Public Attitudes towards the Liberal Script (PALS) – Description of the Survey

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The comparative public opinion survey "Public Attitudes towards the liberal script" (PALS) is conducted by the Junior Research Group "Comparative Survey" of the Cluster of Excellence "Contestations of the Liberal Script" (SCRIPTS). The goal of PALS is first and foremost to measure citizen attitudes in different countries around the globe towards what we call the liberal script. In a first wave[2], the survey has been conducted in 26 countries with over 50,000 respondents.

Questionnaire content

The idea of the PALS questionnaire is to measure the attitudes of individuals about how a society should be organized with a specific focus on elements of the liberal script and its contestations. Most questions thus survey normative ideals and not the status quo in the respondent's country. The questionnaire is structured into six modules: *Module A* deals with the core element of the liberal script, individual self-determination; *Module B* deals with the elements of the liberal script (e.g., market economy, rule of law, tolerance), which were derived from various cluster publications (Börzel and Zürn, 2020; Zürn and Gerschewski, 2021); *Module C* deals with the Research Unit-specific questions Borders, Orders, (Re-)Allocation, and Temporality; *Module D* deals with the challenges of the liberal script and so-called covariates, the latter are included in the questionnaire as potential candidates to explain attitudes of modules A–C; *Module E* measures people's voting preferences; *Module F* contains items on standard socio-demographic characteristics.[3]

Implementation

The implementation of the survey is the responsibility of a junior research group. This group was supported by an advisory council, who regularly monitored the progress of the project and were involved in the decision-making process, such as the final selection of countries or the

[1] If you want to learn more about the project, do not hesitate to get in touch with the head of the research group, Heiko Giebler (h.giebler@fu-berlin.de). Please do not cite without permission.
[2] A second wave adding four new countries (Hungary, Israel, Serbia, and Thailand) but also revisiting six countries already part of the first wave (France, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Turkey, and the USA) is currently in the field.
[3] The questionnaire is available on the project website.

development of the master questionnaire.[4] Members of SCRIPTS provided extensive input based on their country- and region-specific knowledge. Moreover, various international experts were consulted to discuss methodological challenges of such a large project – especially in terms of surveying such heterogenous countries all over the world. By means of a public invitation to tender, a survey company – Gallup International – was selected. The company oversaw translations, scripting, and data collection as well as all kinds of pretests (see below). The survey team as well as Gallup International worked intensely with local partners in various countries.

Country selection, sampling, and mode

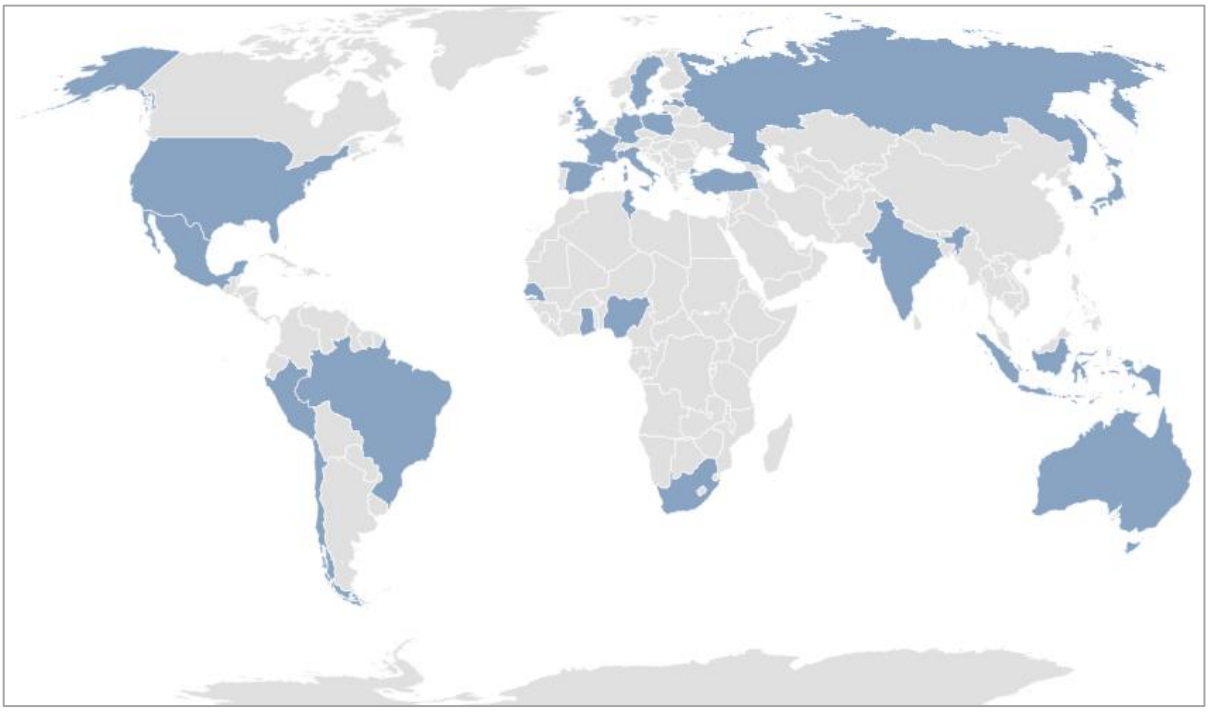
The goal of the survey was to measure attitudes towards the liberal script from a global perspective. This means that the set of surveyed countries had to cover all regions of the world and, within each region, cover variation in terms of economic and political conditions. Our country selection followed a two-step logic. In a first step, we sorted the countries based on characteristics from three dimensions: (a) the geographical region distinguishing between Africa, the Americas, Asia (including Oceania), and Europe, following the UN classification; (b) V-Dem's Electoral Democracy Index (Coppedge et al., 2016, 2022) which sets apart democratic from autocratic regimes on a continuous scale; (c) a combination of the Human Development Index and the Gini coefficient which adds information on the status of societal development and core socio-economic issues. In a second step, we added a group of 13 additional countries. For these, the rationale was (a) to select interesting cases (i.e., with regards to existing data and literature, coverage of typical typologies, but also geopolitical relevance) and (b) to oversample the group of democratic countries to assess the support or rejection in the context of a dominant liberal script. Figure 1 shows the 26 selected countries.[5]

The survey was implemented using a mixed-mode design. In 19 out of the 26 countries, data was collected via computer assisted web interviews (CAWI) with respondents recruited from pre-existing online-access panels. The Internet coverage has increased in many countries over the past decades to the point where over 90% of the population has access to the Internet. In parallel, an infrastructure for survey and market research in the form of large-scale online-access panels has emerged in many countries around the globe. These developments have led to online surveys being a new reliable tool for fast and timely data collection that is relatively low priced but still produces high quality data (Callegaro et al., 2014). Moreover, getting representative samples using probability sampling (either via phone or personal interviews)

[4] The members or the advisory council are Marianne Braig, Jürgen Gerhards, Johannes Giesecke, Macartan Humphreys, Slava Jankin, and Michael Zürn.
[5] Originally, Morocco was among the 26 selected countries. However, during the fieldwork phase, the Moroccan government withdrew the official permission to conduct the survey in the country. As a result, Tunisia was added to the country set as a substitute for Morocco.

suffers more and more from respondents' unwillingness to participate (Olson et al., 2020). Nevertheless, in countries, where the Internet coverage and infrastructure of online access panels was not sufficient, we opted for a traditional face-to-face data collection via computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI).[6]

Figure 1: Selected countries



Africa: Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia
Americas: Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru, USA
Asia and Oceania: Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Turkey
Europe: France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, UK

Permanent residents living in private households aged 18 or older – regardless of their nationality – were the target population in all countries. In CAWI countries, samples are quota-based according to age, gender, education, region of living, and degree of urbanity. The quotas are based on population statistics of the "offline population" (resident population aged 18 and over). Respondents received a small incentive for participation assigned by the survey company. In CAPI countries, random probability samples were drawn. The samples are stratified by region of living and degree of urbanity.[7] Within each stratum, a number of sampling points were randomly selected. From each sampling point, households were selected via

[6] Since more complex survey items (e.g., experiments) can hardly be administered in telephone interviews, we opted for the use of CAPI and CAWI interviews only.
[7] In Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, and Tunisia, all regions of the respective countries were covered by the sampling frame. In India, Nigeria, and Peru, some regions were excluded from the sampling frame for feasibility reasons, e.g., security issues.

random walk procedure. Sampling points and households have been chosen proportional to population. Within selected households, interviewees were selected by the next birthday rule.

Questionnaire design, pretesting, and fieldwork

All items measuring attitudes apply bipolar scales,[8] with respondents being asked to place themselves on six-point Likert scales. The scale endpoints represent opposing views. In some cases, the end poles of the scale were labeled with opposing statements, while in other cases, a single statement was presented to the respondents in the question, and the endpoints were labeled with "Fully disagree" and "Fully agree". Items in the socio-demographic module had nominal and ordinal answering scales corresponding to the content of the item.

For all items in the questionnaire, respondents were presented with the answering options "Don't know" and "I prefer not to say". The only items where respondents were forced to give a substantive answer were items used for the quota sampling in the CAWI questionnaires, namely "gender", "year of birth", "education", "region of living", and "locality".[9] The CAPI questionnaire allowed non-substantive answers on these items, as they were not needed for the sampling in the CAPI countries. In the CAWI questionnaire, questions were presented to the respondents on separate pages of the questionnaire, except for some item batteries, where items had identical scales, which were presented in a matrix format on a single page.

The English master questionnaire was translated by the company into the respective languages by hiring two professional translators on the level of native speakers. Translators were working independently from each other on each translation. A third person was used to decide if there were conflicts between the two translations. For languages that are spoken in multiple of the surveyed countries (English, Spanish, French, and Russian), the translated questionnaires were nevertheless "localized" for each country to make the language as accessible to the respective population as possible. Finally, questionnaires were evaluated by researchers with contextual and language knowledge.

The questionnaire went through a pre-testing phase consisting of cognitive interviews and pilot studies in Chile, Germany, Japan, and Nigeria. The rationale for the selection of these four countries for the pre-tests was to test the questionnaire in countries from all four sampled world regions and across different political and cultural contexts. We also wanted to test the implementation of the survey across countries with different quality-levels of survey infrastructure, different modes, and different sampling designs. The cognitive interviews were

[8] The only exceptions were items C02 and D06, in which respondents were asked to select up to two out of four answering options.
[9] Respondents who did not want to answer the quota questions, as well as respondents whose responses fell outside of the sampling frame (e.g., being too young) or who fell into categories for which the quotas had already been filled, were screened out.

conducted with the goal of better understanding respondents' perceptions of the length of the questionnaire as well as of individual items, to optimize respondents' understanding and experience of the questionnaire (see Farrall et al., 2012). In each country, six in-depth interviews were conducted with respondents with varying combinations of characteristics concerning age, gender, education, locality, and interest in politics. Each respondent filled out the questionnaire, followed by an in-depth interview on general perceptions of the questionnaire and problems with understanding specific items. The general feedback from the interviews was positive: Most items were well-understood by the respondents, the topic was of interest to them, and the duration of the questionnaire was perceived as acceptable. Yet the wording of several items was revised based on the feedback from the interviews, in order to make the meaning of the items easier to understand.

These pilot studies were conducted using the same sampling strategy as planned for the main fieldwork (quota samples and CAWI in Chile, Germany, and Japan; probability sample and CAPI in Nigeria). The fieldwork for the pilots took place in September and October of 2021. We collected 1000 interviews in each of the three CAWI countries and 500 interviews in Nigeria. The data from the pilot studies were analyzed to identify problems concerning the questionnaire as well as the overall implementation of the survey. This led to some minor changes of the questionnaire. While most of the items that were newly constructed for the use in PALS were functioning well, some of them had to be excluded as responses indicated that respondents did not fully understand the meaning of the items. Concerning the implementation of the survey, the collected data performed reasonably well compared to benchmarks of official statistics on socio-demographics and voting behavior.

The main fieldwork started first in the CAWI countries in December of 2021 and lasted four to six weeks per country. While progress of the fieldwork was constantly monitored during the whole fieldwork period via an online platform, several additional quality controls were enacted at specific points of the fieldwork: First, after the completion of the first 1000 interviews across countries, a first dataset was checked to validate the correct implementation of the questionnaires. Second, after having reached 75% of the targeted interviews per country, each country dataset was thoroughly re-checked to potentially identify and correct any country-specific issues. In addition, this step was used to calculate the threshold for the determination and exclusion of 'speeders' (Greszki et al., 2015). As we will explain in more detail in the next section, we excluded interviews as too short with an overall duration below 50% of the median duration of each country and, if applicable, language version. In addition, we excluded interviews that gave too many non-substantive responses (respondent either answered "I prefer not to say" or "Don't know" 60 times or more).[10] This was already done based on the

[10] The total number of items shown to respondents slightly varied between 115 and 120 due to filtering.

75% batch of the data collection to allow quota targets to be fulfilled again. A slight oversampling per country allowed us to also exclude invalid interviews after finishing fieldwork.

The fieldwork phase for the CAPI countries lasted from January to April 2022 and took between six to ten weeks to complete all interviews. Similar to the CAWI approach, fieldwork was closely monitored with regard to the sampling targets after the first 1000 interviews. A substantial proportion of interviewees were called up after the interview by local supervisors to ensure that the interview took place as reported. Since speeding is considered less of a problem in CAPI surveys, we only set a general minimum threshold of 15 minutes for an interview to last and made the local administrators back-check all interviews that lasted 15 to 20 minutes. The collection of geo-codes, which was permitted in most countries, additionally allowed to validate the location of the interviews.

Table 1: Mode, language, fieldwork, and observations per country

Country	Mode	Languages	Fieldwork period	Observations
Australia	CAWI	English	20.12.21–16.01.22	2032
Brazil	CAWI	Portuguese	23.12.21–16.01.22	2110
Chile	CAWI	Spanish	23.12.21–28.01.22	2005
France	CAWI	French	22.12.21–24.01.22	2001
Germany	CAWI	German	13.12.21–07.01.22	2020
Ghana	CAPI	Akan, English	25.01.22–23.03.22	2000
India	CAPI	Bengali, Gujarati, English, Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu	15.02.22–31.03.22	2822
Indonesia	CAWI	Indonesian, Javanese	24.12.21–08.03.22	2001
Italy	CAWI	Italian	20.12.21–12.01.22	2119
Japan	CAWI	Japanese	24.12.21–28.02.22	2000
Latvia	CAWI	Latvian, Russian	21.12.21–29.01.22	2100
Mexico	CAWI	Spanish	22.12.21–22.01.22	2160
Nigeria	CAPI	English, Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba	08.02.22–19.03.22	2000
Peru	CAPI	Spanish, Quechua	19.03.22–11.06.22	2018
Poland	CAWI	Polish	20.12.21–13.01.22	2037
Russia	CAWI	Russian	21.12.21–03.02.22	2143
Senegal	CAPI	French, Wolof	18.02.22–11.04.22	1996
Singapore	CAWI	English, Malay, Mandarin	20.12.21–25.01.22	2010

Country	Mode	Languages	Fieldwork period	Observations
South Africa	CAPI	Afrikaans, Xhosa, English, Zulu	04.02.22–12.03.22	2030
South Korea	CAWI	Korean	21.12.21–20.01.22	2084
Spain	CAWI	Catalan, Spanish	22.12.21–17.01.22	2114
Sweden	CAWI	Swedish	09.12.21–15.01.22	2090
Tunisia	CAPI	Arabic	01.07.22–31.07.22	2012
Turkey	CAWI	Turkish	20.12.21–28.01.22	2016
United Kingdom	CAWI	English	17.12.21–06.03.22	2007
USA	CAWI	English, Spanish	22.12.21–11.01.22	2033

Data

The dataset will be made publicly available after all necessary quality tests and data cleaning efforts have been done and a short inaugural period of data analyses by the core team as well as other members of SCRIPTS has concluded. The accessible data will include all information necessary for data analyses but also adhere to legal regulations, e.g. in the context of respondents' anonymity.

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