

Description for the general public

This project has two objectives. The first is the carrying out of the seventh wave of the Polish National Election Study (PNES) survey at the 2019 parliamentary elections. The PNES is a post-electoral survey of a representative sample of adult citizens of Poland which asks a range of questions about socio-demographic characteristics (for example, age, gender, education, occupation and income), attitudes to democracy, views on the performance of democracy and the economic situation, attitudes on a range of important social questions, and participation and vote choice in elections. The PNES 2019 survey will include all the aforementioned questions, as well as a variety of questions concerning recent political and social developments. This objective is motivated by the continuing importance of reliable sources of data for the analysis of electoral behavior. The PNES is the only survey in Central and Eastern Europe to have incorporated all four modules of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), the most prestigious and comprehensive comparative dataset for the study of electoral behavior. This project will enable us to continue that tradition by funding a new round of the PNES, which will incorporate module 5 of the CSES and also provide new data about important contemporary issues.

The second objective is to find ways to make post-election surveys more innovative and cost-efficient. Until now, the PNES surveys have used a face-to-face survey methodology based on a random sample of the population. This remains the “gold standard” for the representativeness of surveys, but with people less willing than in the past to participate in long face-to-face surveys, it is increasingly difficult and expensive to collect data in this fashion. The internet has opened up a range of possibilities for administering surveys cheaply and efficiently, using increasingly widespread internet-connected devices. However, such surveys remain less representative of the entire population, as some groups – for example older people, or those on lower incomes – have less reliable access to the internet, or a lower propensity to make use of it. In this project, we will field two internet-based surveys alongside the traditional face-to-face survey. This will allow us to evaluate the representativeness of internet-based surveys by comparing them to our “gold standard” face-to-face surveys and enable us to develop tools for adjusting the results of internet surveys to make them more representative of the entire population. This objective is motivated by the need to adapt existing methods of collecting data to changing circumstances, and to make efficient use of new technologies.

The research project will consist in developing questionnaires for the face-to-face and internet surveys, employing the services of a professional polling agency to field the surveys, and then cleaning and analysis of the data by members of the project team.