

ESS Round 8 Question Design Template – New Core Items

Concept: Emotional attachment to country of residence and Europe

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Aim
To develop two new items to measure national and European identity. This is a new concept for the ESS core questionnaire. The selected items focus on the emotional dimension of national/European identity, that is attachment to or sense of belonging to the collective.

SECTION A. Theoretical rationale

Why is the topic important? How will including items on this topic in the ESS enhance our understanding of public attitudes and behaviours across Europe?

In the wake of the European sovereign debt crisis the issue of a European collective identity has resurfaced as a major concern for both policy makers and academics (Boehnke *et al.*, 2012, Fligstein *et al.*, 2012, Hobolt and Tilley, 2014, Risse, 2013). Affective support in the form of a common identity is typically seen as the glue that holds political systems, in this case the EU, together when they are failing to produce satisfactory policy outcomes (Easton, 1965). As economic outcomes have often verged on the disastrous in some European countries over the last few years, it has become ever more important to understand whether there is this widespread affective attachment to the idea of ‘Europe’ and what exactly that attachment entails. It is certainly widely claimed that European identity is ‘the’ potential mechanism that will foster public support for European integration (Cram, 2012, Fligstein, 2008, Immerfall *et al.*, 2010, Risse, 2010), but without high quality data these claims remain impossible to test. Despite the importance of these questions, we have little *cross-national representative* information on people’s identifications and attachment at the national and European level. This means much of the research is fragmented, many of the concepts are contested and most of the policy concerns remain unaddressed.

Including items on national and European identity in the ESS helps to fill this research gap. Collective identities are often said to entail at least three dimensions: cognitive (identification as), evaluative (what does it take to be part of the collective), and emotional (attachment to the collective) (Citrin *et al.*, 2001, Kuhn, 2015: 41). We focus here on emotional attachment to (1) Europe and (2) one’s country as researchers deplore the over-emphasis of the cognitive dimension in current studies (Cram 2102, Risse 2010). As Cram (2012: 72-73) writes, “(E)mpirical research on EU identity has been driven largely by the available data. It has, therefore, focused predominantly on the extent to which individuals identify themselves as Europeans or on attitudinal research which identifies the extent to which individuals express *support for* the EU and the integration process”. What is less well researched is the emotional content of how people relate to Europe. We therefore include a question on emotional attachment to a number of political entities, among which

most importantly Europe and one's country.

This enables us to study the impact of collective identities on a plethora of highly relevant social and political attitudes, such as support for European integration, anti-immigrant attitudes, and vote choice for populist right-wing parties. Second, combining these new items with ESS' excellent and rigorous data on socio-economic background allows us to analyse in more detail the antecedents of national and supranational identity in Europe. Third, including these new items into the ESS provides a unique opportunity to move beyond single-country studies of collective identity. Given that ESS covers over 30 nations, it lends itself to assessing the relationship between national and European identity across countries, and to better understand which macro-level factors foster supranational identity formation.

Including new items on emotional attachment to country and Europe in the ESS core questionnaire will greatly enhance possibilities to conduct cross-national research on the sources and consequences of collective identities and on other core issues of the ESS, such as welfare state attitudes.

SECTION B. Relationship with other variables in ESS questionnaire

Are the items intended to be used primarily as explanatory/background variables or is the topic primarily of interest as a dependent variable?

The proposed concept is a new topic that has not been dealt with before in the ESS. European and national identity (as measured by emotional attachment to Europe/country of residence) is of strong interest to social scientists both as an independent variable and as a dependent variable: On the one hand, there is mounting evidence that rational choice approaches cannot fully explain various aspects of social and political behaviour, such as vote choice, solidarity (Paskov and Dewilde, 2012) and redistributive preferences (Costa-Font and Cowell, 2014), support for European integration (Hooghe and Marks, 2004), or attitudes towards immigrants (Sides and Citrin, 2007) and inter-racial attitudes (Charnysh *et al.*, 2014, Transue, 2007). Many researchers point towards the role of collective identities in motivating these attitudes and actions, but they often lack the empirical tools to measure them. We therefore aim at contributing to this discussion by providing researchers with an adequate measurement of the emotional dimension of national and European identity.

Empirical research has found an important distinction between people who have an exclusively national identity and individuals who incorporate a European dimension into their self-concept (Citrin and Sides, 2004, Risse, 2010). This distinction is strongly related to many salient political attitudes. An important question is how exclusive national vs European identity influences people's attitudes towards European integration (Garry and Tilley, 2009, Hooghe and Marks, 2004). With respect to the recent crisis in the EU, for instance, one could ask to what extent exclusive national vs European identity affects public opinion on matters of Europe-wide solidarity and redistribution (Bechtel *et al.*, 2014, Kuhn *et al.* 2017). In light of other contemporary challenges in many European countries, one could ask about the effects of collective identity on attitudes toward immigrants and foreigners (Curtis, 2014). ESS round 8 will include a rotating module dedicated to welfare attitudes; including variables on collective identity makes it possible to further study welfare chauvinism, a topic that has received great scholarly interest in the past years (Mewes and Mau, 2013, Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012, Van der Waal *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, considering contemporary levels of unemployment in Europe, European identity could have significant effects on the acceptance of attitudes toward mobile workers from other European countries (Gerhards and Lengfeld, 2013). Statistically, measuring both national and European identities will make it possible to enter them as an

interaction term (national x European) to examine how different strength combinations predict all these outcomes, and understand better how each of these identities drives particular effects.

Consequently, scholars will find it useful to employ the new items on emotional attachment to country of residence and Europe as predictors of right-wing extremist vote, anti-immigrant attitudes, welfare chauvinism, and other widely studied phenomena.

New independent variable	Examples dependent variables in ESS
Emotional attachment to country / to Europe	B14* (right-wing populist) vote choice B23-B25 (right-wing populist) party ID B26 political ideology B37 Support for European integration B38-B43 attitudes towards migrants Rotating core module on welfare attitudes

* Q numbers as per ESS Round 8 source questionnaire

On the other hand, collective identities are of prime scholarly interest in and by themselves. Empirical research shows that educational attainment is a strong predictor of European identity—insofar as we can currently measure it—(Citrin and Sides, 2004, Duchesne and Frogner, 1995, Kuhn, 2012), but the reasons behind this are obscure. By using the excellent existing economic position data from the ESS, researchers will be able to test more comprehensively than ever before how economic self-interest is linked to attachment to Europe.

Examples Independent variable in ESS	New dependent variable
A1* Exposure to politics news C18-19 Minority group membership C20-C30, F61 Transnational / migration background F15-16 Educational attainment	Emotional attachment to country / to Europe

* Q numbers as per ESS Round 8 source questionnaire

Finally, given the cross-national coverage of the ESS, it will be possible to study the relationship between emotional attachment to country of residence/Europe cross-nationally, and to assess the impact of macro-level factors, such as EU membership (duration), institutional differences, macro-economic situation on collective identity.

Examples macro-level indicators	New dependent variable
EU membership (duration) Existence and strength of ethnic minorities Institutional structure Media discourse Economic prosperity	Emotional attachment to country / to Europe

SECTION C. Potential methodological or practical difficulties

Provide brief details of any potential methodological or practical difficulties associated with asking about this topic on a face to face cross-national survey

Including questions on attachment to country of residence and Europe in the European Social Survey is a complex endeavour. From a substantive methodological point of view, the equivalence problem is at the core of the complexity of the module. Typically, the question of equivalence in social science instrumentation is discussed with regard to three aspects of equivalence, namely functional equivalence, conceptual equivalence, and measurement (ideally scalar) equivalence. Put simply, these aspects refer to the questions whether a concept has the same basic meaning for respondents (functional equivalence), has the same internal structure (conceptual equivalence), and can be measured in

identical units across nations/cultures/language communities (measurement equivalence).

The functional equivalence problem, in particular, is a delicate issue in the present case, both with respect to national and European attachment. Not all currently or potentially participating countries of the ESS are European countries on equal terms. Some countries have been EU member states from the beginning; some recently joined the EU, while Switzerland and Norway remained outside. Others, such as Israel, are not part of the European continent. Finally, political leaders in the Russian federation and in Ukraine have recently been stoking anti-European sentiments. Nonetheless, we argue that Europeanness plays a role in the self-definition of all participating countries, even if in some countries Europe mainly serves as a common “other” against which one can define one’s own identity. After all, all countries participate in the European (sic) Social Survey. Therefore, asking questions about European identity is not requesting information on a non-attitude, as would be the case when posing such questions, for example, in former colonies of European countries or even countries that have never been under European rule. Moreover, we deal with this potential challenge by asking questions on emotional attachment to Europe, rather than self-concept as a European citizen. The former can also relate to migrants and non-Europeans: while they might de facto not be European citizens, they might still have some emotional attachment to Europe. In fact, we find it precisely relevant to study the variation in European attachment across member and non-member states, something which can be easily modelled using country-level dummy variables for membership (duration). We, therefore, claim that European identity is a decisive issue in all possible participation countries and that a sufficient degree of functional equivalence can be assumed.

Equally, attachment to country might be a problematic concept for some members in some participating countries with strong subnational identities, such as Spain, the United Kingdom, or Ukraine. It is possible that, for example, some Catalan, Scottish, or some east-Ukrainian respondents don’t support the idea of a collective national identity, but identify exclusively as Catalan, Scottish, or Russian. Again, however, we expect all these citizens to comprehend and to be able to relate to the Spanish, UK, Ukrainian identity, even if positioning themselves against them. What is more, we think that especially these tensions make it increasingly important to study collective identities and attachment. It is interesting and informative to explore what national attachment predicts in countries where this type of belonging is less normative (e.g. Catalonia).

SECTION D. Concept definition and measurement

i) SUB CONCEPT NAME: Emotional attachment to one’s country

Describe the first sub concept in detail

Collective identities are often said to entail at least three dimensions: cognitive (identification as), evaluative (what does it take to be part of the collective), and emotional (attachment to the collective). With only space to measure one dimension of national and European identity, the ESS items focus on the latter and are intended to capture emotional attachment in the sense of the respondent feeling as if they belong to the collective.

This item measures emotional attachment to the country where the respondent lives.

Expected relationship with other sub concepts

Emotional attachment to one’s country can be positively or negatively correlated to

attachment to Europe, depending on how individuals conceptualize the relationship between their country and Europe. If individuals see their country as being part of Europe, their attachment to Europe and to the country are likely to be positively related. If, on the other hand, they see Europe as antagonistic to their country, a strong emotional to their country might be negatively correlated to attachment to Europe. We expect this relationship to vary both between individuals and across countries. For example, it is to be expected that Russians who have strong attachment to the Russian Federation are less inclined to feel attached to Europe, while people in Spain might be inclined to feel attached both to Europe and to Spain.

See Section B for details of how emotional attachment is expected to correlate with other ESS items.

Question wording

People might feel different levels of attachment to the country where they live and to Europe.¹

C9 CARD 23 How emotionally attached² do you feel to [country]? Please tell me on a score of 0 to 10, where 0 means not at all emotionally attached and 10 means very emotionally attached.

Not at all emotionally attached												Very emotionally attached	(Refused)	(Don't know)
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			77	88

¹ Europe in general, not specifically European Union

² 'Emotionally attached' in the sense of 'identifying with AND feeling close to'

ii) SUB CONCEPT NAME: Emotional attachment to Europe

Describe the second sub concept in detail

Collective identities are often said to entail at least three dimensions: cognitive (identification as), evaluative (what does it take to be part of the collective), and emotional (attachment to the collective). With only space to measure one dimension of national and European identity, the ESS items focus on the latter and are intended to capture emotional attachment in the sense of the respondent feeling as if they belong to the collective.

This item measures respondent's emotional attachment to Europe. This item should be applicable to all respondents including migrants and non-Europeans: while the latter groups might not cognitively see themselves as European, they might still have an emotional attachment to Europe.

Expected relationship with other sub concepts

Emotional attachment to Europe can be positively or negatively correlated to attachment to one's country, depending on how individuals conceptualize the relationship between their country and Europe. If individuals see their country as being part of Europe, their attachment to Europe and to the country are likely to be positively related. If, on the other hand, they see Europe as antagonistic to their country, a strong emotional to their country might be negatively correlated to attachment to Europe. We expect this relationship to vary both between individuals and across countries. For example, it is to be expected that Russians who have strong attachment to the Russian Federation are less inclined to feel

attached to Europe, while people in Spain might be inclined to feel attached both to Europe and to Spain.

See Section B for details of how emotional attachment is expected to correlate with other ESS items.

Question wording

C10 STILL CARD 23 And how emotionally attached do you feel to Europe?¹

Not at all emotionally attached										Very emotionally attached	(Refused)	(Don't know)
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	77	88

¹ Europe in general, not specifically European Union

SECTION E. References

Please provide full references for any studies mentioned in the template below

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