of **protest and collective action** (extracted from newswire reports);
- (4) The reactions from **all relevant actors**, including government and opposition actors (also extracted from newswire reports);
- (5) The positions of key **media actors** through their editorials (extracted from the editorials of 2 main newspapers in each country);
- (6) Institutional and **systemic** properties (extracted from existing comparative politics databases); and
- (7) The **final governmental decisions** made (which is the dependent or outcome variable of interest of this project).

This dataset will provide the basis for a broad comparative analysis of the extent to which governments respond to public opinion preferences and demands when decision-making junctures occur, and will allow a comparison of the situations where ‘normal’ policy-making follows electoral promises or partisan programmes with those situations in which an ‘unexpected’ circumstance arises and no mandate can legitimately be claimed. The information collected in this dataset will also allow assessing whether the degree of responsiveness (or lack thereof) is connected to the institutional design of the polity.

Various strategies of data analysis will be employed, among which event data analysis and event history analysis will play a major role.³ Fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis will also be considered in order to provide a complementary view to the quantitative statistical analyses.

³ Besides event history models, we are also considering employing sequence analysis and Markov Chain models to describe the sequences of interactions between actors.

Table 2. Countries included in the overall study

	EU member-states	Non-EU member states
European	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus (part of the period), Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malta (part of the period), Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden (most of the period), UK	Cyprus (part of the period), Iceland, Malta (part of the period), Norway, Sweden (part of the period), Switzerland
Non-European		Australia, Canada, New Zealand, US

Note: In lighter font we highlight country cases for which it is unclear as yet that we can gain proper access to comprehensive and automated newswire datasets. Not all of these countries will be included in all case studies due to relevance and/or data availability, but this is the pool of countries for which we will attempt to gather data in all instances.

INITIAL GOVERNMENT POSITION AND FINAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The research design relies heavily on the specification of the initial position of the government and of the final response by the government. This document outlines how we operationalize the positions of the government in each country and policy juncture at the starting and ending points of the coding of each case. First, we discuss how each policy juncture is handled in each country studied. Secondly, we deal with the way we determine the starting date for ‘normal’ junctures. Thirdly, we detail how to set the starting date for ‘unexpected’ junctures. Fourthly, we outline how to determine the ending date for ‘normal’ junctures. Finally, we define the selection of the ending date for ‘unexpected’ junctures.

In all cases, the driving aspect of the definition of these elements of the research design is the interest in the study of responsiveness between elections and its relation with the presence of ‘electoral mandates’. Thus, the presence or absence of an electoral mandate and the timing of elections to elect/form new governments is key to the definition of timing and sources for the initial and final positions of the government.

1. Distinguishing between a juncture and cases within a juncture

A policy juncture covers the whole period subject to coding for a specific policy issue. For example, for the post-Fukushima nuclear energy policy juncture, the whole juncture goes between 11 March 2011 and 31 March 2013, while for the internet copyright infringement policy juncture it goes between 2000 and 2013.⁴ These are the periods for which we ‘search’ to establish if there are relevant cases to study in each country.

Policy juncture cases are identified by a case ID code and they are generally determined by a government tenure period, though they sometimes identify successive governments led by the same PM/President and with no substantial changes in composition. A given policy juncture for a given country can contain only one juncture case or it can contain several, depending on the circumstances in each country.

Throughout the tenure of a given government the same case ID will apply to all events within that period. When a change in government happens (due to elections, a crisis of confidence in parliament, or a change in the balance of the coalition), several situations are possible:

- There are no substantial differences in the composition of the government AND the position of the government on the issue of interest has not changed (e.g. has not been changed during the campaign). This means that the party / parties in the government and the Prime Minister/President remain the same prior and after the change. The changes can be considered, mostly, (minor) cabinet reshuffles. In this situation, the same case ID is used after the government change even if an election has taken place.⁵

- There are substantial differences in the composition of the government OR the government remains the same but have changed their position during the elections, confidence crisis or the coalition negotiations/formation period. Either of these two situations puts an end to a case ID and the coder needs to assign a

⁴ If the news agency access doesn't start until later (e.g. 2005), only new cases that start after that date will be considered.

⁵ For ‘unexpected’ or ‘shock-driven’ cases, an election 6 months or later of the starting date of the juncture puts an end to the case and the juncture.

‘final position’ value to that government case ID (in the case of having changed their position one of the ‘reaction’ outcomes will apply, see section 6 in this document). Whether the coder needs to start a new case ID with the new government depends on whether it is an ‘unexpected’ or a ‘normal’ juncture, and this is explained below in the respective sections on the ending date rules.

Thus, each juncture-case (identified by a case ID value) has to include an initial policy position of the government and a final outcome/response position of the government.

2. Starting date of a ‘normal’ juncture

The analysis of ‘normal’ junctures assumes that policy-making follows the usual circumstances or flow. Parties make electoral promises or pledges, a government is formed, and the party/coalition in government will try to implement at least a portion of its pledges. It follows the responsible party and mandate models of democratic government (see Thomson 2011 for a discussion of scholarship on pledges). As a consequence, juncture cases are supposed to start when a pledge on the given issue has been made and the party/coalition enters government and has an opportunity to implement the pledge.

However, responsible party and mandate models of democratic government fail to acknowledge that very often parties get involved in policy-making on issues on which they did not formulate a pledge — or, for that matter, on which they did not have a clear policy preference or position. This means that, often, the first announcement of intentions is not prior to the elections but after elections have taken place, either at the coalition agreement stage or already during the governmental tenure. In this project we will incorporate all these formulations of intentions to implement a certain policy (or to maintain the status quo) and will refer to them as ‘pledges or commitments’.

Following Royed (1996) and Thomson (2001), we will consider as a pledge or a commitment those statements that are formulated as unequivocal — either firmly (‘we will’, ‘we shall’) or softly (‘we support’, ‘we are for’, ‘we intend to’) — intentions to implement a certain policy and the latter is specified as a definite action that can be verified. These intentions can be announced in party manifestos, specific electoral

policy documents, solemn electoral campaign statements (verbal or written), coalition agreements, in parliamentary speeches (e.g. inauguration speeches or annual governmental speeches such as state of the union, Queen's speech) or debates (such as budgetary debates), press conferences, formal press interviews, etc.

Accordingly, we will apply the following rules for the identification of the starting date of a 'normal' juncture case:

- For single party governments, if an electoral pledge exists on the given issue prior to the party entering government, the juncture starts right after the elections when the pledge was made.⁶

- For coalition governments, if EITHER an electoral pledge exists by the leading coalition partner (the PM party) or by the party holding the Ministry responsible for the policy issue, OR a statement exists in the coalition agreement, the juncture starts right after the elections when the pledge/coalition agreement was made.

- For all types of governments, if no electoral pledge or coalition agreement statement is found, the juncture starts when the government announces a clear position or initiates a reform on the given policy issue and this can be at any point of the legislative term. These commitments can be to change the policy or to maintain the status quo, and both would lead to starting a new juncture case.

It is important to highlight that there might be multiple cases for each 'normal' juncture for any given country. For example, if party A pledges to protect cultural goods from copyright infringement in the 2004 elections and party A wins the elections, the legislative term of the government of party A constitutes one juncture case. Let us

⁶ We will not code cases that are halfway through by the date that our coding time frame starts. For example, if the juncture coding period starts in Jan 2000, and a government is formed in Mar 1999 (and has made a pledge), we exclude that government altogether because they started before the juncture coding period. For that country we would only code a case if another government (or the re-elected one) makes another pledge or another firm policy statement after 2000. In other words, we do not code cases that are censored at the beginning of the case and we do not go backwards from the date indicated as the starting one for the juncture period even if we have access to news agency data prior to that date. If, however, the government is formed, e.g., in February 2000 and the pledge was made during the elections or the coalition agreements in, e.g., November-December 1999, we would include such a case because the coding of the events as such would fall within our coding period. The coder would just have to retrieve the relevant documents to code the original position from a few months earlier. What is critical is not to miss any early period during the legislative term to be coded.

imagine that party A initiates a reform of copyright laws and then loses the 2008 elections without being able to complete the legislative process of the reform. Party B wins the elections in 2008 and forms a single party government and party B decides to continue with the reform initiated by party A in the previous term. In this example, the legislative term of party B constitutes a second juncture case for the same policy juncture. Similarly, we would add a second/third/etc. juncture case if a new government were to make a pledge or commitment (in whatever direction) on the policy issue of the juncture during the time frame established for the policy juncture in question.

This means that for ‘normal’ junctures the ResponsiveGov central team establishes the overall time frame period for the policy juncture and each country coder needs to establish the specific periods for the juncture cases that will be coded.

3. Starting date of an ‘unexpected’ juncture

In the cases of ‘unexpected’ junctures, the main premise on which this project is based is that an external shock might — at least to a certain degree — invalidate or reduce the legitimacy of any ‘electoral mandate’. As the external shock introduces fundamentally new circumstances and information, citizens’ prior choices based on a radically different situation can be thought of as possibly no longer valid or subject to re-evaluation.

Given this, the natural starting data of all ‘unexpected’ junctures is the date of the external shock. This date will be given to coders in the case of junctures for which the external shock is the same for all countries (e.g. Fukushima, the 2008 crisis, 9/11, etc.), and they will have to establish it — in consultation with the ResponsiveGov central team and country experts — for those cases where the shock is country-specific.

4. Identifying the government’s initial policy positions: which sources to use?

This section sets out the rules for identifying the government’s (and other parties) policy position on a specific policy juncture. Follow, in strict order, the steps to find the relevant sources for the initial policy positions depending on the type of juncture you are coding.

'Normal' junctures

1a) (The following does NOT apply for Switzerland.) If the juncture case starts because the main governing party (Prime Minister's party) made an electoral pledge, then use the leading governing party's (Prime Minister's party's) election manifesto from the elections that start the policy juncture case to code the initial government position.

1b) **In the case of Switzerland**, if the juncture case starts because one of the main governing parties (those with 2 seats in the Federal Council at the relevant period) made an electoral pledge, use that party manifesto to code the initial government position. If more than one party with 2 seats in the Federal Council made an electoral pledge on the given issue and their positions coincide, use the manifesto of the party with the largest number of seats in the National Council (lower house) after that election. If more than one party with 2 seats in the Federal Council made an electoral pledge on the given issue and their positions do not coincide, use in the first instance the manifesto of the party with the ministerial portfolio relevant to the policy issue or, if none of them hold the ministerial department, use the manifesto of the party with the most seats in the National Council and the Council of States. In all of the cases where more than one party with 2 seats made an electoral pledge, make sure to explain sufficiently the positions in all the manifestos in the section for notes of Appendix 1a.

1c) If the juncture case starts because the government made a policy proposal / suggested a law amendment / issued a decree, then use the policy proposal document / document describing the suggested law amendment / the decree that marks the start of the juncture case to code the initial government position.

'Shock-driven' or 'unexpected' junctures

1) As a first step, you should search for any policy pledge, policy document, law amendment document, governmental decree, etc., which covers the policy issue in question, closest in time to the start of the policy juncture but BEFORE the start date of the policy juncture. Then check (with the help of the key-word dictionary) if the government states its position in a policy area corresponding

EXACTLY to the policy juncture in question. If yes, then code the government's policy position based on this policy pledge document, policy document, law amendment document, governmental decree, etc.

2a) (The following does not apply to Switzerland) If there is no recent policy document / law amendment / decree / etc. mentioning the policy issue right before the start of the policy juncture, check the coalition agreement of the government (for coalition governments) or the government's general initial policy or governmental programme (for single-party governments), outlining the government's main policy positions and plans. This coalition agreement / initial governmental policy programme must refer to the government that was in office during the policy juncture. Then check, if the coalition agreement / initial governmental policy programme includes references to the policy juncture in question. If yes, then code the government's policy position based on the statement in the coalition agreement / initial governmental policy programme. The coalition agreement / initial governmental policy programme MUST date further back than the start date of the policy juncture.

2b) (The following does not apply to Switzerland) If there is no recent policy document / law amendment / decree / etc. mentioning the policy issue right before the start of the policy juncture and the coalition agreement / initial governmental policy programme also does not mention the policy issue (or there is no coalition agreement / initial governmental programme), check the government's inauguration speech⁷ for any references to the policy issue. The government's inauguration speech must refer to the government, which was in office during the policy juncture. If the government's inauguration speech mentions the policy issue, then code the government's policy position based on the government's inauguration speech. This inauguration speech MUST date further back than the start date of the policy juncture.

⁷ In some parliamentary systems, the inauguration speech refers to the speech the Prime Minister gives in front of Parliament on the day when the Parliament is voting the Prime Minister and the government into office. In presidential systems, the inauguration speech refers to the speech the President gives on the day of inauguration.

2c) For Switzerland: If there is no recent policy document / law amendment / decree / etc. mentioning the policy issue right before the start of the policy juncture, check the annual goals (Jahresziele) statements, the Messages of the Swiss government to the Swiss parliament, and the Legislature planning document published every 4 years after the elections. If any of these mentions anything about the policy area of interest, then use the latest position prior to the start of the juncture as the governmental position. For example, if both the Jahresziele and the Legislature planning mention the policy area in question, use the document that was published the latest prior to the start date of the policy juncture as a basis for coding the government's initial policy position.

3) (The following does not apply to Switzerland) If the policy juncture is not mentioned in a recent policy document / law amendment/ decree/ etc., OR in the coalition agreement / the initial governmental policy programme, OR in the governmental inauguration speech, find the leading governing party's (Prime Minister's party's) election manifesto from the past elections closest to the start date of the policy juncture but BEFORE the start date of the policy juncture. Then check (with the help of the key-word dictionary) if the party states its position in a policy area corresponding EXACTLY to the policy juncture in question. If yes, then code the government's policy position based on the election manifesto of the leading governing party.

3a) For Switzerland: If none of the three types of sources, listed above in 2c, mention the policy area, use the status quo on the policy for the code of the government initial position, as the Swiss political system has an embedded dynamic that is biased towards the status quo.

4) If none of the above covers the government's position on the policy juncture, search for journalistic materials to identify the position on the specific policy juncture of the leading governing party. In this case, it is COMPULSORY to double check the coding with the leading country expert.

5. Ending date of a 'normal' juncture

In the case of 'normal' policy-making, the natural ending point of the juncture is the moment in which a resolution is given to the original pledge/commitment. This can be when:

- The reform is dropped or substantially changed (responsive move)
- The reform is approved or implemented
- The government is removed from office or a substantial change in the coalition government takes place

If the government is re-elected (and has not substantially changed as per indications above in section 1) and the policy pledge or commitment is not dropped in the new legislative term, the same case ID code should be applied for the subsequent term and the case continues until one of the three conditions mentioned in the previous paragraph is met.

6. Ending date of an 'unexpected' juncture

In the case of 'unexpected' junctures, the natural ending of the juncture is the celebration of legislative/presidential elections, as this re-instates the 'normal' flow of democratic government, or a substantial change in the policy position (e.g. a responsive move). After the shock has happened, both citizens and political elites have had the opportunity to process the new information of the changed circumstances and adapt their preferences and positions around the given issue. If an election is called, citizens have the chance to vote out or in parties as a function of their new information and how each party represents their (new) preferences/positions. As a general rule, thus, elections will mark the end of the juncture, unless the government has changed its policy position substantially before the following elections.

However, when elections are called less than 6 months after the shock it is questionable that (i) citizens have had enough time to process all the relevant information about the

shock and about the positions of the multiple actors on the issue as a consequence of the shock, and that (ii) the government has had sufficient time to react in a responsive way to any pressures of the public. This is much more so the case the closer the elections to the shock (e.g. 1-3 months). The (somewhat arbitrary) threshold of 6 months was established after the first pilot study of nuclear energy policy after the Fukushima case was coded for a reasonable number of countries (6).

7. Variables in the data matrix for the coding of the initial and the final positions

We now describe the variables that capture the initial and final positions on the given issue. Table 3 differentiates between variables used to determine the initial position (coded only once in Appendix 1a for each case within a single juncture), variables to code interim positions (coded as many times as necessary depending on the number of events in the main matrix), and variables to code the final position (coded also only once per case in a juncture). The table outlines how we measure salience and position at three different points of the event history: the initial policy position, the final policy position at the end of the juncture, and interim (usually moderate) changes in position and salience. For each of these intersections, we establish variables that allow us to measure that aspect.

To determine if responsiveness has occurred we use the final set of variables that measure the outcome or final policy position: the variable on Outcome of the policy juncture case (see all variables measuring the final outcome at the end of this document, and all variables collected in the project in the codebook available on the project website). This will be a judgement provided by the coder in agreement with Maarja & Laura after evaluating the final outcome of the juncture. We provide examples of cases for each value to make sure that error is minimised in the attribution of the values. However, given that the raw information will be stored in a few sentences in V21, we (or other analysts) can change to a new variable or values if we/they so wish.

Table 3. How to measure changes in Governmental policy positions

Dimensions	Initial position	Interim positions	Final position
Salience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manifesto/pledge prior to juncture: # words over total # words in document (v4a1) • Page in manifesto/doc (v4a2) • Qualitative judgement: Was this a major issue for Govt party/coalition before start of juncture? — Why? Describe rationale for answer in (v4a3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative judgement: Has an event triggered a change in the attention to the issue by the Govt party/coalition? (v18a) — How? Describe rationale for answer in v18a (v18a1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manifesto/pledge after end of juncture: # words over total # words in document (v4p1, Appendix 5c on political party manifestos)
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive/Conservative scale of position (-1 to 1 with 0.5 intervals) [v4a4] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative judgement: Has an event triggered a change / changed the government's position on the policy juncture? (v18b) — How? Describe rationale for answer in v18b (v18b1) • Classification of the direction of change triggered: 1. In a more progressive direction; 2. In a more conservative direction (v18b2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive/Conservative scale of position (-2 to 2) (v19) • Qualitative judgement: Has the salience or position on the issue by the Govt party/coalition changed? (v20) — How? (v21) • Which actors was the government reacting to? (v22a1, v22a2, v22b1, v22b2) • Explanation of why coder things govt was responding to these actors (v22c)

FINAL OUTCOME VARIABLES

V19 Government's final position on the policy issue of the juncture

Government position on the policy issue of the juncture (i.e. pro- or anti-nuclear energy / progressive or conservative) at the end of the juncture/juncture case.

See [Section 5](#) in Appendix 1 for examples on how to code the final government position. These examples will be updated before coding any new policy juncture.

- 2 - Very progressive
- 1 - Progressive
- 0 - No position / neutral / vague
- 1 - Conservative
- 2 - Very conservative

V20 The outcome of the policy juncture case

Please select the category that best describes, in your view, the final reaction or position of the government.

- 0- No reaction, no change in attention or in position.
- 1- Increased attention to the issue by the GOVT but no change in position.
- 2- Rhetorical reaction/change: increased attention to the issue and some symbolic yielding to opposing actors (e.g. consultation process, setting up an expert panel, opening up deliberations in parliament or other bodies, etc.) without substantive change in policy.
- 3- Moderate policy reaction/change: substantive change in a (relatively) minor aspect of the policy (e.g. delay of a specific implementation, closure of a specific power plant but not all of them, increase in certain regulatory aspects, change in some non-core legislation, etc.).
- 4- Substantial policy reaction/change: in the case of major policy changes, u-turns in relation to initial policy positions or proposals, or when major legislation is enacted.

V21 Description of the outcome

A string variable. The coder should describe briefly, but in some detail, what the outcome was (e.g. the government did not change its policy but paid much more attention to the issue and tried to persuade the

public and other actors that their position was the most appropriate one, change in policy by adopting X policy instead; etc.).

Please fill in the following variables only if you coded some form of reaction/change in the final outcome variable (values 2, 3, or 4 in V20), otherwise leave blank.

**V22a1 First type of actor (V22a1) and second type of actor (V22a2) the
V22a2 government is reacting to?**

If some form of reaction/change is the final outcome (categories 2-4 in V20), to which type of actor(s) is the government reacting to? A maximum of two types of actors to whom the government is reacting to are coded per policy juncture case. If there are more than two types of actors the government is reacting to, code the most relevant ones (categories 4 and 5 have a higher priority).

- 1 – Government actor (national level only)
- 2 – Legislative actor (national level only)
- 3 – Other institutional actor (incl. judiciary, ombudsman, regional / local level actors)
- 4 – Collective action actor / public sphere actor (incl. general public when involved in collective action, incl. newspaper editors)
- 5 – Survey respondents (e.g. the general ‘silent’ public, the general public opinion mood)
- 6 – Companies (public / private), firms, businesses, etc.
- 7 – Any other type of actor

**V22b1 Name or description of the Actor 1 (V22b1) and Actor 2 (V22b2)
to which the government is responding to.
V22b2**

String variable. Write down specifically the name of the actor (individual or organisation) to whom the government is reacting to. If there is no one specific actor (several individuals or organisations), describe briefly the type of actor the government is responding to when changing symbolically or substantively its policy or position on the given issue.

Please make sure that the actor described in V22b1 corresponds to the type of actor coded in V22a1. Similarly, the actor described in V22b2 should correspond to the type of actor coded in V22a2. Make sure you use the same name or acronym used for these actors in