

# In harmony: Exploring the feasibility of ex-post harmonisation of European Social Survey and European Values Study items

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[europeansocialsurvey.org](http://europeansocialsurvey.org)

ESS is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC)

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# Structure of the presentation

## 1. Introduction

- Comparison of EVS and ESS

## 2. Methodology

- Selection of compatible items
- Criteria used to compare the items
- Further selection of items and countries

## 3. Results

## 4. Conclusions, limitations and next steps

## Enhancing links with other infrastructures – ESS-SUSTAIN-2

- One of the main objectives of Work Package 2 was to create closer links between the ESS and EVS
- The objective was to bridge EVS measures into ESS items to maintain the EVS time series  
When bridging is not possible, the EVS team will select questions to potentially fill a 30-item module on future rounds of the ESS



European *Values* Study 



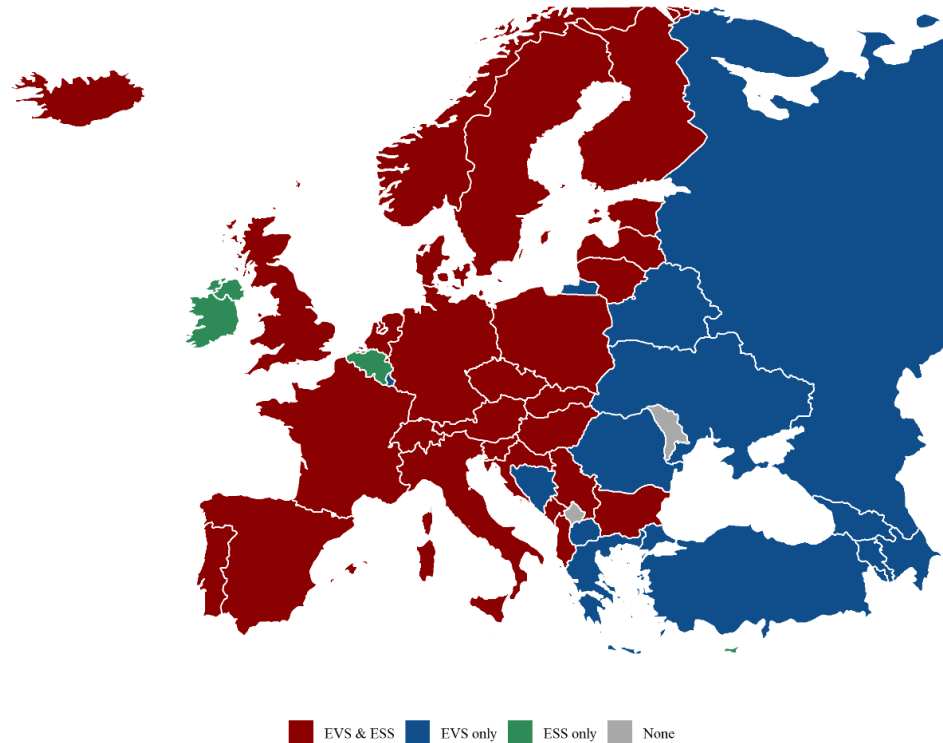
## Comparison of the ESS and the EVS

- The ESS is a biannual cross-national survey designed to measure changing social attitudes and values in Europe. The EVS is a cross-national survey, conducted every nine years, focused on changing moral and social values

	European Social Survey	European Values Study
<b>Abbreviation</b>	ESS	EVS
<b>Time span</b>	2002 – Present	1981 – Present
<b>Frequency</b>	Every 2 years	Every 9 years
<b>Waves to date</b>	10	5
<b>Design</b>	Cross-sectional	Cross-sectional
<b>Central topics</b>	Climate change, crime, human values, media and internet use, national and ethnic identity, perceived discrimination, politics, religion, social exclusion, social trust, subjective wellbeing	Perceptions of life, work, religion and morale, family, politics and society, national identity, environment
<b>Data access</b>	Free of charge for non-commercial use	Free of charge for non-commercial use
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/">https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/</a>	<a href="https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/">https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/</a>

## Geographic comparison of the ESS and the EVS

In terms of geographical coverage, both the ESS and the EVS mostly collect data in European countries. Participating countries vary across data collection rounds/waves, with Figure 1 displaying those taking part in ESS Round 9 (2018) and EVS Wave 5 (2017)



**Figure 1:** Distribution of EVS Wave 5 (2017) and ESS Round 9 (2018) surveys in European countries



# Methodological comparison

## Comparison of source questionnaires

EVS Wave 5 – ESS Round 10

>> 75 potentially comparable item pairs

## Data comparison

EVS Wave 5 – ESS Round 9

>> 24 substantive items

## Comparison of item pairs

using 17 attributes grouped into four domains: 1) question attributes, 2) interviewer role, 3) response attributes and 4) showcards

>> overlapping score ranging from 35 to 100

$M = 75.8\%$  ( $SD = 21.3$ )

# Data comparison

**Goal:**

To assess the extent to which matched items yield similar results



**Challenges:**

- Definition of “similar results”
- Differences in data collection may confound differences in measurement
  - Minimize differences within country/across survey
- Not many analytical techniques to test validity and reliability for single-item measures
- Comparison of different response scales

	<u>Fieldwork duration (days)</u>		<u>Response rates</u>		<u>Sample sizes</u>	
	ESS	EVS	ESS	EVS	ESS	EVS
<b>Germany</b>	188	164	28%	28%	2358	1494
<b>Norway</b>	225	118	43%	55%	1406	1124
<b>Slovenia</b>	131	85	64%	60%	1318	1076

*Note:* sample sizes are achieved, not effective. In Norway, 145 EVS interviews conducted over the phone (CATI) were excluded, resulting in a sample size of 977.

## Analytical approach

- **Study population**  
18 and over (exclude 15-17 from ESS)
- **Mode of data collection**  
Full-length face-to-face interviews  
(exclude CAWI/Mail 3,913 cases from DE  
and 145 CATI cases from NO)
- **Variable prep**  
Measures are transformed (rescaled,  
recoded) to increase comparability when  
needed

- **Weights**  
The analyses are based on weighted data  
(best available weights → ESS: post-  
stratification weights; EVS: calibration  
weights)
- **Analytical comparison**
  - Validity (partial correlations)
  - Reliability (when possible)
  - Comparison of distributions
  - Nonsubstantive responses



# Results: Some examples

(Ever) belong to a religious denomination

Political orientation

Belonging to trade unions

## (Ever) belong to a religious denomination

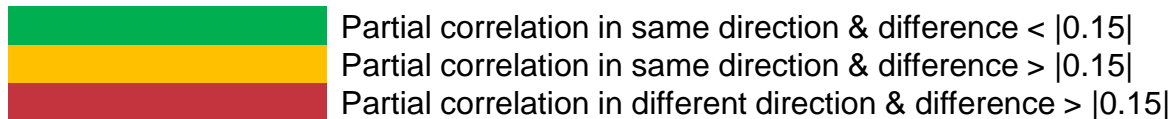
Overlapping score: 100%

	ESS	EVS
<b>Question #</b>	C11	Q13
<b>Question stem</b>	Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?	Do you belong to a religious denomination?
<b>Question #</b>	C13	Q14
<b>Question stem</b>	Have you <u>ever</u> considered yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?	Did you ever belong to a religious denomination?
<b>Response options</b>	1 – Yes 2 – No	1 – Yes 2 – No
<b>Target variable</b>	Dummy coded 0 – No 1 – Yes	

# (Ever) belong to a religious denomination

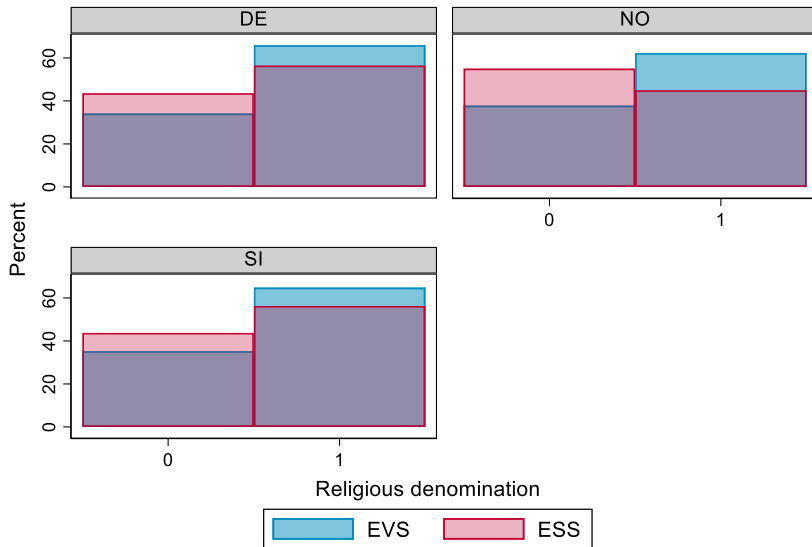
Validity test: largely similar patterns of results across surveys

	Belong			Ever belonged		
	DE	NO	SI	DE	NO	SI
Religious person	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
Age	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
Educational level	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Female	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
In paid work	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

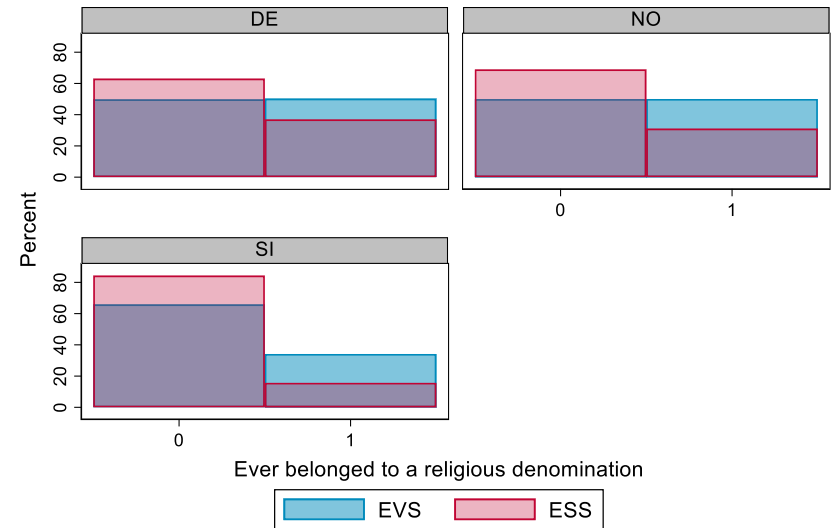


# (Ever) belong to a religious denomination

Distributions: significant differences across surveys



Source: EVS 5(2020), ESS 9(2020) - weighted data



Source: EVS 5(2020), ESS 9(2020) - weighted data

Chi-square test: significant differences in all 3 countries

Significantly more positives in EVS

Item non response: significantly higher in EVS in NO

Chi-square test: significant differences in all 3 countries

Significantly more positives in EVS

Item non response: significantly higher in EVS

# Political orientation

Overlapping score: 76%

	ESS	EVS
<b>Question #</b>	B26	Q31
<b>Question stem</b>	In politics people sometimes talk of “left” and “right”. Using this card, where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?	In political matters, people talk of ‘the left’ and ‘the right’. How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking?
<b>Response options</b>	0 – Left.... 10 – Right	1 – The left ... 10 – The right
<b>Target variable (joint)</b>	Same as source variables	
<b>Target variable (harmonised)</b>	$\text{Stretched political orientation} = \left( \frac{\text{Political orientation}_{EVS} - 1}{10 - 1} \right) * 10$	

# Political orientation

Validity test: largely similar patterns of results across surveys

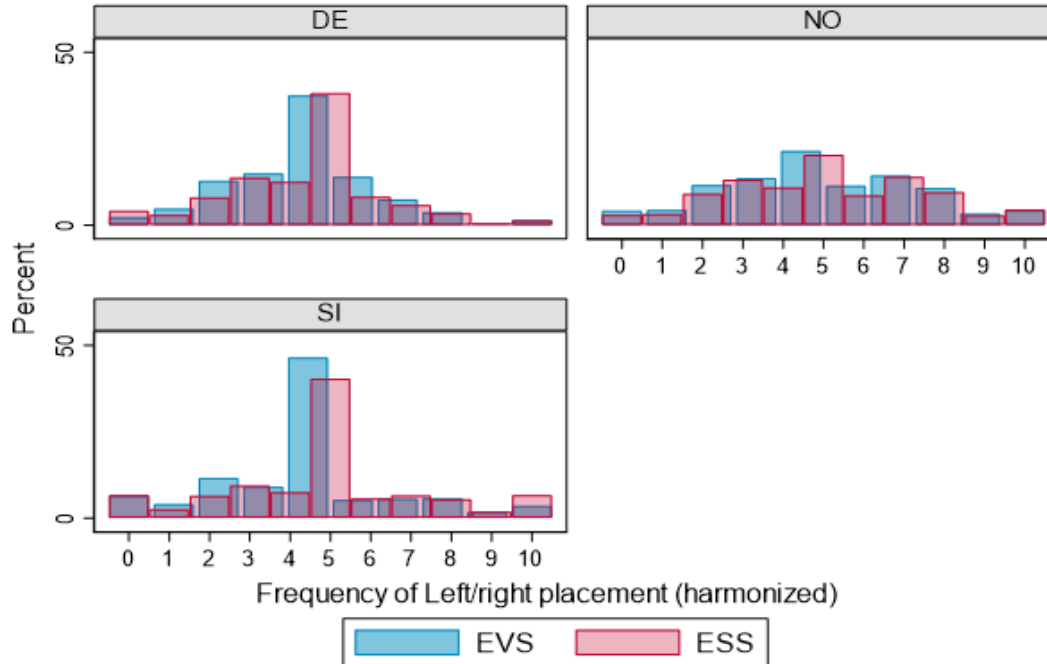
	DE	NO	SI
Age			
Educational level			
Female			
In paid work			

- Partial correlation in same direction & difference < |0.15|
- Partial correlation in same direction & difference > |0.15|
- Partial correlation in different direction & difference > |0.15|

*Note: for this test, the joint variable was used*

# Political orientation

Distributions: significant differences across surveys



Source: EVS 5(2020), ESS 9(2020) - weighted data

T-test: Significant differences in means across surveys in DE (Cohen's  $d = 0.08$ ) & SI (Cohen's  $d = 0.24$ )

Item non response: significant differences across surveys, but small proportions overall

*Note: for these tests, the harmonised variable was used*

# Belonging to trade unions

Overlapping score: 35%

	ESS	EVS
<b>Question #</b>	F39	Q4
<b>Question stem</b>	Are you or have you ever been a member of a trade union or similar organisation? IF YES, is that currently or previously?	Please look carefully at the following list of voluntary organisations and say which, if any, do you belong to?  Trade unions
<b>Response options</b>	1 – Yes, currently 2 – Yes, previously 3 – No	1 – Mentioned 2 – Not mentioned
<b>Target variable</b>		Dummy coded 0 – No 1 – Yes



# Belonging to trade unions

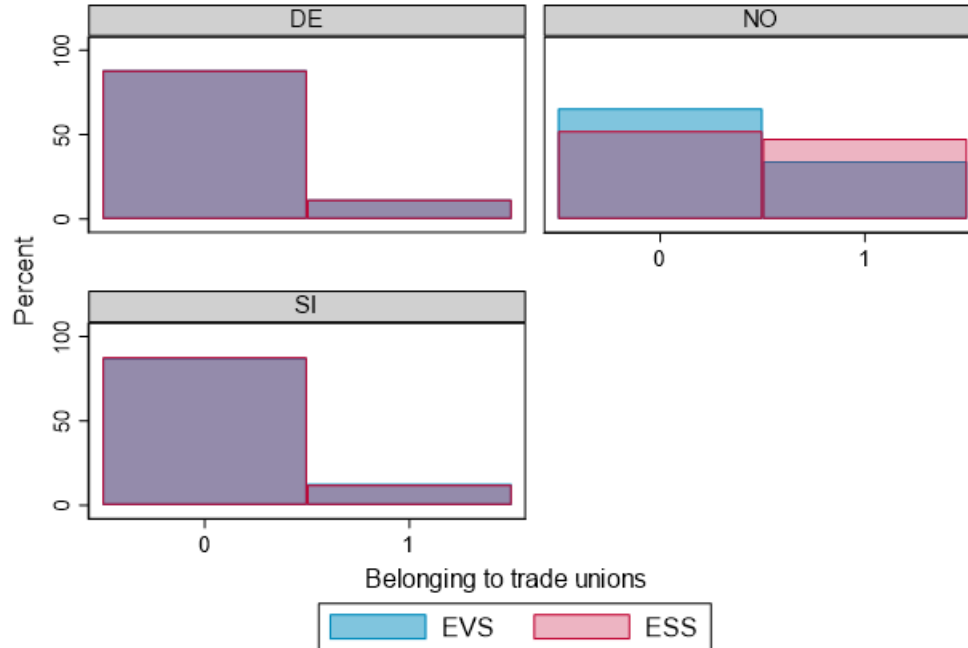
Validity test: largely similar patterns of results across surveys

	DE	NO	SI
Age			
Educational level			
Female			
In paid work			
Boycot product			
Attended demonstration			
Signed a petition			

	Partial correlation in same direction & difference <  0.15
	Partial correlation in same direction & difference >  0.15
	Partial correlation in different direction & difference >  0.15

# Belonging to trade unions

Distributions: no significant differences across surveys in DE and SI



Source: EVS 5(2020), ESS 9(2020) - weighted data

Chi-square test: significant differences in NO

Significantly more positives in ESS

Item non response: significantly higher in ESS in NO

# Summary

Comparison of  
source  
questionnaires  
EVS Wave 5 – ESS  
Round 10

Data comparison  
EVS Wave 5 – ESS Round 9  
>> 24 substantive items

## Limitations:

- Differences in data collection/methodology cannot be completely ruled out
- Three most similar countries.. And the others?
- Narrow definition of comparability
- Validity tests: constraints on correlates

Comparison of item  
pairs  
using 17 attributes grouped  
into four domains: 1)  
question attributes, 2)  
interviewer role, 3) response  
attributes and 4) showcards

## Summary

Comparison of  
source  
questionnaires  
EVS Wave 5 – ESS  
Round 10

Data comparison  
EVS Wave 5 – ESS Round 9  
>> 24 substantive items

- Overall,
- Similar validity (comparable patterns of partial correlations)
  - Similar item non-response
  - Differences in distributions
  - No consistent patterns across countries
  - Differences across variables

Comparison of item  
pairs  
using 17 attributes grouped  
into four domains: 1)  
question attributes, 2)  
interviewer role, 3) response  
attributes and 4) showcards

Next steps:  
Design of EVS Module & Pre-testing  
  
Experimental comparisons?  
Ex-post harmonisation for joint time series?



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