The European Social Survey (ESS): An overview

www.europeansocialsurvey.org

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Outline

1. Introduction: The ESS at a glance
2. Methodological aspects of the ESS
3. The ESS individual-level data
4. The ESS multilevel data
5. Additional resources concerning the ESS
Facts and figures

Facts

- cross-national survey with a focus on Europe
- interdisciplinary, academic background
- established and first conducted in 2001/2002
- data for eight rounds currently available (2002-2016)
- winner of the Descartes Prize of the EU Commission 2005

Figures

- >35 participating countries
- ~375,000 interviews during the first seven waves
- >3,000 scientific publications based on ESS data
- publications in ~475 academic journals
- ~135,000 registered users of ESS data
Structure of the ESS

- collection and dissemination of individual-level data and dissemination of contextual-level data (‘multilevel’ and ‘media claims’)
- implementation and repetition every two years
- structure of the ESS main questionnaire:
  - main part of the survey consisting of a ‘core module’ and so called ‘rotating modules’
  - the ‘core module’ comprises items of permanent scientific interest that are repeated (mostly unchanged) in every round of the ESS
  - the ‘rotating modules’ comprise more specific items that are not included in every ESS round (but may be repeated)
Scope of the ESS

Geographical coverage

- in total 36 countries in the first eight rounds (2002-2016)
- the composition of countries across ESS rounds is not constant (!)
- 15 of 36 countries participated in all eight rounds
- 27 of 36 countries participated in at least four ESS rounds
- 7 of 36 countries participated in only one or two ESS rounds
- clear focus on Europe (but Israel, Russian Federation, Turkey)
- smallest country: Luxembourg; biggest country: Russian Federation
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Methodological cornerstones of the ESS

- translation of the English master questionnaire into any language that is spoken as a first language by five per cent or more of a country’s population (TRAPD procedure: Translation, Review, Adjudication, Pre-Testing, Documentation)

- random probability sampling at all stages of the selection process (e.g., multi-stage or stratified random sampling)

- "target population": representative samples for all individuals of at least 15 years of age living permanently in a private household

- common fieldwork period of 4 months for all participating countries (usually September-December)

- exclusive use of standardized personal, face-to-face interviews at respondents’ homes (CAPI)
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Topics and contents of the ‘core module’

1. Media and Social Trust
2. Politics
3. Well-Being, Exclusion, Religion, National and Ethnic Identity
4. Gender, Year of Birth and Household Grid
5. Socio Demographics
6. Human Values
Topics and contents of the ‘rotating modules’

1. Immigration (2002, 2014)
2. Citizen Involvement (2002)
13. Public Attitudes to Climate Change (2016)
Access to the ESS individual-level data

- data from all eight rounds of the ESS incl. all ESS documentation materials, guidelines and project specifications are provided on the ESS website
- for using the data a short registration is necessary
- data sets are available via download (formats: Stata, SPSS, SAS) or an Online Analysis Tool
- for individually modified data sets (only certain variables, countries or rounds), see the ‘ESS Cumulative Data Wizard’
- the Online Analysis Tool allows for basic analyses (cross tabulation, correlations, regression) without the need to download the data
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The ESS multilevel data: Topics and access

The research potential of the ESS individual-level data can be extended by the ESS multilevel data. The ESS multilevel data allows to complement the individual-level data with additional information on the context in which respondents live.

**Topics**

1. Demography und geography
2. Economy
3. Health
4. Education
5. Crime
6. Political institutions
7. Indices

**Access**

- ESS Multilevel Data Download
- ESS Multilevel Bulk Download
- ‘Online Browsing’
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Additional information on the ESS

1. ESS Infoclip: short video clip on the ESS (in German)

2. ESS EduNet: E-learning courses and tutorials on a variety of topics regarding the ESS

3. ESS Key Findings / Topline Series: Brochures and booklets that summarize main findings from the ESS

4. ESS Bibliography: bibliography database containing all (scientific) publications based on the ESS

5. International ESS Website: the meta-resource on all topics relevant for the ESS (for information on the German part of the ESS, see the German ESS website)