

Description for the general public: Reflecting Europeanisation: cumulative data bases of cross-country surveys as a tool for monitoring European public opinion trends

Europe boasts a rich tradition of conducting cross-country comparative surveys, which translates into enhanced capacity for monitoring public opinion trends in an international setting. European international survey programs are characterized by a significant diversity in terms of research aims and issues covered, as well as with respect to temporal and spatial coverage. Furthermore, significant distinctions arise due to the differences in the measurement methodology, which impacts the quality of gathered data. Those differences underlie the tendency in academic literature to concentrate on the results obtained within a single project (often just one survey wave) and to only refer to other survey-projects in a descriptive manner.

The project is going to focus on four major European multi-wave comparative cross-country projects: Eurobarometer (EB, conducted biannually since 1974), European Values Study (EVS, conducted once per decade since 1981), International Social Survey Programme (ISSP, conducted annually since 1985), and the European Social Survey (ESS, conducted biennially since 2002). The analysis would focus on issues related to the monitoring of opinions and attitudes with respect to the process of European integration.

The main objective of the research project would consist in performing cross-country and cross-project comparisons with respect to attitudes towards European integration. In order to reach this objective, it would be necessary to build a cumulative database integrating results of individual surveys (altogether 1,4 thousand country surveys with 1,5 million respondents), as well as meta-bases registering cross-project differences in the ways of asking questionnaire-items and the different characteristics of survey fieldwork execution at the country level.

The research project makes use of the rich experience of data harmonisation projects, especially with respect to the measurement of socio-demographic characteristics. When it comes to the measurement of opinions and attitudes towards European identification and legitimisation of European institutions, however, the cumulative database will retain original variable characteristics. Thanks to such an approach to cumulation it would be possible to undertake cross-project evaluation of specific measurement styles, as well as check whether conclusions formulated on the basis of one survey project are convergent with results stemming from other projects.