# Gone Fishing: The Creation of the Comparative Agendas Project Master Codebook

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# Outline

- What is the CAP?
  - Limitations
  - Policy not Targets
- The CAP Master Codebook
  - Process
  - The Devil in the Details
  - Country and Regional Topics
- Data tools
  - Memos
  - The CAP Website (Beta)

# What is the CAP? I

- The Comparative Agendas Project (CAP) is a misnomer.

- A network of many projects with different funders and goals, but with the same focus on policy attention.
  - Policy attention meaning the substantive focus of the policy used, proposed or discussed for each observation.

- Observations vary, from individual laws or news stories to aggregated measures such as with 'most important problem' type measures.

# What is the CAP? II

- ~ Two dozen projects including a host of different countries, the EU and the US States of Pennsylvania and Florida.

- Long time frames (30 to 100 years) & multiple agendas.

- Uses the same coding system.

- CAP data is as transparent, replicable and contestable as possible by including raw reference and substantive information whenever possible.

# Policy not Targets

- Targets and policies are not the same. Whether or not solutions search for policy windows (Kingdon 1995) the policies aimed at targets often come from several places and often need to.

- Terrorism

- Economic Crisis

# The CAP Master Codebook – Process

- The need: 225 to ~450 subtopics across 15 projects

- Goals
  - Create a common Master Codebook that allows for accurate comparisons across all CAP datasets.
  - Minimize the overall amount of work by seeking a common middle ground between projects rather than asking any project to use a particular country's codebook.
  - Whenever possible avoid the need for recoding with appropriate aggregations.

# The CAP Master Codebook - Details

- 21 Major Topics
- 213 Subtopics

- Immigration can be a civil rights or, in countries with seasonal and/or illegal workers, a labor issue. Yet, as most EU scholars would argue immigration is a policy area unto itself having played a major role in the creation of the EU and its continued existence.
- Culture, namely the preservation and promotion of culture and language plays an important role in many countries.

# The CAP Master Codebook – Country and Regional Codes

- A Cold War Mentality.
  - E.g. Soviet Union and Former Republics

- Many projects used a dummy variable coding system.

- A practical compromise – Specific region or country subtopic code.

- Category of last resort, allowing for a separation of foreign and domestic items.

## CAP Master Codebook Major Topic Codes

| Major Topic | Title |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Domestic Macroeconomic Issues |
| 2 | Civil Rights, Minority Issues, and Civil Liberties |
| 3 | Health |
| 4 | Agriculture |
| 5 | Labor and Employment |
| 6 | Education |
| 7 | Environment |
| 8 | Energy |
| 9 | Immigration and Refugee Issues |
| 10 | Transportation |
| 12 | Law, Crime, and Family Issues |
| 13 | Social Welfare |
| 14 | Community Development and Housing Issues |
| 15 | Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce |
| 16 | Defense |
| 17 | Space, Science, Technology, and Communications |
| 18 | Foreign Trade |
| 19 | International Affairs and Foreign Aid |
| 20 | Government Operations |
| 21 | Public Lands, Water Management, and Territorial Issues |
| 23 | Cultural Policy Issues |

# Data Tools: Memos

- Temporary Link: sbevan.com/cap-master-codebook.html

- General Comparative Agendas Project Coding Guidelines

- The Comparative Agendas Project Master Codebook: Details and Process

- The Comparative Agendas Project: Advice for New Projects

# Data Tools: The CAP Website (beta)

- http://beta.comparativeagendas.com/uk

- http://beta.comparativeagendas.com/tool