ESS core review - ESS data user consultation

The ESS questionnaire can be classified in two main parts: the core section and the rotating one. This consultation refers specifically to the core section of the ESS, which contains items measuring a range of topics of interest to the social sciences as well as comprehensive set of socio-structural variables.

The ESS core questionnaire is being reviewed ahead of ESS Round 10. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the ESS core questionnaire continues to accurately reflect the most pertinent social, political and demographic divisions across Europe.

You are invited to take part in this consultation as a known user of ESS data. Your feedback is important as we want to ensure that the changes we propose will not have a negative impact on the community of ESS data users and their work.

Please note that, if not stated otherwise, the question numbers quoted in the following consultation refer to the ESS Round 9 questionnaire.

We will update the data users about the results of this consultation and other strands of the review process. The final changes to the core questionnaire will be shared with you prior to implementation.

About this review:

The review covers the content of the core modules on Politics (Section B), Subjective Wellbeing and identity (Section C), Socio-demographics (Section F), as well as some new proposed items.

The review will be limited to assessing whether and how the broad domains currently included in the core questionnaire should be covered.

Notes for participants in the consultation

Your feedback is important to us to ensure that the final changes will not have a negative impact on the ESS data user community and their work.

Please note that we will only consider comments in English.

Please only fill out this consultation once.

We value your anonymity, so we advise that you do not disclose your identity in this consultation.

We will retain and securely store the data from the consultation until we finalise the decisions about the core questionnaire, in May 2020. However, if the data are used for analysis and reports, those will be kept indefinitely. Your participation in the online consultation gives consent to the above.
**Preliminary question**

Before we start, please indicate the type of activity related to your most recent use of ESS data.

1. Faculty and research
2. PhD thesis
3. Student
4. Government
5. Organisation (non-governmental)
6. Journalist
7. Private enterprise
8. Private individual
9. Other

**Topic of interest**

Please select the section(s) of the consultation that you would like to respond to (you will only be shown the proposed changes for these sections):

- Section B: Politics – Voting behaviour (B14), Political engagement (B16, B17, B20), European unification (B37)
- Section C: Subjective wellbeing and identity – Social Capital (C2, C4), Citizenship (C18), Minority ethnic group membership (C24)
- Section F: Socio-demographics – Respondent’s sex (F2), Activities in the last seven days (F17a), Parents’ jobs (F53, F8)
- Proposed new items: Individual income, Climate change, Authoritarianism
Potential changes to core items

MODULE B – Voting behaviour (B14), Political engagement (B16, B17, B20), European unification (B37)

Voting behaviour

**QUESTION B13**

Some people don’t vote nowadays for one reason or another. Did you vote in the last [country] national election in [month/year]?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not eligible to vote

ASK IF YES AT B13 (IF B13 = 1)

**QUESTION B14**

Which party did you vote for in that last election?

[Country specific codes]

Proposal

Keep B13 on whether voted in previous election, as it is an important measure of political engagement.

Remove B14 – which party voted for in previous general election – because there is doubt about the validity of this item. The most recent general election may have taken place up to 5 years ago, making vote recall potentially difficult for respondents.

Add a new item after B23 (Is there a particular political party you feel closer to than all the other parties?). This question will only be asked if the answer is ‘no’ at B23 and will mean being able to assign a current party ID to a higher proportion of respondents than is possible at the moment.

**Proposed new item:**

If there was a general election in [COUNTRY] tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

How would you rate this proposal?

Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to provide feedback on whether this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

TEXTBOX
Political engagement (1)

**QUESTION B16**

There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?

Have you... **READ OUT**...

...worked in a political party or action group?

1. Yes
2. No

‘Help prevent things from going wrong’ in the sense of help prevent serious problems arising.

Proposal

We will amend this item to make it clear that it does not just relate to being in the paid employment of a political party or action group, but rather broader less formal participation.

**Proposed amended item**

There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?

Have you... **READ OUT**...

...donated to or participated in a political party or action group?

1. Yes
2. No

**How would you rate this proposal?**

Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

**TEXTBOX**
Political engagement (2)

**QUESTION B17**

There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?

Have you... **READ OUT**...

...worked in another organisation or association?

1. Yes
2. No

‘Help prevent things from going wrong’ in the sense of help prevent serious problems arising.

Proposal

As this is part of a battery and there have been a few items before respondents often appear to have forgotten the first sentence of the question: ‘There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong’ and therefore B17 might not make sense to them. More precisely, it is not clear what “another organisation or association” refers to. Moreover, the issue raised at B16 about work in the sense of being in paid employment is also relevant for this item. These issues have consistently been reported across countries for item B17.

Therefore, the proposal is to remove B17 from the ESS core questionnaire.

**How would you rate this proposal?**

Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

**Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:**

**TEXTBOX**
Political engagement (3)

**QUESTION B20**

There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?

Have you... **READ OUT**...

...taken part in a lawful public demonstration?

1. Yes
2. No

‘Help prevent things from going wrong’ in the sense of help prevent serious problems arising.

**Proposal**

We believe that the demonstration attendees might not know whether a demonstration is officially lawful or not, therefore the proposal is to remove the word ‘lawful’ from B20.

**How would you rate this proposal?**

Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

TEXTBOX
European unification

**QUESTION B37**

Now thinking about the European Union, some say European unification\(^1\) should go further. Others say it has already gone too far. Using this card, what number on the scale best describes your position?

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Unification has already gone too far</th>
<th>Unification should go further</th>
<th>(Don’t know)</th>
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</table>

‘Unification’ refers to further integration rather than further enlargement.

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Proposal

We are concerned that respondents may not have a clear view of what they are being asked about – i.e. deepening EU integration vs. enlarging EU. There is a translation annotation to B37 that indicates “unification’ refers to further integration rather than further enlargement’, however this annotation might also be unclear since unification and integration are quite different in meaning as well. More importantly perhaps the annotation and the source questionnaire vary somewhat. To date, there are no definite plans about how to improve this question, but we believe that a change will be beneficial for validity and comprehension.

We would be particularly interested to hear from data users who have used this item in their research. We want to know whether any change in this question will have an impact (positive or negative) on your work.

How, if at all, will any change to this question affect your work?

Very positively/ positively/ No impact / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

**TEXTBOX**

**MODULE C - Social Capital (C2, C4), Citizenship (C18), Minority ethnic group membership (C24)**
Social capital (1)

**QUESTION C2**

Using this card, how often do you meet socially with friends, relatives or work colleagues?

- Never 01
- Less than once a month 02
- Once a month 03
- Several times a month 04
- Once a week 05
- Several times a week 06
- Every day 07

‘Meet socially’ implies meet by choice rather than for reasons of either work or pure duty.

**Proposal**

We are concerned that ‘meet socially’ is an English idiom that is difficult to translate into other languages and achieve comparability. We are also considering whether the item should make explicit that it refers to in-person contact only and excludes online contact which have become in scope as the latter kind of contact becomes more common.

To date, there are no definite plans about how to improve this question, but we believe that a change may be beneficial for validity and comprehension.

We would be particularly interested to hear from data users who have used this item in their research. We want to know whether any change in this question will have an impact (positive or negative) on your work.

**How, if at all, will any change to this question affect your work?**

Very positively/ positively/ No impact / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

TEXTBOX
Social capital (2)

**QUESTION C4**

Compared to other people of your age, how often would you say you take part in social activities?

1. Much less than most
2. Less than most
3. About the same
4. More than most
5. Much more than most

Events/encounters with other people, by choice and for enjoyment rather than for reasons of work or duty.

**Proposal**

We are concerned that ‘social activities’ may be problematic in terms of translation. As with C2, we are considering whether the item should explicitly indicate that it relates to meeting in person, rather than remotely. To date, there are no definite plans about how to improve this question, but we believe that a change will be beneficial for validity and comprehension.

We would be particularly interested to hear from data users who have used this item in their research. We want to know whether any change in this question will have an impact (positive or negative) on your work.

**How, if at all, will any change to this question affect your work?**

Very positively/ Positively / No impact / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

**TEXTBOX**
Citizenship

**QUESTION C18**
Are you a citizen of [country]?

1. Yes
2. No
8. Don’t know

ASK IF NO OR DONT KNOW AT C18 (codes 2 or 8)

**QUESTION C19**
What citizenship do you hold?

WRITE IN ............................................................

[To be coded into pre-specified ISO 3166-1 (2 character)]

Proposal

If a respondent is not a citizen of the country where the survey is taking place, they are asked what citizenship they hold (C19). The latter item has been used very rarely (8 publications), so we propose dropping it.

However, we want to remind that other items in this section will continue to be asked. We will keep the items asking where the respondent was born (C22 and C23) and the ones about where their parents were born (C27 and C29).

How would you rate this proposal?

Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

TEXTBOX
Minority ethnic group membership

QUESTION C24
Do you belong to a minority ethnic group in [country]?
1  Yes
2  No
8  (Don’t know)

“Belong” refers to attachment or identification.

Proposal

National coordinators have expressed concerns that in some countries “minority ethnic group” is not well understood. The identification in a minority ethnic group seems to vary a lot depending of national characteristic and the respondents’ subjectivity.

As a result, we propose dropping this item.

However, we would like to remind the data users that other items on respondents’ origins will continue to be asked. For example, respondents will be asked whether they are a citizen of the country where they are participating in the ESS (C18), where they and their parents were born (C22, C23, C27, C29) and how they would describe their ancestry (F61).

How would you rate this proposal?
Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

TEXTBOX
MODULE F – Respondent’s sex (F2), Activities in the last seven days (F17a), Parents’ jobs (F53, F8)

Respondent’s sex (change to answer categories and mode of collection)

Proposal

ESS interviewers code the respondent’s sex and most are believed to do so without asking the respondent. We do not believe this is a sustainable or ethically acceptable approach, as it heightens the risk of error and denies respondents the opportunity to describe their own sex.

We propose two changes to this question:

Change to the answer categories:

We believe it is important that ESS respondents are able to give an answer other than ‘male’ or ‘female’, if they wish to do so, so we propose including ‘other’ as a substantive category. This would not give any indication of the ‘transgender’ population (those who identify as a sex different to the one assigned at birth). However, this is not the aim of making the change to the question. The aim is to give respondents who do not regard themselves as either male or female, an option to select. However, we believe that asking both about sex (at birth) and gender (identity) could prove problematic in some European languages. Therefore, the proposed question would be:

What is your sex?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other

Change in mode of administration:

Respondents should be asked to code their sex, within a short self-completion (CASI) module of questions. It may be a good idea to ask interviewers to also continue to code sex for the next couple of rounds, allowing for comparison of this data with self-reported sex.

How would you rate these proposals?

Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

TEXTBOX
### Activities in last seven days

**QUESTION F17a**

Using this card, which of these descriptions applies to what you have been doing for the last 7 days? Select all that apply.

**PROMPT** Which others?

1. in paid work (or away temporarily) (employee, self-employed, working for your family business)
2. in education, (not paid for by employer) even if on vacation
3. unemployed and actively looking for a job
4. unemployed, wanting a job but not actively looking for a job
5. permanently sick or disabled
6. retired
7. in community or military service
8. doing housework, looking after children or other persons
9. (other)

**Proposal**

There is scepticism about whether this item is picking up all the things that respondents have been doing in the last 7 days. For example, the proportion of people answering ‘doing housework, looking after children or other persons’ is often very low, even amongst women with young children. Is there a need for F17a (multi-code) or is it that analysts are interested more in F17c (which of these best describes your situation in the last 7 days)?

We propose splitting answer option 9 into two answer options: ‘doing housework’ and ‘looking after children or other persons’. This will allow us to collect information on people who have some caring responsibilities apart from other activities.

**How would you rate this proposal?**

Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

**Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:**

**TEXTBOX**
Father’s job (string variable)

**QUESTION F53 (and F57 for mothers)**
When you were 14, did your father work as an employee, was he self-employed, or was he not working then?

1. Employee  ASK F54  
2. Self-employed  ASK F54  
3. Not working  GO TO F56  
4. (Father dead/absent when respondent was 14)  
8. (Don’t know)

ASK IF FATHER WORKING OR DON’T KNOW (codes 1, 2 or 8 at F53)

**QUESTION F54 (and F58 for mothers)**
What was the name or title of his main job? WRITE IN
______________________________________________________

Proposal

As only one researcher has ever requested use of the ‘string’ variable in relation to the title of father’s (or mother’s) job when respondent was 14, we propose dropping item F54, as well as F58 (which is the equivalent question for mothers).

We propose keeping F55 (and F59 for mothers), which asks the respondent to pick the category that best fits their father’s (or mother’s) occupation, when the respondent was 14.

How would you rate this proposal?
Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

TEXTBOX
Individual income

The ESS core questionnaire already includes a question about household income. We propose adding a question asking about individual income. Our suggestion would be to use an amended version of the question on individual income included in the ESS9 rotating module on Justice and Fairness.

Proposed item:

**FXX CARD XX** Using this card, please tell me which letter describes your own personal income, after tax and compulsory deductions, from all sources? If you don't know the exact figure, please give an estimate.

Use the part of the card that you know best: weekly, monthly or annual income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Annual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>£190 to under £250</td>
<td>£820 to under £1,100</td>
<td>£9,850 to under £13,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>£250 to under £310</td>
<td>£1,100 to under £1,360</td>
<td>£13,190 to under £16,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>£310 to under £380</td>
<td>£1,360 to under £1,640</td>
<td>£16,320 to under £19,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>£380 to under £450</td>
<td>£1,640 to under £1,960</td>
<td>£19,650 to under £23,520</td>
</tr>
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<td>S</td>
<td>£450 to under £540</td>
<td>£1,960 to under £2,330</td>
<td>£23,520 to under £28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>£540 to under £650</td>
<td>£2,330 to under £2,820</td>
<td>£28,000 to under £33,790</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>£650 to under £790</td>
<td>£2,820 to under £3,450</td>
<td>£33,790 to under £41,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>£790 to under £1,050</td>
<td>£3,450 to under £4,580</td>
<td>£41,350 to under £54,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>£1,050 or more</td>
<td>£4,580 or more</td>
<td>£54,910 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The actual amounts must NOT appear on the questionnaire. Only the letters and the corresponding numeric codes. The categories are national and based on deciles of the actual individual income range in the given country.

How would you rate this proposal?

Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to explain if this change will have an impact, either positive or negative, on your work:

TEXTBOX
Proposed new items – Individual income, Climate change, Authoritarianism

Climate change items

**Climate change** is a topic that is highly pertinent and is likely to remain so for a very long time. A module on climate change was included in ESS Round 8. The inclusion of two items from the climate change module in Round 10 is suggested, once their content was agreed. The items under consideration are presented below (from ESS8).

You are invited to suggest which TWO of these items should be included OR whether other items rather than the ones presented here should be considered for inclusion. Please note that only items that have previously been included in ESS8 module on climate change can be considered.

(https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/ess_methodology/source_questionnaire)

**QUESTION D19 (from ESS8)**

You may have heard the idea that the world’s climate is changing due to increases in temperature over the past 100 years. What is your personal opinion on this? Do you think the world’s climate is changing? Choose your answer from this card.

1 Definitely changing
2 Probably changing
3 Probably not changing
4 Definitely not changing

**QUESTION D22 (from ESS8)**

Do you think that climate change is caused by natural processes, human activity, or both?

1 Entirely by natural processes ASK D23
2 Mainly by natural processes
3 About equally by natural processes and human activity
4 Mainly by human activity
5 Entirely by human activity
55 (I don’t think climate change is happening) GO TO D30

**QUESTION D23 (from ESS8)**

To what extent do you feel a personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change?

Not at all 00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 A great deal

**QUESTION D24 (from ESS8)**

How worried are you about climate change?

1 Not at all worried
2 Not very worried
3 Somewhat worried
Which of these items should be included? Please select TWO

- D19
- D22
- D23
- D24
- Other (Please specify): __________________________

How would you rate this proposal?

Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to comment on the inclusion of these proposed questions in the core questionnaire or to suggest other items. Please remember that only items previously included on ESS should be suggested.

TEXTBOX
Libertarianism-authoritarianism scale

The ESS core questionnaire includes a self-reported left-right scale (B26), which we believe is important to keep, despite the recognised limitations of the item.

The libertarianism-authoritarianism divide has the potential to become increasingly important throughout Europe and we are keen to explore ways that this can be measured in the ESS core.

There are three dimensions of authoritarianism: Authoritarian Submission, Conventionalism and Authoritarian Aggression. We propose adding two items on Authoritarian Submission. The rationale behind this choice is that the ESS core questionnaire already indirectly measures Conventionalism (B34, B35 and B36) and Authoritarian Aggression (C36).

The first proposed item is:

“Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.”
(from Duckitt et al., 2010)

This item is similar as the one used in ESS4: “Schools must teach children to obey authority” which has been successfully used in analysis, but is more comprehensive. Variations of this item have been widely used as a measure of Authoritarian Submission, and it is generally considered as one of the most reliable measures of this construct, not least because it is independent of any political context.

The second proposed item is:

“What [country] needs most is loyalty towards its leaders.”

This item is important to assess attitudes that explicitly refer to authorities and leaders at the national level. The proposed version is adapted from items in tested scales (Funke & Dunwoody, 2016 and Duckitt et al., 2010). The main amendments from the tested items are the use of “loyalty” rather than “obedience” and the use of “leaders” rather than “authorities” to not refer to only people currently in positions of power.

How would you rate this proposal?

Very positively / Positively / Neutrally / Negatively / Very negatively

Please use the space below to comment on the inclusion of these proposed questions in the core questionnaire or to suggest other items. Please remember that only items previously tested should be suggested.

TEXTBOX
FINAL QUESTION

As a valued member of the ESS data user community, we would like to give you the opportunity to tell us in 140 characters or less if you think there is any particular topic that should be included in the core questionnaire and why?

TEXTBOX (max 140 characters)