



Technical Note on Best For Britain Internationalism Index

25nd April 2021

Summary

The Best For Britain internationalism index is a segmentation of UK adults based on the extent to which they hold internationalist attitudes. The measure is calculated at individual level, and by extension can also provide a measure for groups within the population (such as demographic, geographic or political subsets).

Polling results are often analysed by various breakdowns, with election and EU referendum votes, together with age and education, often acting as proxies for attitudes. This can often lead to wrong conclusions, because these proxies, while useful, are usually far from perfectly correlated with how people feel about any particular issue (or set of issues).

Put simply, people decide how to vote for a variety of reasons, and neither groups of voters nor demographic groups are homogenous. In order to understand best how opinions differ between people with different attitudes, then it makes sense to measure those attitudes directly.

Segmentation of the type made possible by the index enables us to do this. The index combines answers to a battery of questions with statistical modelling to determine how internationalist an individual (or group) is. The segments derived from the index provide the tools with which to analyse how views on things like voting, topical issues, fundamental values in other areas, and so on, vary between those who are more and less internationalist.

Subtopics

In order to construct a broad measure of internationalism, questions probed the public's attitudes to the following subtopics:

- Supranational organisations (such as the WHO, UN and World Bank)
- Learning about and having exposure to other cultures and languages
- Multiple identities
- Humanitarian aid
- Cooperation in general
- Cooperation on the Covid-19 pandemic
- Cooperation on trading standards
- Freedom of movement
- Asylum and refuge

Questions

The questions take the form of agree/disagree statements (listed below), with the following a five-point response scale:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Data collection

The initial data collection for the index was conducted by Number Cruncher Politics via a nationally representative poll of 3,004 UK adults between 8th and 18th March 2021.

Modelling process

To construct the index, the categorical responses were converted into five-point numerical scales, from the most internationalist to the least internationalist answer, with the "don't know" option coded as the mid or neutral response.

In order to normalise the responses, each of the variables was Box-Cox transformed, using lambda parameters automatically selected by iteration for each variable. The transformed variables were then analysed by principal components analysis (PCA) to identify the common internationalism factor, with the nine variables selected based on their correlations with the candidate factors, from which the final index was derived using PCA.

The correlations of the transformed variables with the final index ranged between approximately $r=0.65$ and $r=0.77$.

Finally, to convert the scale back into categorical segments, respondents were classified into "high", "medium" and "low" terciles, which are used as segments for the analysis.

Results

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

International organisations like the World Health Organisation, the UN and the World Bank, have an important role to play in helping to solve global issues such as pandemics, climate change, famine

Strongly agree	36
Agree	38
Neither agree nor disagree	16

Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	2
Don't know	4

Learning about and having exposure to other cultures and languages is important

Strongly agree	30
Agree	40
Neither agree nor disagree	21
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	2
Don't know	3

People can have multiple identities. For example, they can simultaneously be both British and European

Strongly agree	25
Agree	33
Neither agree nor disagree	24
Disagree	9
Strongly disagree	4
Don't know	4

Britain should support international humanitarian aid to help develop economies around the world

Strongly agree	20
Agree	32
Neither agree nor disagree	29
Disagree	9
Strongly disagree	5
Don't know	4

Britain alone can never have all the answers, it's only right that we work with experts from other countries

Strongly agree	34
Agree	38
Neither agree nor disagree	20
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	2
Don't know	3

If the covid-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it's that countries must work together because no one is safe until everyone is safe

Strongly agree	44
Agree	33
Neither agree nor disagree	14
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	2
Don't know	3

Britain should collaborate with other countries to set global trading standards, not try to impose its will

Strongly agree	29
Agree	38
Neither agree nor disagree	23
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	2
Don't know	

British people should have the right to live, work and study in other European countries (and Europeans the right to live, work and study in the UK)

Strongly agree	23
Agree	34
Neither agree nor disagree	29
Disagree	7
Strongly disagree	3
Don't know	4

Britain should offer refuge to those fleeing from war, torture, famine and other problems in their own country

Strongly agree	17
Agree	30
Neither agree nor disagree	30
Disagree	11
Strongly disagree	8
Don't know	5