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Did the Great Recession impact human values?

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The Human Values Scale

Findings from
the European
Social Survey



“When considering new policies, governments in the past were often ignorant of their citizens’ preferences and needs. Now European governments have a source for counteracting that ignorance.”

Professor Sir Roger Jowell CBE

Co-founder of the European Social Survey

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THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY

As the European Social Survey (ESS) approaches 20 years of data collection, we present a compendium of academic research based on the Schwarz human values scale section of our survey

Our survey was first developed at the European Science Foundation in 1995, intended to provide academics, researchers and policy makers the tools required to map and measure social attitudes, beliefs and behaviours between and across European nations.

Every two years since 2002/03, around 1,500 face-to-face interviews are conducted in participating countries. Individuals are selected by strict random probability methods at every stage using sampling frames of individuals, households or addresses. They represent the entire residential population aged 15 and over in each country.

Since Round 9 was completed in 2018/19, over 425,000 interviews have taken place.


Over 200 questions - all carefully translated into each language - are asked in each round of the survey. Most are repeated every round, though we also cover two topics proposed by researchers from all scientific disciplines.

Our tenth round will include core questions on climate change and energy, crime and justice, discrimination, economic justice and morality, health and wellbeing, immigration, media consumption, political attitudes and participation, satisfaction with government and trust in democracy, religion, trust in other people and institutions and welfare.

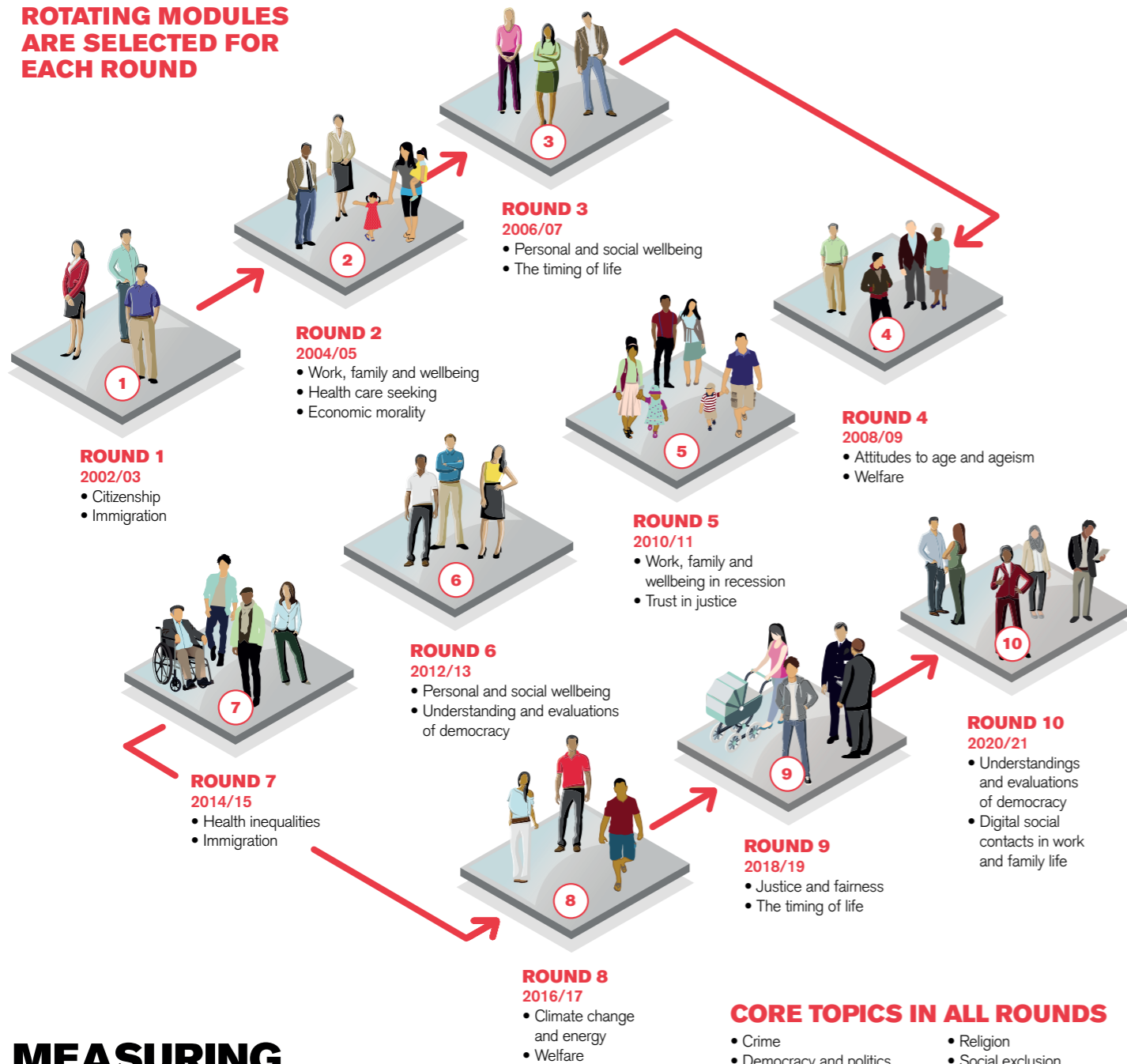
We also ask questions on socio-demographics, so responses to questions can be analysed by age, gender, economic profile, ethnicity and a range of other factors.

In each round we also include the 21-item human values scale (or portrait values questionnaire), which is a series of statements developed by Shalom H. Schwartz to understand the moral values of the respondent.

Shalom has very kindly written an introduction to the human values scale and the research presented in this publication on page 7.

We hope you enjoy this Findings Booklet, and we thank all the authors for their research and excellent contributions. 

ROTATING MODULES ARE SELECTED FOR EACH ROUND



MEASURING ATTITUDES SINCE 2002

CORE TOPICS IN ALL ROUNDS

- Crime
- Democracy and politics
- Human values
- Immigration
- Media use
- National and ethnic identity
- Perceived discrimination
- Religion
- Social exclusion
- Social trust/trust in institutions
- Subjective wellbeing
- Socio-demographics

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

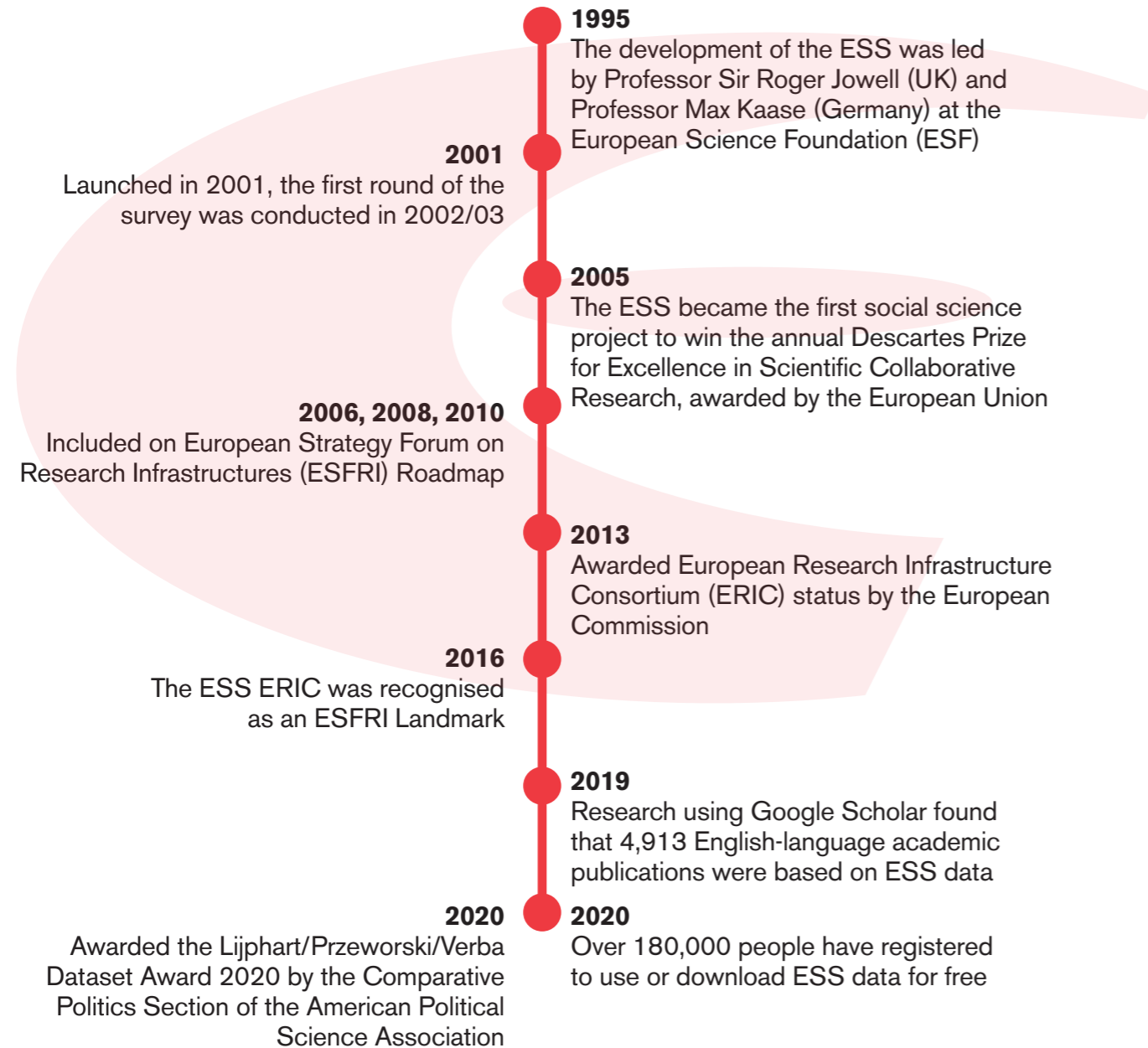
The ESS aims to gather survey data from as many European nations as possible - the wider the coverage, the richer the data

38 countries have participated in at least one round of the ESS since the first round was fielded in 2002/03. Up until the ninth iteration of our survey, 15 countries

have taken part in every round of the ESS. The ESS currently has the largest number of members of any European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC). €



THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY



THE HUMAN VALUES SCALE

The European Social Survey (ESS) has always included a 21-item measure of human values: the Human Values Scale or Portrait Values Questionnaire. The scale was designed by Shalom H. Schwartz (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) to classify respondents according to their basic value orientations. Here, the Israeli psychologist introduces the Theory of Basic Human Values and how we measure them in our survey.


When we refer to people's values, we mean the deeply rooted, abstract orientations that help to guide, justify or explain people's opinions, attitudes and actions. These orientations help to predict and to explain people's opinions, attitudes and behaviour patterns. Moreover, they influence - and are influenced by - social, political and economic changes within societies. Rigorously measuring value differences between people and countries and changes in the importance and distributions of values was one of the primary motivations for the ESS.

The absence of a comprehensive, well-tested and analytically-powerful set of tools for measuring underlying values across nations challenged the ESS planners. Existing surveys and validated scales focused on specific topics. Even combined, they did not provide the needed comprehensive, theory-based integration of the domain of basic values. Consequently, they asked me to develop a values scale for the ESS, grounded in my theory of basic human values that had been tested and validated internationally.

Every language has thousands of specific value terms. Scientists must reduce this abundance to a manageable yet comprehensive set in order to work with values. The 21-item ESS scale measures ten broad values intended to cover the full range of narrower values that people in all cultures share. The theory underlying the scale assumes that values developed through evolution as a vehicle for humans to communicate about their fundamental needs and to coordinate with others in satisfying them. Three types of universal needs gave rise to values: biological needs, needs for interpersonal cooperation, and groups' needs for welfare and survival. Values express these needs as motivating goals (e.g. security, kindness, creativity, achievement, tradition).

We all recognize the same ten basic values, but we differ in how important we consider each as a guiding principle. That is, every person, group, or country has its own importance hierarchy of values. The ten values form a circle in which the more compat-

ible any two values are, the closer they are going around the circle, and the more in conflict, the more distant. The more important a value is in the hierarchy, the more it influences opinions, behaviours and policies. When a value comes into play, the conflicting values in the circle are activated too. So decisions result from trade-offs between opposing values (e.g. security vs. stimulation; autonomy vs. conformity). The influence of values often occurs outside of conscious awareness

Values are involved in a wide variety of personal and policy decisions and they are sensitive to societal pressures and changes. Both personal and collective values change quite slowly, but they do change. The studies summarized in this booklet illustrate some of what we have learned about values. 

CONVERGENCE ON POLITICAL VALUES? A MULTI-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENTS IN 15 EU COUNTRIES 2002-2016

Pepijn van Houwelingen, Jurjen Iedema and Paul Dekker of The Netherlands Institute for Social Research - SCP - analysed several survey items to better understand political values. As well as attitudes towards homosexuality, migrants and trust in national and European Parliaments, the authors analysed three Schwartz indicators.

Basic core political values such as the desirability of immigration, the acceptance of LGBTs and the wish for further European integration differ considerably across EU member states. This has already been noted by for example Inglehart and Baker (2000).¹ From a perspective of European integration a gradual convergence in core political values across European Union countries would be expected and also considered to be beneficial. According to this hypothesis, differences in core political values of respondents between countries should gradually decline, shown by a decrease of intraclass-correlations across time. Utilizing ESS data and proxy variables for 15 EU countries to measure these core political values, we were able to conclude that since the beginning of this century these core political values have not converged within these 15 European

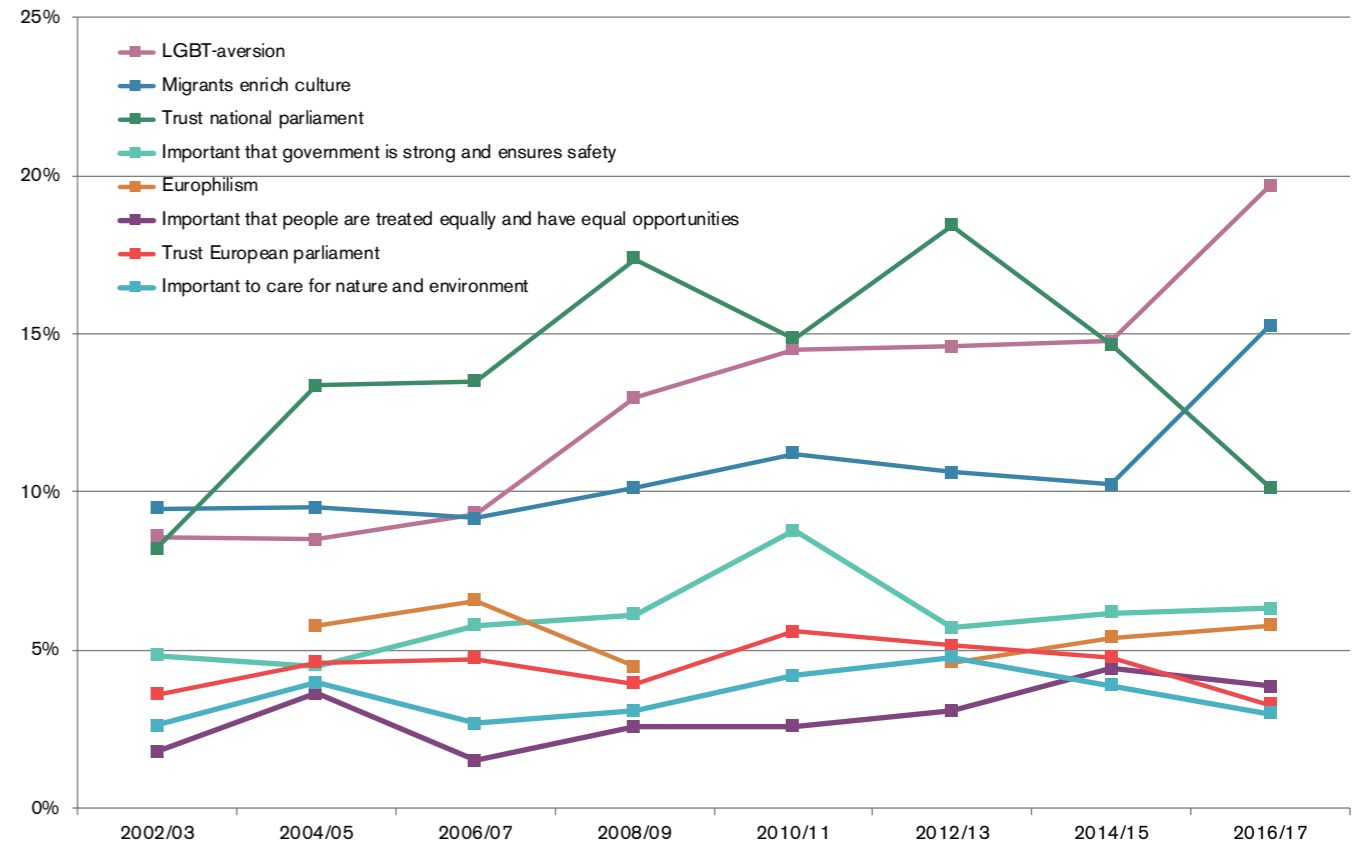
countries, except for one core political value indicator: europhilism (i.e. 'European integration should go further'). However, europhilism and also trust in the European Parliament has in general decreased across Europe implicating that the opinions and underlying political values of the citizens of these 15 EU countries have probably grown more similar in only one aspect: a growing aversion towards further European integration.

In other words, our hypothesis has not been confirmed. Considerable value differences between EU countries did and still do exist. For example while almost everyone in The Netherlands or Sweden believes that gays and lesbians should be able to live their own lives as they wish, more than 50% of Hungarians disagree with this statement. Developments in public opinion as far as these core political value indicators are concerned also differ per country, with the notable exception of europhilism.

LGBT-aversion, for example, has been declining in Northwest Europe while the trend lines are more or less flat in the Czech Republic and actually increases in Hungary. Overall LGBT-acceptance however has increased and this is in line with European Union values, therefore from this more 'substantive' perspective, integration has indeed occurred.

In general, the countries in Northwest Europe look alike as far as their core political values and political trust in one's national parliament and the European Parliament is concerned. Assuming that, in the absence of value convergence among the 15 EU countries investigated, further political integration within the European Union as a whole is difficult. Considering the possible increase of euroscepticism and distrust in the European Parliament, a future breakup of the EU is not extremely unlikely. The value clusters identified in this paper may provide the vault

Developments in intraclass correlations for personal and political values and political trust (ESS Round 1 - Round 8)



lines along which such a potential breakup could occur.

Finally, in a paper currently under review based on European Values Study (EVS) data from 1990 to 2017, we continue this line of research and try to assess the developments among 18 EU countries with regard to public opinion on nine political value indicators, comprising three core political values: redistribution, individual autonomy

and cosmopolitanism. The differences and the dynamics of change in core political values between these 18 European countries are both considerable. Our investigation arrives at highly diverse conclusions about the outcome of the temporal development, depending on the political value we analyze. EU countries have converged on redistribution and cosmopolitanism values, but diverged on individual autonomy. The overall change in

cosmopolitanism is, however, not in the direction that the EU intends, as the countries have become more skeptical of EU enlargement. The trend in individual autonomy is in an EU-desired direction, but is much slower in the former socialist countries, which results in divergence on an EU-wide scale. Overall, the trends and conclusions converge nicely with our earlier article based on ESS data. ☞

1. Inglehart, R. and W. Baker (2000). Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values. In: *American Sociological Review*, jg. 65, nr. 1, p. 19-51.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT PREDICTORS OF OPPOSITION TO IMMIGRATION IN EUROPE: INDIVIDUAL VALUES, CULTURAL VALUES, AND SYMBOLIC THREAT

In a summary of an article first published by the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Eldad Davidov, Daniel Seddig, Anastasia Gorodzeisky, Rebeca Raijman, Peter Schmidt and Moshe Semyonov assessed values in the context of attitudes towards immigration.

The arrival of immigrants in Europe in the last decades has been accompanied by a public debate on the willingness of Europeans to accept immigrants, their fear that European societies will change their identity, and the negative attitudes that large population groups have developed toward immigrants. The sociological literature includes a large body of studies that have tried to explain these attitudes and how they are formed.

Alongside sociodemographic characteristics like age, education and income, contextual variables at the country level have also been introduced to explain in a theoretically driven way how competitive threat (i.e. fear of competition), immigration policies, or media reports increase negative attitudes toward immigration, and why individuals and countries differ in the intensity of such attitudes.

This study contributes to this body of literature by introducing human values as a potential explanatory factor of negative attitudes both on the individual and country levels. First, it examines whether and

to what extent universalism and conformity/tradition values are associated with negative sentiments toward immigration. Second, it investigates whether values provide a distant or a rather proximate explanation of attitudes toward immigration by testing if (symbolic) threat due to immigration mediates this relation. In other words, the study explores if values explain directly these attitudes, or whether values at first increase or decrease the levels of threat due to immigration, which then in turn form attitudes toward immigration. Finally, the study examines if cultural (rather than individual) values moderate the associations between individual values and attitudes towards immigration across countries and are responsible for differences in strength of these relationships across countries.

The test of these expectations was done by employing the 2014/2015 data from the immigration module of the European Social Survey (ESS). The data included more than 35,000 respondents covering 19 west and east European countries, thus provid-

ing the opportunity to examine the relationship between values, threat and attitudes towards immigration across a large set of countries in Europe.

The study supported the theoretical expectations set forth by the authors. That is, first, it found that universalism values were associated with lower (symbolic) threat due to immigration, whereas conformity/tradition values with a higher threat. Second, threat due to immigration was associated with more negative sentiments toward immigration. Third, in most cases threat was only part of the values-attitudes toward immigration mechanism, as values had a further independent effect on attitudes toward immigration beyond threat. In other words, in most countries, values still operated as a proximate explanatory factor of attitudes toward immigration even after introducing threat as a mediator of this link. Finally, the study provided support for the expectation that in societies characterized by lower levels of the social embeddedness and higher levels of the intellectual and affective

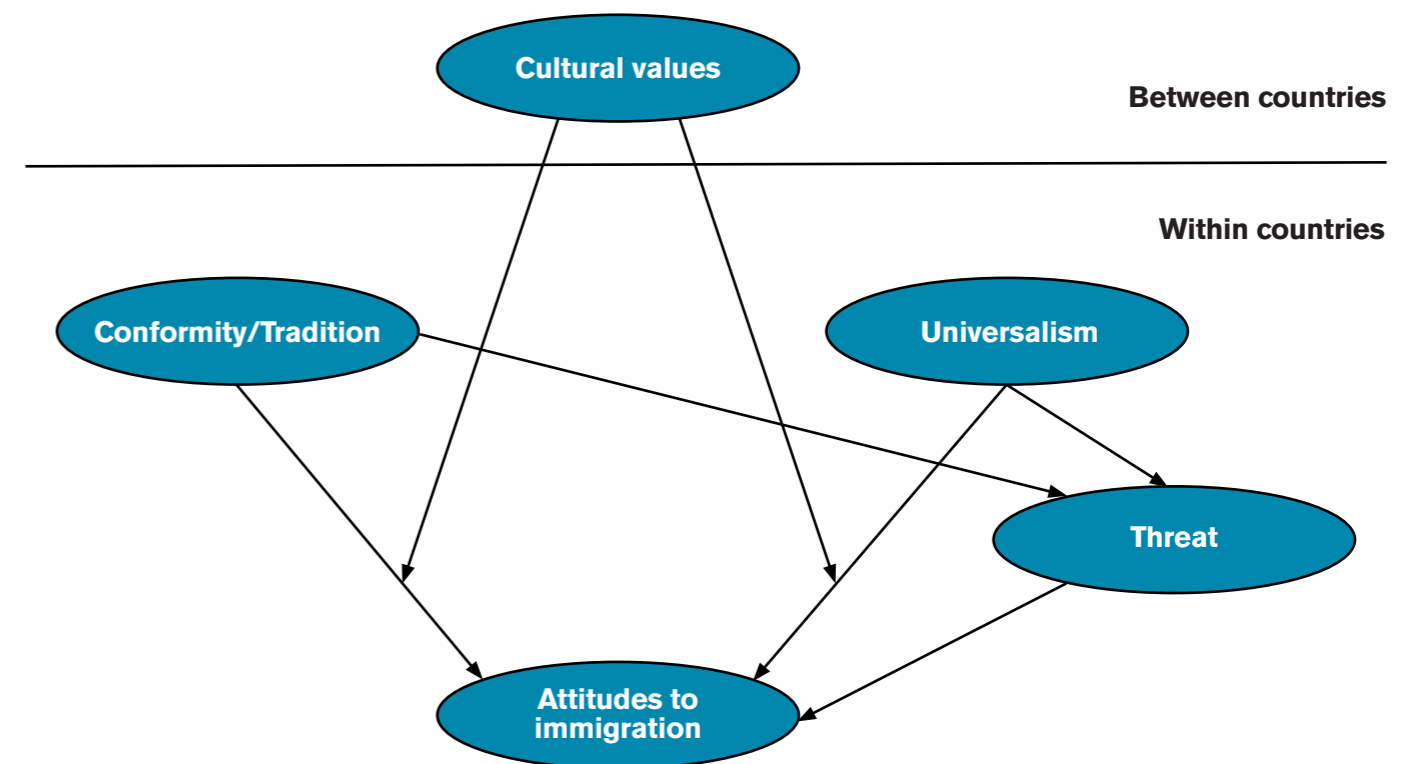
autonomy cultural values, individual values take a more prominent role in explaining the formation of attitudes toward immigration.

This last finding is potentially relevant for the study of values and their consequences in general. That is, the finding is not only relevant to understanding attitudes in the context of immigration, but it also provides insights as

to when individual human values may become relevant for behavioral and attitudinal explanations in other contexts. In less socially embedded and more autonomous societies, where a higher importance is placed for the realization of individual goals, there seems to be a stronger inclination to activate individual human values, follow them, and live by them.

In these societies people have a stronger tendency to pursue actions and hold beliefs or attitudes that are more in accordance with the motivations underlying these individual values. Thus, it is more likely that we may find a stronger explanatory power of individual values when studying the formation of other forms of attitudes and behaviour in these societies. ◀

The effects of individual and country-level values on attitudes toward immigration



DO VALUES MATTER FOR BEHAVIOUR?

Andrew Miles (University of Toronto) analysed ESS Round 2 data on human values and 15 behaviours, alongside data on personal rights, freedoms, and tolerance as rated by the Social Progress Index.

Values are abstract ideals that are thought to serve as guiding principles. However, questions remain about how much values actually matter for how people live their lives. To address this, I used second round ESS data to examine whether two universal value orientations help explain behaviours related to religion, social activities, family relationships, helping, honesty, and politics.

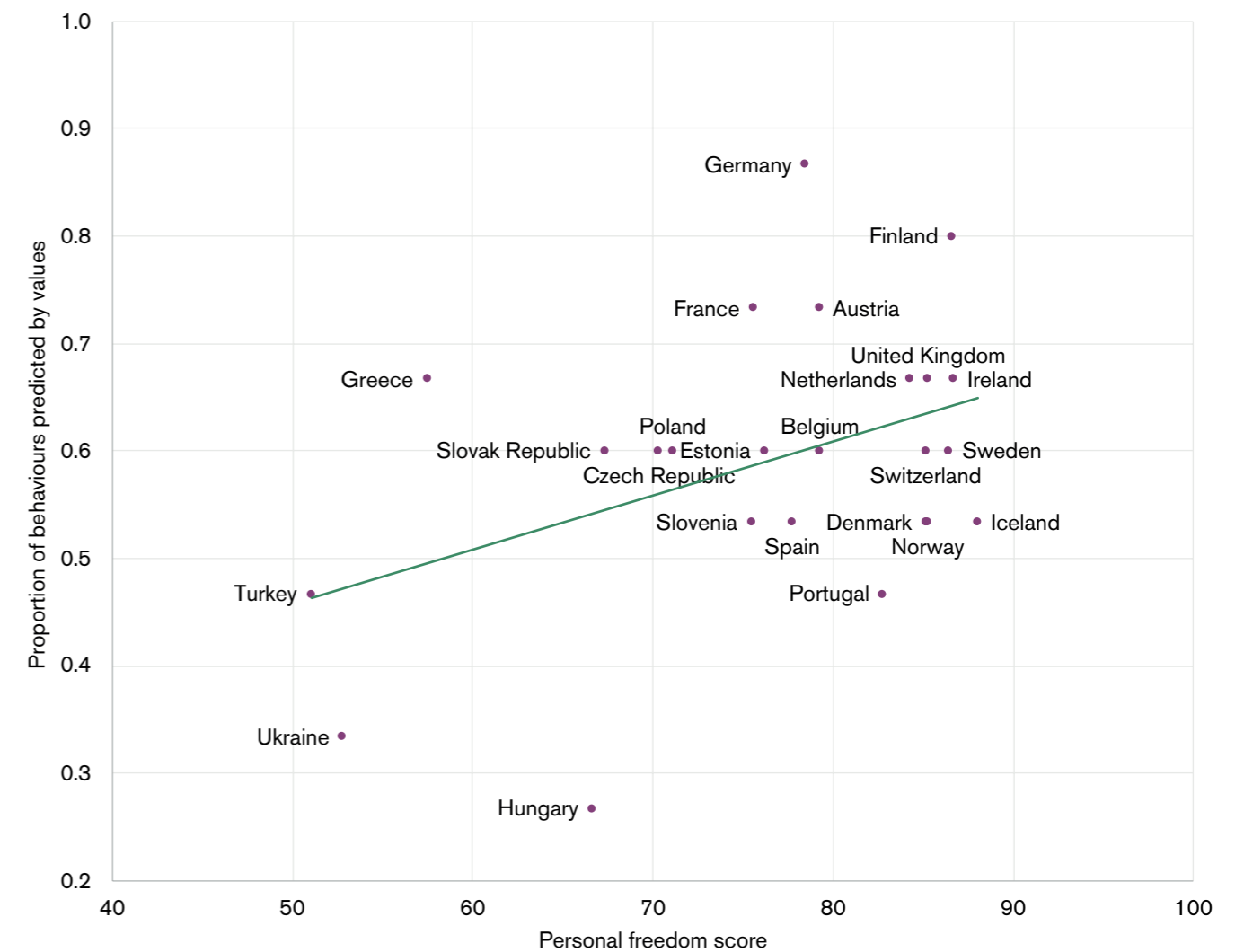
In total, I examined fifteen behaviours in twenty-five European nations. At least one of the two value orientations predicted behaviours in every country, and every type of behaviour was tied to values in at least a few countries.

Across nations, social behaviours (e.g. meeting with friends) were most consistently related to values, followed by political activism and helping others.

Values, then, do seem to matter for what people do. However, how much values matter varies across nations. Value orientations predicted the most behaviours in countries that were high in personal rights, freedoms, and tolerance as rated by the Social Progress Index. Arguably, this is because these nations permit individuals more latitude in deciding how to behave, which allows their personal motivations to play a greater role in shaping what they do.

A second study hints at why values might be important for behaviour. Values are abstract, which seems to suggest that they can only influence behaviour if people have time to consider how to apply them. However, I found the opposite. Individuals high in other-oriented values behaved fairly and generously toward others, but only when their ability to think carefully was blocked, forcing them to rely on automatically activated “gut reactions.” Considerable research indicates that people’s behaviour is heavily shaped by these sort of automatic thought processes, so the ability of values to operate in this way could explain why they predict many types of behaviours across many different contexts. €

Proportion of behaviours predicted in each country by levels of personal freedom (ESS Round 2)



SOCIAL TRUST AND VALUE SIMILARITY: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL TRUST AND HUMAN VALUES IN EUROPE

Mai Beilmann and Laur Lilleoja analysed ESS Round 6 data measuring levels of social trust and human values to understand the relationship between the two.

There is a stronger positive relationship between value similarity and social trust in Scandinavian countries, which have high social trust levels, while in countries with a low level of social trust, congruity of the personal value structure with the country level value structure tends to decrease the individual's trustfulness.


Social trust - the willingness to trust others, even total strangers, without the expectation that they will immediately reciprocate that trust or favour - is often considered the glue that holds society together and facilitates cooperation between people. It has been claimed that people tend to trust people who are more like them and share similar values. As this suggests that people find it easier to trust total strangers if their values are similar to the prevailing values in the society, we analysed whether value similarity may foster the social trust in society and whether people have higher levels of social trust when they emphasise the same values that prevail in their country.

The relationship between social trust and human values was examined in a sample of 51,308 people across 29 European countries using data from the European Social Survey Round 6.

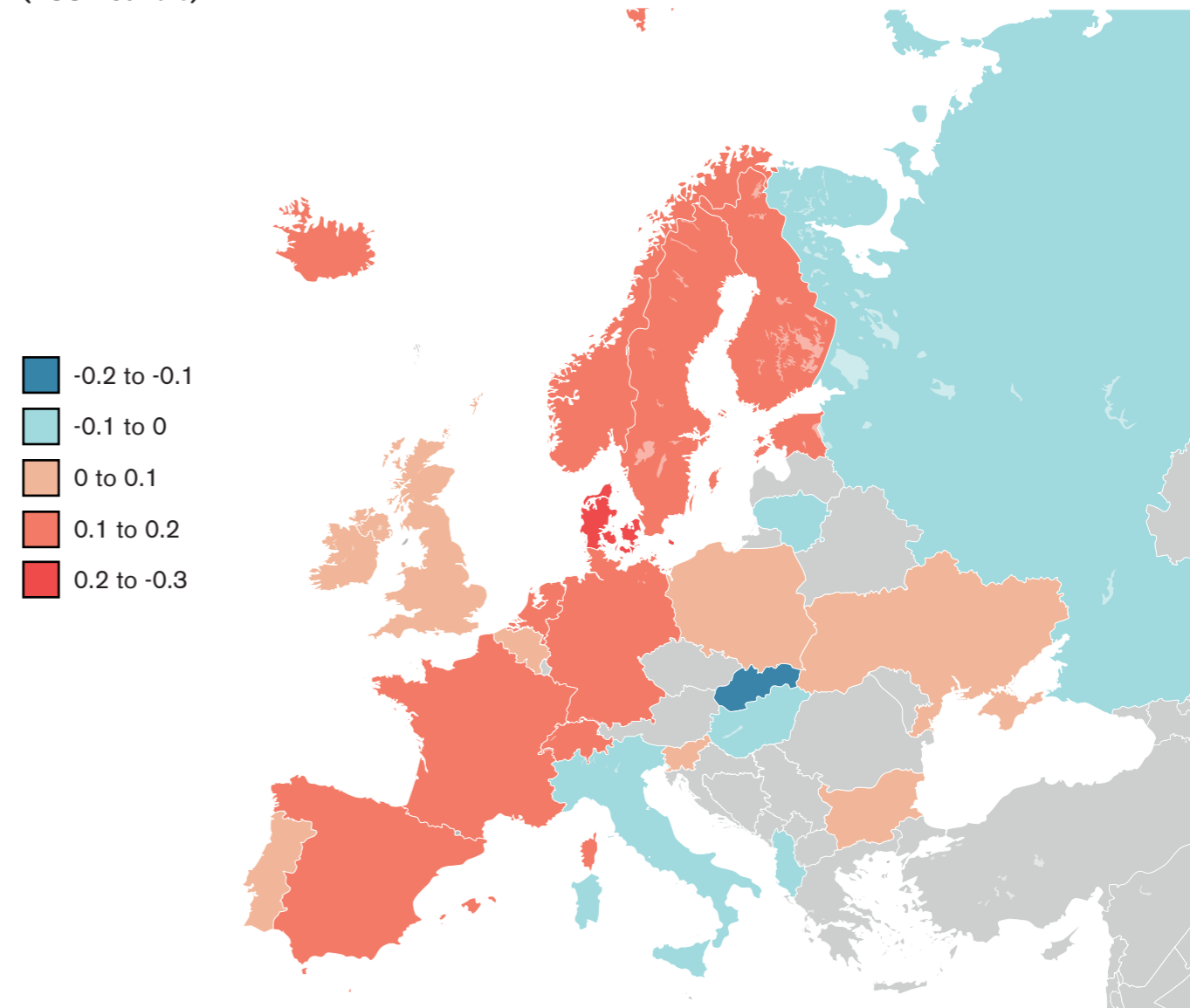
Social trust levels vary considerably between European countries: the most trusting societies are the Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland and Sweden), followed by the Netherlands, German and English speaking countries and Estonia. Social trust levels are lower in the Southern and Eastern parts of Europe.

Our results suggest that value similarity is more important in generating individual level social trust in countries where the overall levels of social trust are higher. There is a stronger positive relationship between value similarity and social trust in countries, which have high social trust levels, while in countries with a low level of social trust, congruity of the personal value structure with the country level value structure tends to decrease the individual's trustfulness.

The value similarity and social trust are most strongly related among Scandinavians, while for Western Europeans the positive relationship between value similarity and trust is weaker, and for Eastern and Southern Europeans slightly negative. Therefore, our results suggest that value similarity is more important in generating individual level social trust in countries where the overall levels of social trust are higher.

Based on the European data, it seems likely that certain types of value structures are sustaining social trust at the individual level and there are higher levels of social trust in countries where such types of value structures prevail among inhabitants. 

Strength of the relationship between the mean level of social trust and value similarity by country (ESS Round 6)



Data source: ESS Round 6 (2012/ 13). Post-stratification weights applied.

Note: Social Trust Index was computed based on the average of the standardised scores of trust, honesty, and helpfulness items. An individual level Value similarity measure was created for each individual by estimating a rank order values for all the 21 value indicators of Human values scales, which were then correlated with the value hierarchy based on country-level average scores. Darker colours indicate a stronger relationship.

Beilmann, M., & Lilleoja, L. (2015). Social trust and value similarity: the relationship between social trust and human values in Europe. *Studies of Transition States and Societies*, 7(2), 19-30. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-455248>

THE GEOGRAPHY OF HUMAN VALUES

Besides the between-country differences there are significant geographical patterns on human values emerging in other spatial scales, writes Mikko Weckroth and Teemu Kemppainen (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Human geographers and regional scientist often contribute to understanding of our societies by noting there exists significant spatial variation on human activity beyond the obvious country level framing. Furthermore, understanding this place-based human functioning is of central importance for several research perspectives in human, cultural and political geography.

For example, economic geographers have recently noted that integrating behavioural aspects into theories of regional development offers significant potential for exploring long-term evolutionary patterns of development. Following these notes we investigated the relationship between human values and economic performance in European regions.

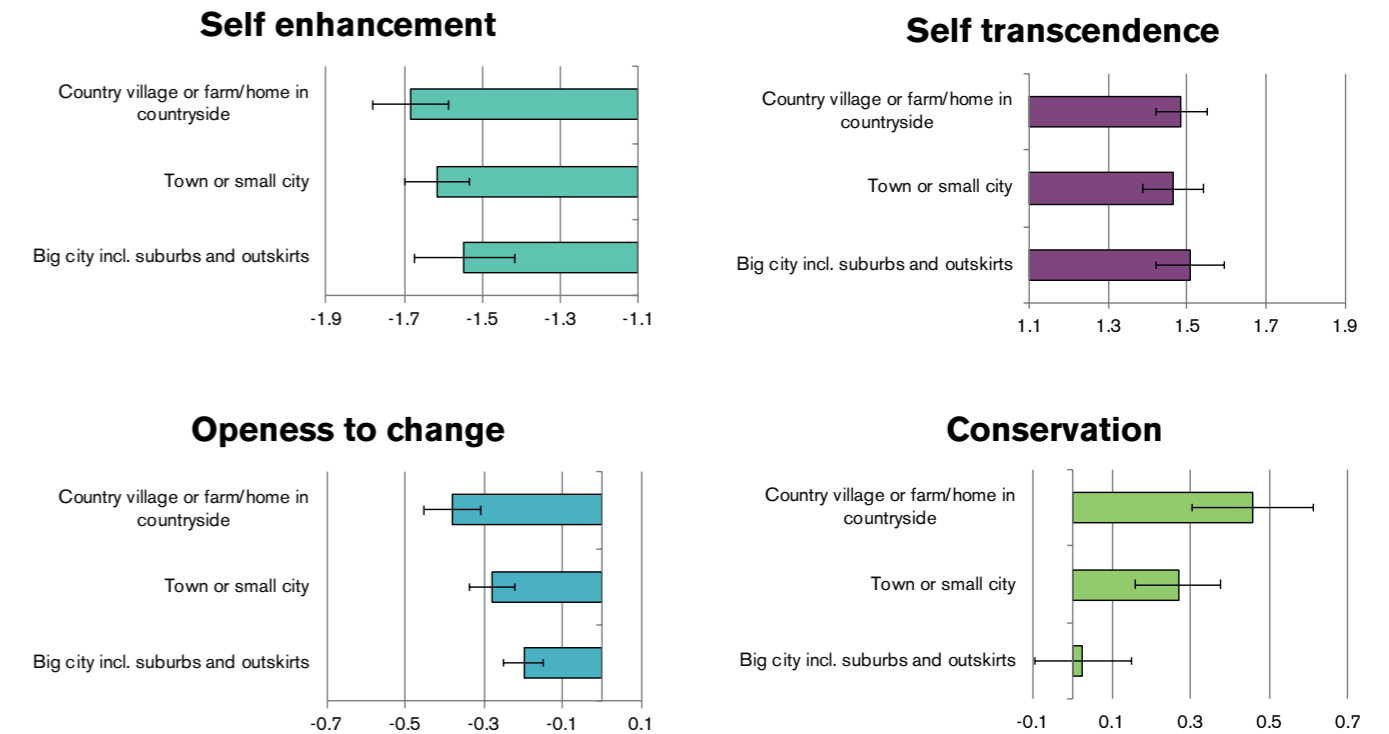
More specifically, we examined the cross-sectional association of three value orientations (self-direction, achievement and power) from 6th round of the European Social Survey with the level of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 289 NUTS regions. We examined this relationship through spatial and geographic regressions but also by making maps of regionally aggregated human values.

This visualization of the human values provided a snapshot of the current state of overall development - both cultural and economic - in contemporary Europe. This picture should be primarily interpreted as an outcome of interconnected and path-dependent historical and institutional processes.

Overall, the maps reveal a picture where Western Europe and the Nordic countries have already moved to the post-materialistic phase of the modernization process characterized by high levels of economic performance, self-expression values and modest regional disparities.

In certain areas the culture-economic developmental patterns appear especially evident, for example in the case of the Iberian Peninsula with a distinct difference between Spain and Portugal in addition to clear north-south pattern within Portugal in both GDP and 'value climate'. Additionally, London emerges as an anomaly in the western context due to its 'value climate' resembling more Eastern than Western Europe despite its exceptionally high economic performance.


The unadjusted means for four value orientation in different domiciles and 95% confidence intervals (ESS Round 7)



As an addition to interregional comparisons, the other spatial pattern of perennial interest in human geography is the urban-rural gradient or continuum. Here our results show that value orientation for Self-enhancement, emphasizing self-interest, social rivalry and superiority, shows signs of rural-urban gradient where higher values can be found in a more urban context. Concerning the bipolar dimension on Openness

to change vs. Conservation results show a pattern where urban context is associated with higher Openness to change and lower Conservation orientations.

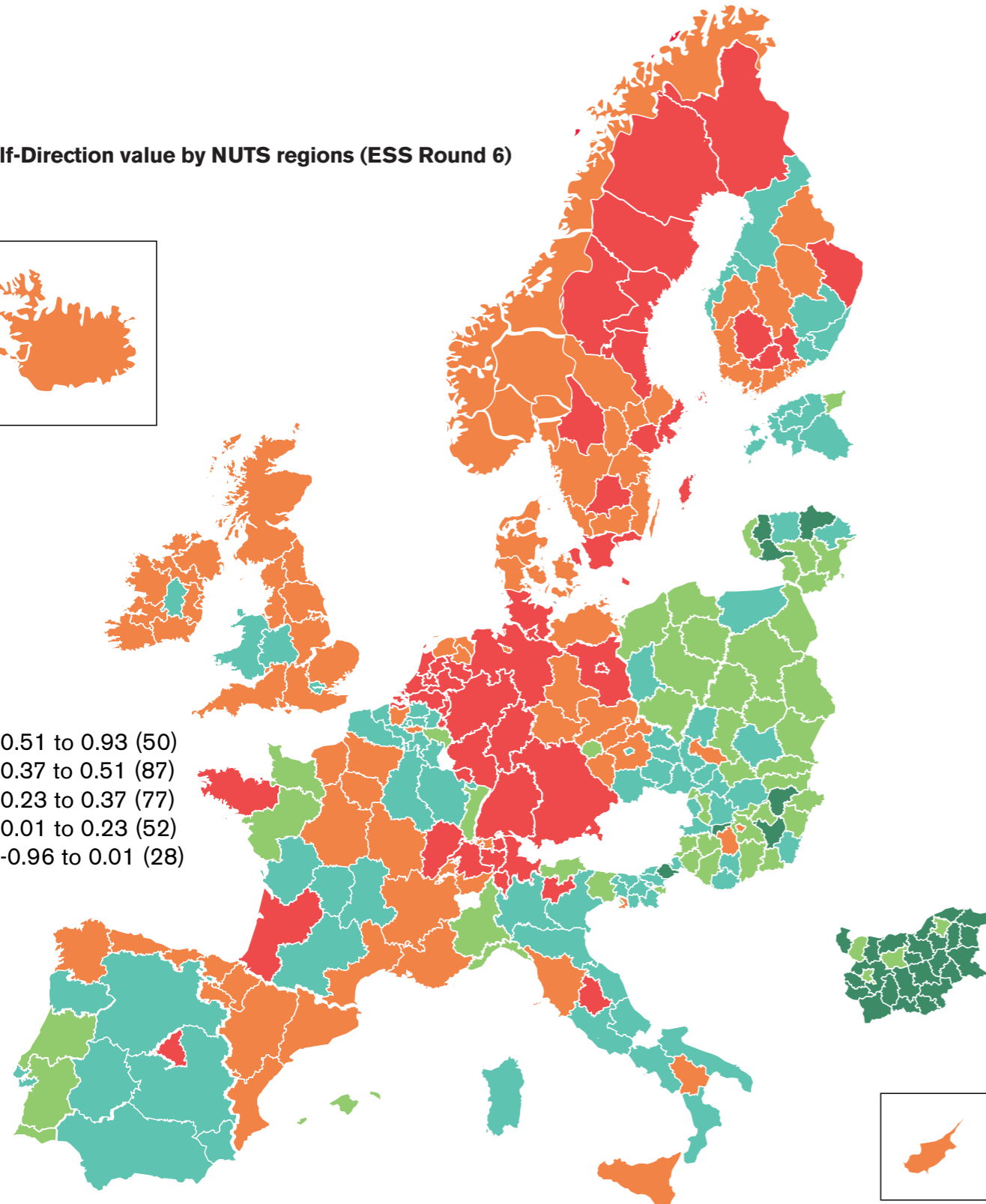
In conclusion, the spatial variation human values is a key component for understanding the intertwined geographies of economic growth, urbanization and different forms of wellbeing and development. Moreover, geographically referenced

ESS data can be utilized to examine several topical research perspectives such as geography of human capital and innovation, as well as exploring the value based foundations behind the emergent geographies of populism and discontent. 

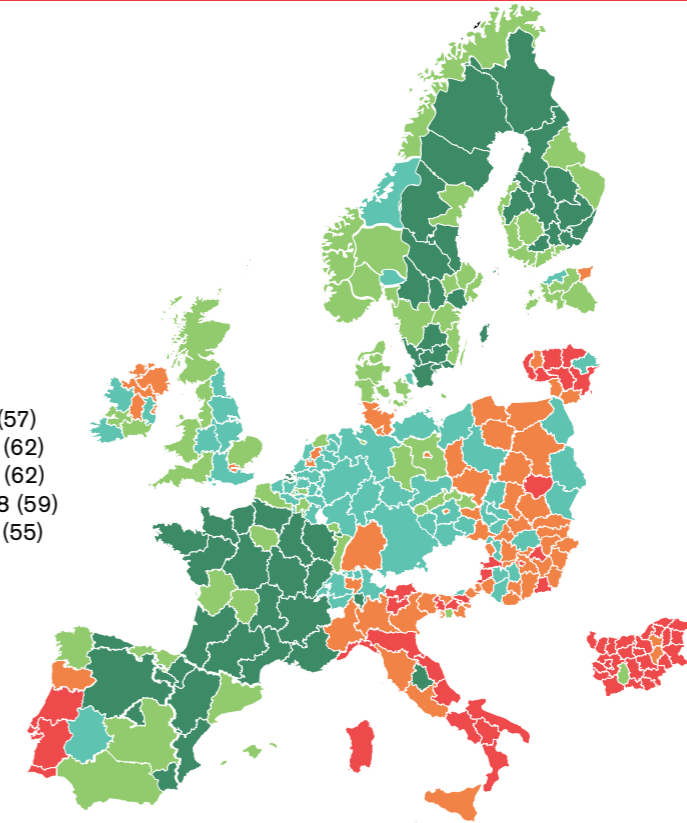
Self-Direction value by NUTS regions (ESS Round 6)



- 0.51 to 0.93 (50)
- 0.37 to 0.51 (87)
- 0.23 to 0.37 (77)
- 0.01 to 0.23 (52)
- -0.96 to 0.01 (28)



- -0.05 to 0.4 (57)
- -0.3 to -0.05 (62)
- -0.48 to -0.3 (62)
- -0.72 to -0.48 (59)
- -1.2 to -0.72 (55)

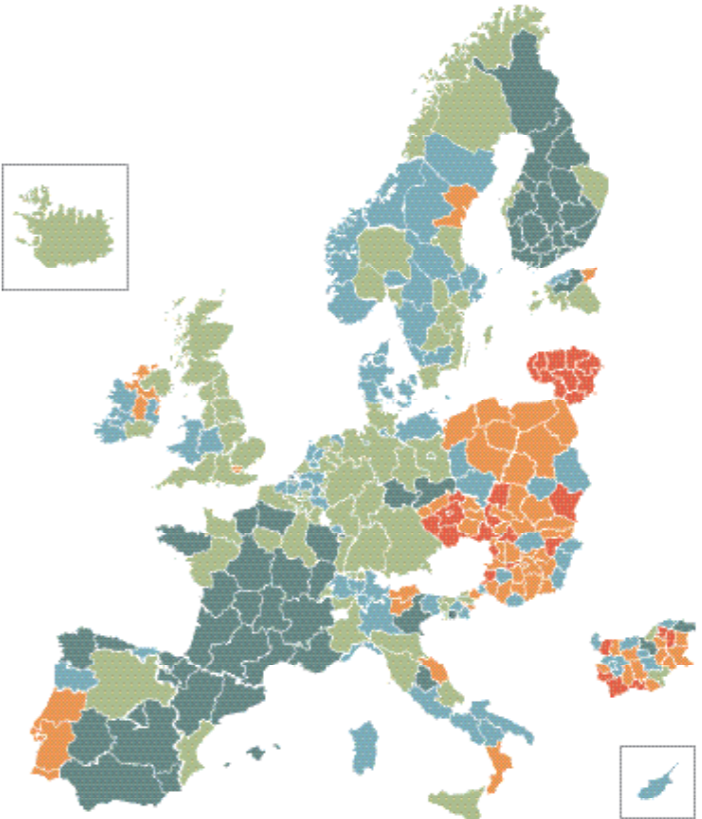


Achievement value by NUTS regions (ESS Round 6)

Power value by NUTS regions (ESS Round 6)



- -0.39 to 0.08 (29)
- -0.76 to -0.39 (63)
- -1.01 to -0.76 (75)
- -1.23 to -1.01 (73)
- -1.87 to -1.23 (56)



WELLBEING, THE ENVIRONMENT AND MORAL VALUES

Heinz Welsch and Jan Kühling (University of Oldenburg) analysed European Social Survey data collected over the first seven rounds (2002-15) to understand the relationship between subjective wellbeing and "green" values. A second paper by Welsch - summarised on page 22 - assessed human values in the context of our Round 8 (2016/17) climate change data.


Social science research on subjective wellbeing has initially focused on the relationship between happiness or life satisfaction and objective circumstances such as wealth or labour market status. More recently, an interest has emerged in linkages between subjective wellbeing and behaviours and human values. A branch of this literature has found that people engaging in environment-friendly behaviours display higher levels of life satisfaction, consistent with the idea of a psychological "warm glow" from behaving non-selfishly.

A paper published by Heinz Welsch and Jan Kühling from the University of Oldenburg in Germany has investigated whether a similar relationship exists not only between people's life satisfaction and green behaviours but between life satisfaction and the endorsement of environment-friendly - "green" - values.

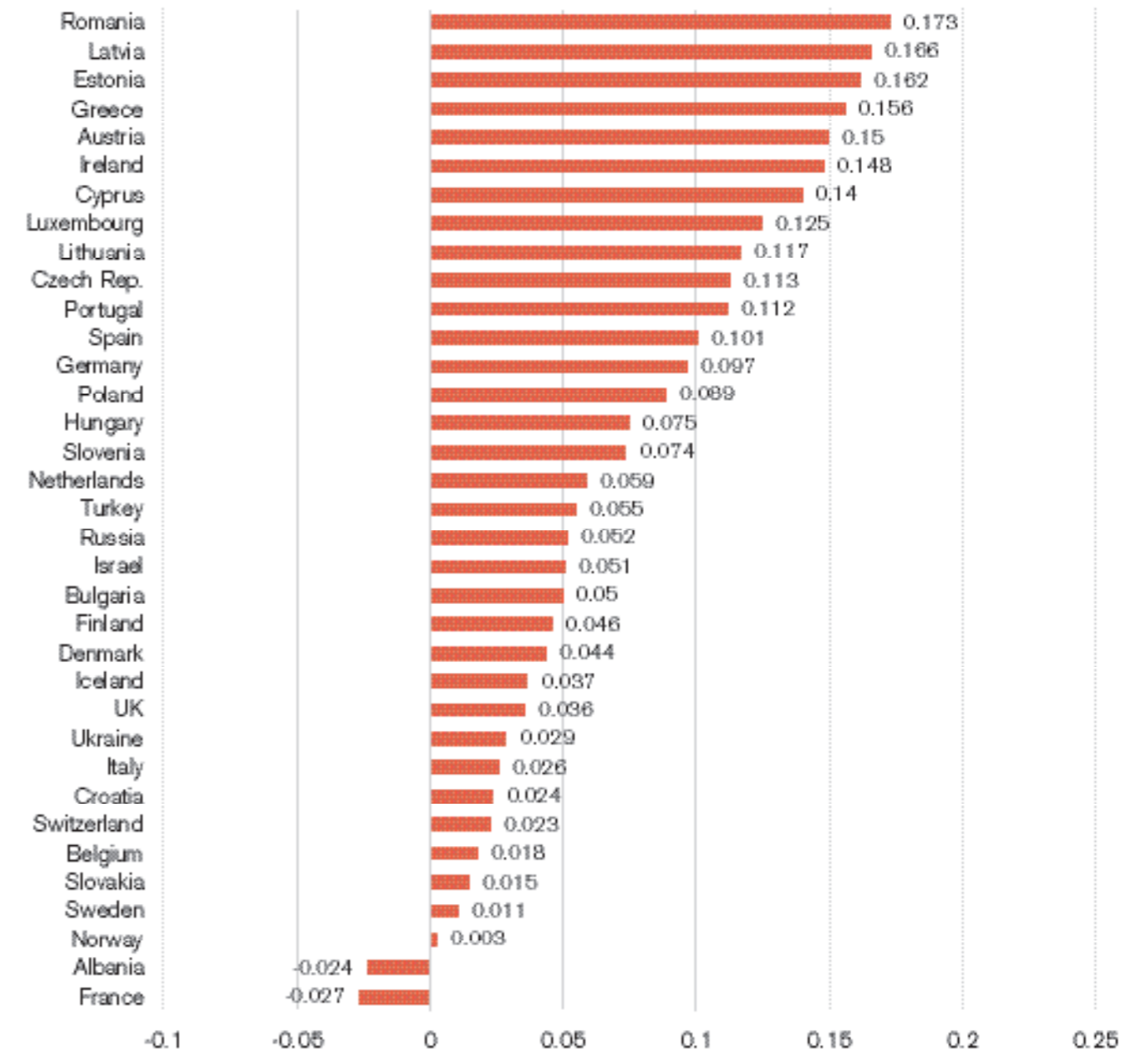
Additionally, the paper studied which contextual factors may explain such a relationship. Pertinent hypotheses were that endorsement of green values endows people with satisfaction from conforming to a society-wide green norm or, alternatively, that it helps people to bolster a green group identity.

Using almost 230,000 observations from the first seven rounds of the ESS, the paper found a significantly positive relationship between life satisfaction and a green self-image in a pool of 35 European countries and in the majority of individual countries.

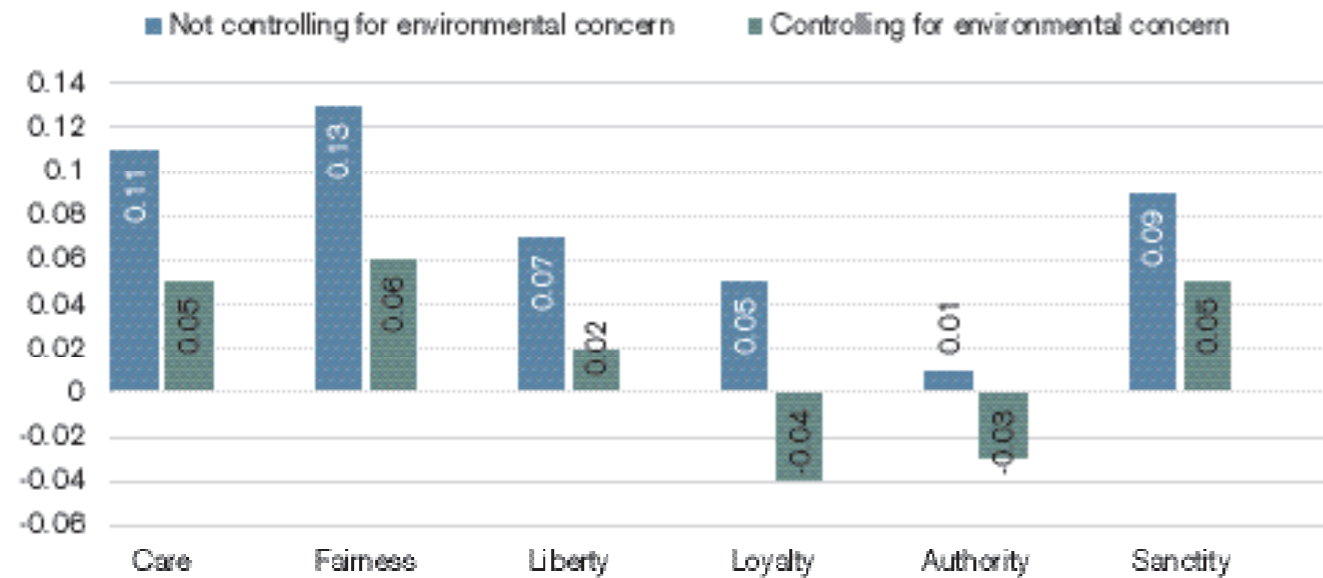
In the pooled analysis, the difference in life satisfaction between the lowest and the highest category of greenness amounted to almost one half of the wellbeing repercussions of unemployed status - one of the typically strongest threats to life satisfaction.

In addition, it was found that the wellbeing benefit of holding a green self-image is greater in societies that display more unanimity (less polarization) with respect to pro-environmental attitudes. Invoking the notion of social norms as shared agreements about what is appropriate and inappropriate, the latter finding suggests that part of the wellbeing benefit from holding pro-environmental values derives from conformity to a social norm. 

Regression Coefficients. Dependent variable: life satisfaction. Independent variable: green self- image (ESS Round 1-7)



Dependent variable: 11-point life satisfaction. Independent variable: 6-point pro-environmental values. Regressions include socio-demographic and macroeconomic controls and country and year dummies.




Intention to Buy Energy Efficient Appliances (ESS Round 8)

Dependent variable: 11-point intention to buy energy efficient appliances. Independent variables: 6-point endorsement of the moral foundations. Regressions control for age, gender, household size, household income, education level, unemployed status, left-right scale, health status, and urban-rural scale.

The functionalist conception of human morality maintains that moral systems serve as a means for enhancing cooperation and facilitating the voluntary provision of public goods by suppressing or regulating selfishness. Moral psychology has identified a distinct set of moral foundations on which various moral systems rely: Care, Fairness, Liberty, Loyalty, Authority, and Sanctity. Endorsement of these moral values can be found across various cultures, societies, and socio-economic groups, though to different degrees. In particular, cultural differences exist with respect to endorsement of the individual-focused moral foundations (Care, Fairness, Liberty), which apply to all individuals independent of their membership to one's group, and the group-focused foundations (Loyalty, Authority, Sanctity).

One of the arguably most important public goods to which morality may be relevant is the natural environment, notably the climate system. A paper recently published by Heinz Welsch from the University of Oldenburg, Germany, used data from Round 8 of the ESS to investigate whether climate-friendly behaviours and the support of climate-friendly regulations are shaped by endorsement of the moral foundations. The paper found that using the moral foundations in addition to standard explanatory variables improves the explanation of climate-friendly behaviors and endorsement of climate-friendly regulations considerably. Comparing different behaviours, it was found that more costly behaviour is more morally-motivated than a less costly one.

While the Fairness and Care foundations are strong and robust predictors of the dependent variables, the Loyalty foundation contributes positively only when neglecting the nature of climate change mitigation as a global public good. More generally, in contrast to the individual-focused, universalistic foundations, the group-focused, parochial foundations are of little direct relevance to climate change mitigation – consistent with the benefit from mitigation extending beyond the in-group (family, neighborhood, region, or nation) to which these moral foundations refer. Group-focused morality is only of indirect relevance as its endorsement fosters general environmental concern. 

THE LINK BETWEEN PERSONAL VALUES AND FREQUENCY OF DRINKING DEPENDS ON CULTURAL VALUES

Maksim Rudnev and Christin-Melanie Vauclair assessed ESS Round 7 (2014/15) data to explore the link between values and alcohol consumption.


The link between human values and behaviour is one of the key questions in cross-cultural psychology yet it has not been extensively studied. In particular, individual and cultural values were suggested to be linked to alcohol drinking. Existing culture-specific studies found that individuals who valued Openness to Change (self-direction, pleasure, and enjoyment) exhibited more frequent drinking, whereas those valuing Conservation (conformity, tradition, and security) drank alcohol less frequently. At the culture level, we expected that higher endorsement of Openness and Self-Transcendence values is associated with more frequent drinking. In addition, cultures that promote intrinsic motivations through emphasizing Openness to Change and Self-Transcendence values could encourage people to express their personal values in all kinds of value-expressive behaviours including drinking, therefore leading to a stronger link between personal values and behaviour.

We used data on alcohol consumption from the "Social Determinants in Health" module of the 7th round

of ESS (2014/15) as well as Schwartz's Human Values Scale. Frequency of drinking was measured with the following question: "In the last 12 months... how often have you had a drink containing alcohol?" on a 7-point scale from "Never" to "Every day". The results were presented for three levels of abstraction of values: ten basic values, four higher-order values, as well as two value dimensions. The models included cross-level interactions between values and controlled for personal religiosity, sociability, depression scale, as well as several socio-demographic variables.

A series of multilevel regressions demonstrated, as hypothesized, that more frequent drinking was associated with higher individual-level Openness to Change (vs. Conservation). However, in contrast to our expectations, this link was pronounced only in more conservative European countries. Self-Transcendence (vs. Self-Enhancement) had a positive link with drinking frequency in countries high on Conservation but a negative

link in countries high on Openness values. Country-level values did not show significant links with average country drinking.

One reason for higher positive effects of values in more conservative countries is cultural incentives provided to more conservative (and thus conforming) individuals and to those who emphasize Self-Enhancement (motivation for social approval), so they are coerced to less frequent drinking. In contrast, countries that emphasize intrinsic motivations through Openness and Self-Transcendence values keep normative pressure at relatively low levels; therefore expression of values through drinking is neither rewarded nor sanctioned, leading to the paradoxically weaker link of values with drinking behavior. A negative link of drinking frequency with Self-Transcendence (vs. Self-Enhancement) in countries high on Openness can be explained by the lack of the normative pressure accompanied by an intrinsic motivation to behave in a less selfish way and drink less, in particular. Overall, this study showed that the value-behavior link differs across European countries, yet in a more complex way than was assumed so far. 

VALUE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PARENTS AND NON-PARENTS

Sointu Leikas presents research undertaken with University of Helsinki colleagues, Jan-Erik Lönngqvist and Markku Verkasalo, that explored ESS rounds 1-7 data to establish whether human values are affected by parenthood

Values are typically construed as abstract ideals that serve as guiding principles of one's life. The widely utilized Schwartz' Value Theory identifies ten basic values types that form two higher-order dimensions: Self-Transcendence vs. Self-Enhancement (reflecting valuation of caring for and accepting others vs. self-interest and control over others) and Conservation vs. Openness to change (reflecting valuation of traditions and norms vs. self-directedness and acceptance of change).

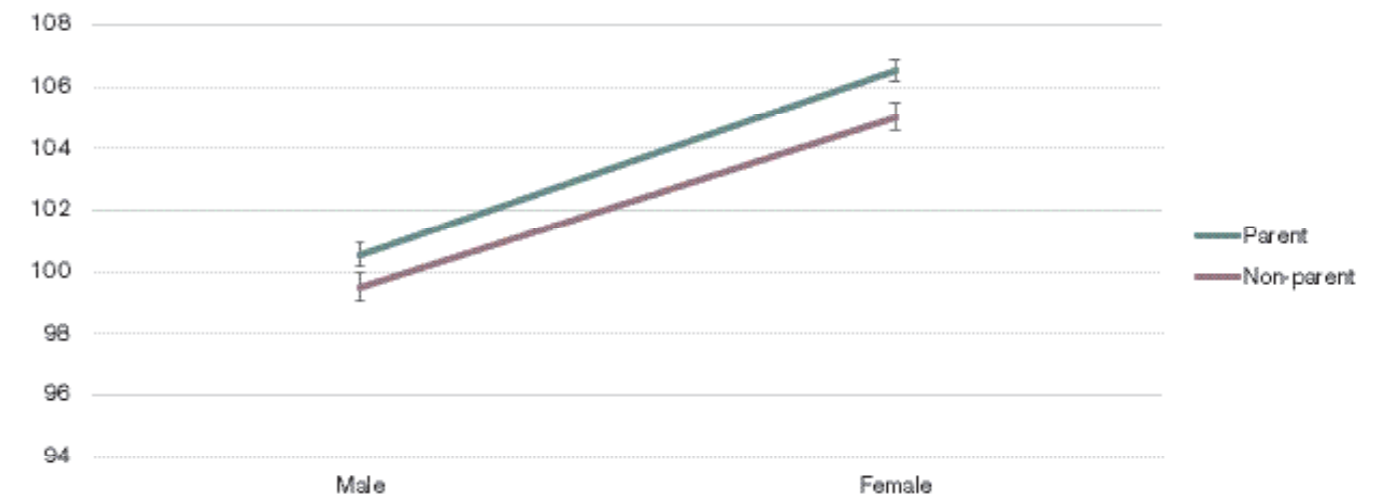
The present study investigated value differences between Finnish parents and non-parents. Parenthood can be considered as one of the most profound life transitions. Thus, the values of parents and non-parents were expected to differ. As parenthood represents a substantially different experience for mothers and fathers, sex differences in value-parenthood link were also investigated.

The European Social Survey (ESS) has included a 21-item Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) measuring the ten Schwartz' values into all rounds. The present study utilized Finland's PVQ data from ESS rounds 1-7 (2002-15), providing a sample of N = 12,850. Out of these respondents, 8,478 were parents, and 4,280, non-parents.

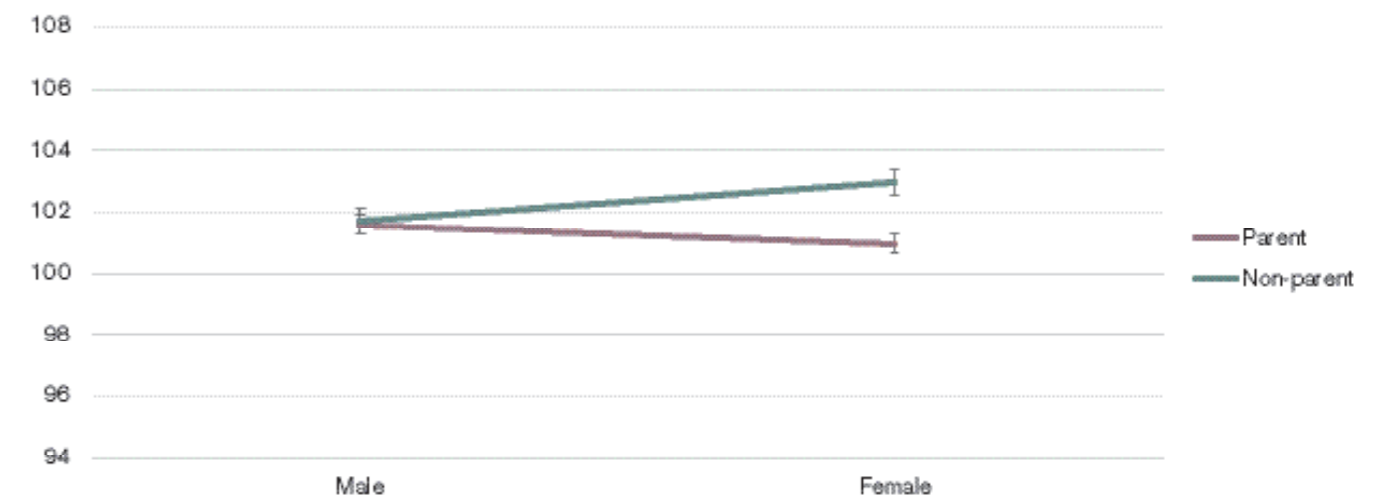
The results showed that mothers scored higher on both Conservation and Self-Transcendence than non-mothers, and fathers scored higher on Self-Transcendence (but not on Conservation) than non-fathers. Thus, parents valued Self-Transcendence values more than non-parents, regardless of their sex. Mothers valued Conservation values more than non-mothers, but fathers and non-fathers did not differ with regards to Conservation values. The results held while controlling for participants' age and education level.

Overall, the value differences between parents and non-parents were small, and based on the cross-sectional setting it is not possible to say whether they reflect selection effects (i.e. people with higher Self-Transcendence and Conservation values are more likely to become parents) or life transition effects (i.e. becoming a parent causes value shifts towards higher Self-Transcendence and Conservation). ☞

Self-transcendence values (ESS Round 1-7)



Openness to change values (ESS Round 1-7)



DID THE GREAT RECESSION IMPACT HUMAN VALUES?

Tim Reeskens (Tilburg University) and Leen Vandecasteele (University of Lausanne) explored the effect that the 2008 economic crisis had on human values. This was done by focusing on Round 5 (2010/11) data collected immediately after the economic crisis and comparing it with human values data combined from several waves.

Modernization theory holds that values ought to be largely stable over the lifespan because they are deep-rooted and socialized at a young age. Opinions and attitudes, as well as well-being, by contrast, are expected to be more volatile because they respond to changing conditions. To evaluate these assumptions, zooming in on young people during the Great Recession makes an interesting case. Initiated in 2008, this crisis affected populations of European countries in varying magnitude, which allows us to examine whether values are robust against the exposure to economic hardship.

We analyze data of the European Social Survey (ESS) in a number of ways. First, we conducted a multi-level analysis of the 2010/11 cross-sectional data, which was the first ESS-wave fielded after the start of the economic recession. In a second approach, we combined several ESS-waves and created

a so-called 'pseudo-panel', as it gave additional opportunities to study the influence of the exposure to changing economic contexts.

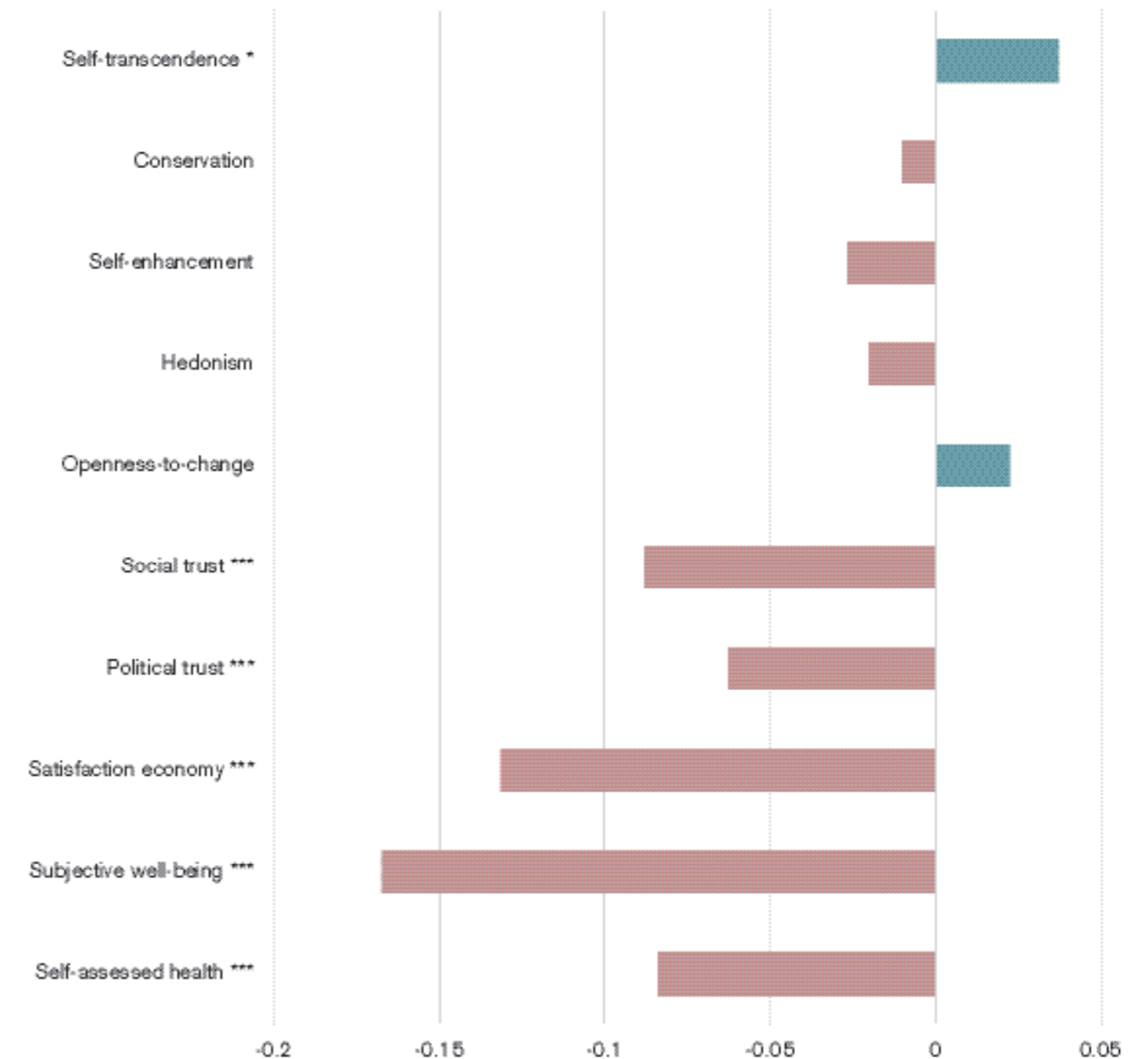
From numerous angles, our analysis shows that the experience of economic hardship leads to more negative opinions about society: young people place less trust in politics and report more depressive outlooks of the economy. Also, people are more depressed about their individual well-being, and rate their health more poorly. By contrast, the Schwartz human values in our study were largely unaffected by the experience of economic hardship.

The implications of our findings are twofold. First, combining ESS data for several years over multiple countries confirms that attitudes change when young people are faced with economic hardship or a recession, while human val-

ues are more robust in response to adverse economic experiences. Second, this finding implies that on average, young people are resilient. When confronted with hardship, human values which influence our everyday behaviour, are rather weakly influenced by material hardship.

As Europe and other parts of the world are currently a health crisis of unprecedented magnitude, it begs the question whether the COVID-19 pandemic, which started as a health crisis but is unfolding as an economic crisis, will present similar outcomes. Our previous findings open up a stream of future studies using ESS data. ☞

Standardized coefficients of human values, social attitudes and well-being regressed on experienced economic hardship (ESS Round 5)



RELATIONS AMONG HIGHER ORDER VALUES AROUND THE WORLD

Using ESS data collected over the first six rounds (2002-13), Maksim Rudnev, Vladimir Magun and Shalom Schwartz also explored World Values Survey data.

The Schwartz theory of basic human values represents values as a circular structure organized by the content of their underlying motivational goals. The closer the values in this circle, the more compatible for pursuing goals, the more distant, the more in conflict. This theoretical structure has been confirmed across more than a hundred cultures. However, it is a common misconception that compatibility and conflict in this structure necessarily imply positive and negative correlations, respectively. The present study examined the actual correlations between the four higher order values that encompass the ten basic values: Openness to Change (including self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism), Conservation (including security, tradition, and conformity), Self-Transcendence (including universalism, care for all people and nature and benevolence towards close ones), and Self-Enhancement (including power and achievement).

We used three different sources of data. The Schwartz Value Survey used the most comprehensive questionnaire but only surveyed teachers and students. Six rounds of the European Social Survey

(2002-13) included a Portrait Values Questionnaire that allowed accurate comparison of the four higher order values. It provided survey data from national representative samples across over 30 countries, collected biennially. Additionally, the fifth and sixth waves of the World Values Survey used a very short version of the Portrait Values Questionnaire and provided data from 52 countries across the world in each wave. Overall, the data included about half a million respondents located in 104 countries.

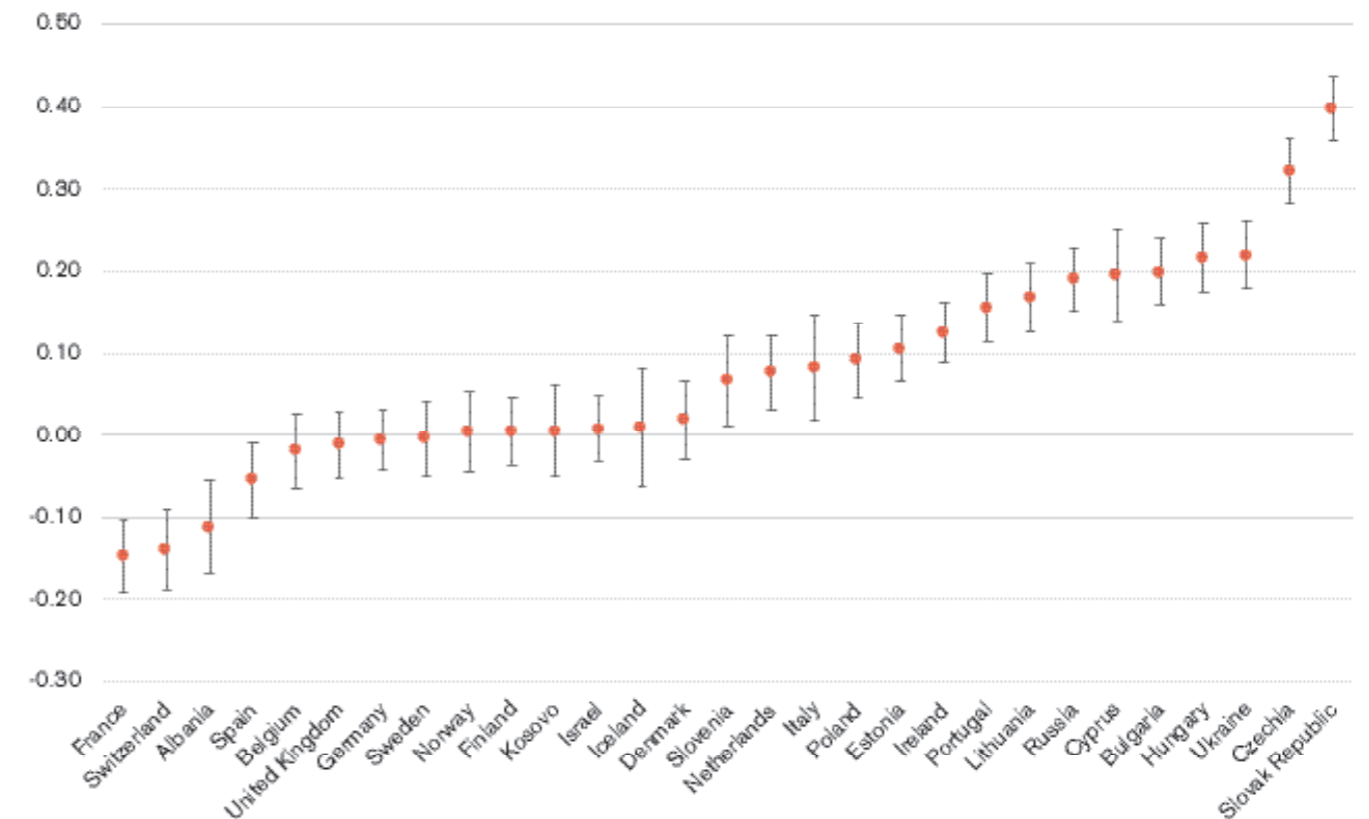
Analysis was conducted in three steps. First, we computed correlations between higher-order values within each sample. Second, we aggregated these correlations within and across surveys by means of meta-analytical regression. Third, we examined the moderating role of country-level covariates on these correlations. On average, Openness to Change values correlated positively with Self-Enhancement and Conservation values correlated positively with Self-Transcendence. The other correlations between the higher order values were negative. This pattern of correlations

suggested that overall the higher order values formed a single dimension that opposed the two social focused values (Conservation and Self-Transcendence) to the two person focused values (Openness to Change and Self-Enhancement).

However, this unidimensional structure did not hold in all countries. The correlations between Openness to Change and Self-Enhancement and between Conservation and Self-Transcendence varied systematically across countries. The Figure shows the correlations between Openness to Change and Self-Enhancement values for the countries in the 6th round of ESS. These correlations varied across European countries both in magnitude and direction, from the most negative in France to the most positive in the Slovak Republic. The correlations between Conservation and Self-Transcendence (not shown) varied from the most negative in Switzerland to the most positive in the Slovak Republic.

The variation in these correlations was associated with the country's level of economic development,


Correlations between Openness to Change and Self-Enhancement values (ESS Round 6)



even after controlling for the level of education and income inequality. In more developed countries, the correlations were closer to zero. As a result, a second value dimension emerged in more developed countries, making for a more complex value structure. This dimension opposed Growth values (Openness to Change and Self-Transcendence) to Self-Protection values (Conservation and Self-Enhancement). Thus, relations among values tended to

be organized along a single social versus person focus dimension in less developed countries but along two dimensions in more developed countries.

These results add to the understanding of cultural differences. Economic development was associated not only with the value priorities prevalent in a country, but with the relationships among the values. For instance, in less developed countries, attribut-

ing high priority to Openness to Change values implies highly valuing Self-Enhancement values too, but these values are relatively independent in more developed countries. The findings also make clear that the focus of values on personal vs. social outcomes is universal, but people must experience some level of economic security before they distinguish Growth values from Self-Protection values. 

ESS RESOURCES: DATA, LEARNING AND PUBLICATIONS

The ESS is a major research infrastructure with freely available data to inform academic, policy and public debate on a wide range of social, moral and political issues facing Europe. Find out how to join 160,000 other people who have accessed our survey data for free.

The European Social Survey (ESS) has undertaken 430,870 face-to-face interviews since Round 1 was fielded in 2002/03. All the documentation and data - collected over the subsequent waves up to and including Round 9 (2018/19) - is available to download or view online (europeansocialsurvey.org).

The ESS became a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) in 2013, meaning all participants contribute to the budget of the project. During Round 8, there were 23 participating countries, including 17 ERIC Members.

Download ESS Data

Researchers can download data in a number of different ways. Data is available in SAS, SPSS and STATA formats for download by round. Additionally, registered users can download a bespoke subset of data by selecting rounds, countries and/or variables in SPSS, STATA or CSV format through our Cumulative Data Wizard.

Online Analysis

The ESS Online Analysis tool – NESSTAR – was created by NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data. The tool allows you to conduct simple analyses of our data without having to leave your web browser. It includes all data collected by the ESS since 2002/03 (nesstar.com).

E-learning Tool

The ESS e-learning tool, EduNet, provides hands-on examples and exercises to guide users through the research process, from a theoretical problem to the interpretation of statistical results.

Wellbeing Matters


Using data collected between rounds 1-6, several academics authored a report on wellbeing items explored through the ESS. The report – Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing – was expanded upon through the creation of a new website (esswellbeingmatters.org).

Exploring Public Attitudes Informing Public Policy

This booklet is the third in the series of our compilation reports that bring together academic research undertaken using our data. Issue 1 relied on data collected from rounds 1-3 and Issue 2 included research based on rounds 1-5 data. The latter has also been translated by our Bosnian, Latvian and Luxembourgish national teams.

Topline Results

Based on our rotating module subjects, we have now produced nine issues in our Topline Results series of publications. All nine issues are available to view or download on the ESS website:

1. Trust in Justice (also available in Croatian)
2. Welfare Attitudes in Europe (also available in Croatian, Cypriot Greek and Ukrainian)
3. Economic Crisis, Quality of Work and Social Integration (also available in Serbian)
4. Europeans' Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy (also available in Albanian, Bulgarian, Italian, Lithuanian and Slovak)
5. Europeans' Personal and Social Wellbeing (also available in Albanian, French, Lithuanian, Russian, Slovak and Slovene)
6. Social Inequalities in Health and their Determinants (also available in Danish, French, German, Irish Gaelic, Italian, Lithuanian, Romanian, Slovene and Spanish)
7. Attitudes towards Immigration and their Antecedents (also available in Georgian, German, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Slovene and Spanish)
8. The Past, Present and Future of European Welfare Attitudes (also available in German and Spanish)
9. European Attitudes towards Climate Change and Energy (also available in German, Slovak and Spanish)
10. Justice and Fairness in Europe (also available in Bulgarian and French) 



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ESS

The European Social Survey is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC) that provides cross-national data about public attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

If you have a general enquiry about the European Social Survey or would like to find out more, please contact the ESS team based at City, University of London:

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