

**From the Civic Culture to the Afro-Barometer: The expansion in cross-national public opinion surveys****Pippa Norris****Harvard University**To <[amessina@nd.edu](mailto:amessina@nd.edu)> For APSA-CP 3738 words.

Survey resources for the systematic cross-national comparison of public opinion have expanded dramatically during recent decades. Many political and intellectual factors have probably contributed towards this development. As the world has become more interconnected through globalization, so the social sciences have been tugged bobbing in its wake. Regional and international associations of political scientists have strengthened professional networks and institutional linkages, notably the ECPR and IPSA. The expansion of the European Union played a direct role, as the Commission monitored public opinion since the early 1970s through the Eurobarometer and related surveys. The growth of electoral democracies has facilitated the study of public opinion and also the demand for commercial market research companies and non-profit social science institutes, free from political interference and overt state censorship. International development agencies, such as the UNDP, the World Bank, and Transparency international, have increasingly recognized that programs seeking to expand democracy and good governance need to monitor public opinion, as well as the standard 'objective' developmental indicators.

Particular leaders in the field have had a decisive and enduring impact. Many colleagues have contributed to this process, and it is invidious to single out a few, but both Ronald Inglehart and Roger Jowell have played seminal roles, through generously initiating, managing, and sustaining major cross-national surveys which have had multiplier effects through funding public opinion institutes and training the next generation of field-work staff and survey analysts. Modern international communications, notably the ease of communicating among colleagues and distributing electronic datasets online through the standard archives and dedicated websites, have greatly facilitated awareness and use of these resources. Whether leading or following, intellectual fashions have also contributed towards this process, notably eroding interest in the more old-fashioned historical-institutional tradition of area studies within specific countries, and the demand among the younger generation of researchers in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe for more systematic cross-national comparison of political culture and behavior, conducted within varying institutional contexts.

Perhaps the most recent spur has been the events of 9/11 and their aftermath, renewing American curiosity about public opinion in the rest of the world, particularly areas such as the Middle East where cross-national survey research has been non-existent or scarce. These

developments have gradually transformed the geographic scope of coverage, with an exponential surge in the available survey resources occurring during the last decade, allowing comparativists to move 'from nations to categories', one of the key but elusive goals of the sub-discipline. Nevertheless the substantial advances in collaborative data collection have, somewhat curiously, moved ahead of the profession's exploitation of these resources.

To summarize the state of the sub-field, we can first compare basic information about the available cross-national survey series and then briefly summarize the bottom line of using each of them.

### **Comparing the available cross-national surveys**

The series of cross-national public opinion surveys are included in this comparison if they meet four criteria, namely

- *Sample*: surveys are designed to monitor public opinion among a representative sample of the adult population in each country, excluding surveys of elites such as TI's Corruption Perception Index<sup>1</sup>, or the CIVED civic education study among students<sup>2</sup>;
- *Coverage*: surveys cover a substantial number of countries, ranging from 8 nations in the Asian barometer to almost 80 in the World Values Survey;
- *Subject*: the core questionnaire or battery of items focus on measuring political and social attitudes, values, and behavior, rather than other topics such as population or health surveys; and,
- *Time-series*: they constitute a recognizable series conducted over successive waves, rather than a single snap-shot survey.

Eight survey series were identified on this basis, with their basic features listed in Table 1.

#### **1. Eurobarometer**

The Euro-barometers are the longest and perhaps one of the best-known series, constituting public opinion surveys conducted on behalf of the European Commission at least twice a year (spring and autumn) in all member states of the European Union since the early seventies. The geographic coverage has expanded with EU membership, now covering all 25 member states, monitoring social and political attitudes in the European publics. The Eurobarometer program was later enlarged by small scale Flash Eurobarometer and a Central and Eastern Eurobarometer; later replaced by the Candidate Countries Eurobarometer.

The standard items in the Eurobarometer were integrated into the Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File 1970-1999 and ZUMA also maintain the online Main Trends Documentation 1970-

2002. The data received from the principal investigator are checked, corrected, and formatted to archival standards since the beginning by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), recently in cooperation with ZUMA's Zentralarchiv at Cologne and the Swedish Social Science Data Service (SSD). ZUMA maintain a codebook and questionnaire continuity guide, which is an invaluable short-cut since by now there are over sixty surveys available. Eurobarometer raw data and documentation (questionnaires, codebooks etc.) are stored at the ICPSR and at the Zentralarchiv and made available for social science research purposes (i.e. secondary analysis of the raw data) by the Social Science Data Archives. Survey results are regularly published in official reports by the Eurobarometer unit of the European Commission.

*Bottom line:* The Eurobarometer series is familiar to students of the politics of the European Union, but the full potential of this series is still surprisingly under-utilized outside of this sub-field, perhaps because of the complexities of handling over sixty large-scale surveys. The best exemplification of its potential use is the *Beliefs in Government* book series published in 1995 by Oxford University Press (time for an updated edition?).

## **2. The World Values Survey/European Values Survey**

Still the grand dame of cross-national surveys, the study is now entering its fifth wave. The World Values Survey is a worldwide investigation of sociocultural and political change. It has carried out representative national surveys of the basic values and beliefs of publics in almost 80 societies on all six inhabited continents, containing almost 80 percent of the world's population. It builds on the European Values Surveys, first carried out in 1981. A second wave of surveys, designed for global use, was completed in 1990-1991, a third wave was carried out in 1995-1996 and a fourth wave took place in 1999-2001. This study has given rise to more than 300 publications, in 16 languages.

This project is being carried out by an international network of social scientists, with local funding for each survey (though in some cases, it has been possible to raise supplementary funds from outside sources). In exchange for providing the data from interviews with a representative national sample of at least 1,000 people in their own society, each participating group gets immediate access to the data from all of the other participating societies. Thus, they are able to compare the basic values and beliefs of the people of their own society with those of more than 80 other societies. In addition, they are invited to international meetings at which they can compare findings and interpretations with other members of the WVS network. The project is guided by a steering committee representing all regions of the world. Coordination and distribution of data are based at the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan, under the direction of Ronald Inglehart. The dataset is documented at its dedicated

website and it is available from all the data archives, with the 4<sup>th</sup> wave released this spring, and the fifth wave currently in the field.

*Bottom line:* Still the only cross-national public opinion survey comparing all world regions, with growing geographic coverage of the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Time-series analysis is complicated mainly by the fact that country coverage and some items vary across successive waves, and the 1981-3 first wave focused mainly on affluent nations. Nevertheless the WVS provides a benchmark for many developing societies, where for many years it was the only widely available cross-national survey monitoring a wide range of social and political values. The new *Human Values and Beliefs* sourcebook (Siglo XXI Editores, 2004) makes the descriptive data accessible for the electronically challenged. Some of the most recent book publications from this include *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Worldwide* (Inglehart and Norris, 2003) and *Sacred and secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Norris and Inglehart 2004), both with Cambridge University Press.

### **3. The International Social Survey Program**

The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) is a continuing, annual program of cross-national collaboration. It brings together pre-existing, social science projects such as the General Social Survey at NORC and the British Social Attitudes series, and coordinates research goals among the consortium, thereby adding a cross-national perspective to the individual, national studies. Since 1983, the ISSP has grown to 38 nations, including many industrial and post-industrial societies. Each survey covers a representative sample of the national population. The focus is the inclusion of a thematic annual module with a battery of items carried in existing social national surveys, with the annual theme covering rotating issues in the social sciences, such as national identity, the role of government, religion, the environment, work orientations, and gender roles. Considerable attention is paid towards standardizing the social and demographic background information in the surveys.

*Bottom line:* The ISSP has a far more limited geographic range than the WVS, and a narrower thematic focus than the WVS or the EB, but nevertheless, if the thematic topic fits your research needs, the survey provides considerable depth on each topic. Illustrative books include Roger Jowell, Lindsay Brook, and Lizanne Dowds, eds., *International Social Attitudes: The 10th BSA Report*. (Dartmouth, 1993).

### **4. The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems**

The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) bring together an international team of collaborators who have incorporated a special battery of survey questions into the national election studies, based on a representative sample of the electorate in each country. Data from each of the separate election studies is coordinated, integrated and cleaned by the Center for

Political Studies, Institute for Social Research, at the University of Michigan. The dataset is designed to facilitate the comparison of macro and micro-level electoral data. Module 1 of the CSES (1996-2001) allows comparison of a representative cross-section of the electorate in 37 legislative and presidential national elections in 32 countries. The geographic coverage is remarkably diverse, ranging from Belarus and Ukraine to Canada, Australia and Belgium. The focus on voters' choices, the cross-national integration, and above all the timing of the data collection (within a year following each of the elections), provide a unique opportunity to compare voting behavior in a way that is not possible through other common sources of comparative data such as the World Values Survey. Fieldwork, data-collection, and integration of the second module (2001-2005) is in process, with some country datasets already released, and planning for Module 3 is currently under-way.

*Bottom line:* The CSES is the best data currently available for cross-national electoral analysis but analysis is complicated by the diverse range of regions, political systems, and levels of democracy included in the study. This requires a 'most different' comparative strategy, rather than the familiar regional/area approach. The integration of the data, for example the demographic and social coding, is also far more complicated than in a single-funded survey such as the Eurobarometer. The main strength is the capacity for multi-level analysis combining analysis of political behavior within contrasting institutional contexts.

## **5. The Globalbarometers**

Rather than a single entity, these are actually four separate regional series, loosely coordinated, and originally inspired by the Eurobarometer model. The *New Europe* series coordinated by Richard Rose at Strathclyde University has focused upon monitoring the process of cultural change in political and economic attitudes following the breakdown of communism. The survey is conducted every year in selected Central and Eastern Europe and it has resulted in numerous papers and books published by Professor Rose and his collaborators. Under Marta Lagos (MORI, Santiago), the *Latinobarometer* has conducted pioneering work monitoring annual trends in attitudes towards democracy. The series started with 8 nations in 1995 and subsequently expanded in 17 countries in the region. Although an invaluable resource, and founded as a non-profit institution, the electronic data is less easily available for secondary analysis than other surveys compared here, and as a result it has had less impact on Latin Americanists than might be expected given the topic and the quality of the data. The Afrobarometer is one of the newer members of the stable, pioneered by Mike Bratton, Bob Mattes, and E. Gyimah-Boadi who developed networks of surveyors in many countries which have never had any previous social scientific surveys of political and social attitudes. The Afrobarometer also serves as a model of transparency for others in releasing full information about the work in progress, including questionnaires, publications, funding, and associates, as well as depositing all data through

archives and its own dedicated website. Lastly the *Asian Barometer* is the latest to join the network, sharing similar concerns to monitor public attitudes towards democratization and economic development, with 8 nations coordinated in the survey by Yun-han Chu in Taiwan.

*Bottom line:* At last, survey research is covering large parts of the developing world, such as Africa, which were previously neglected, and thereby building up the infrastructure of experienced fieldwork teams and survey analysts that will pay dividends in future. The surveys facilitate cross-national comparisons among a group of collaborators while also retaining regional autonomy to focus on specific themes of interest to each area. One of the most important remaining challenges is to make sure that this data is available and utilized by the social science communities within each region, by equipping the next generation of graduate students with the necessary intellectual frameworks, skills, and infrastructure to exploit the data. The first book emerging from the Afrobarometer series is Michael Bratton, Robert Mattes and E. Gyimah-Boadi *Learning about Reform in Africa: Public Opinion, Democracy, and Markets* (Cambridge University Press 2004).

## **6. The European Social Survey**

The European Social Survey (the ESS) is a new, academically-driven social survey designed to chart and explain the interaction between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes, beliefs and behavior patterns of its diverse populations. The survey covers at least 21 nations (in Western and Central Europe) and it will employ the most rigorous methodologies. The survey contains a core that will be replicated every two years plus rotating thematic modules, allocated to teams of scholars on a competitive basis. It is funded via the European Commission's 5th Framework Programme, with supplementary funds from the European Science Foundation which also sponsored the development of the study over a number of years. The project is directed by a Central Coordinating Team led by Roger Jowell at the Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University. The organization of the survey is a model in transparency as well as employing the highest standards in sampling and fieldwork practices, and carefully standardizing the collection of social and demographic background data.

*Bottom line:* In time, this will come to be regarded as the Rolls Royce of cross-national surveys. The central coordination and funding of the ESS, the care in crafting and testing the questionnaire, and the development of additional contextual data, provides a model that other cross-national survey research will seek to emulate (if only they had the resources). A pure pleasure for any analyst to work with: the series can only become more valuable over time.

## **7. The Pew Global Attitudes Survey**

In response to the aftermath of 9/11, attention in the United States has turned increasingly towards understanding how the world (particularly the Muslim world) views America. The 'clash'

thesis has also spurred greater interest among the international relations community into issues of global cultural similarity and difference. Andy Kohut at the Pew Center for the People & the Press responded to this with the Pew Global Attitudes Survey, an annual attempt to monitor public opinion in many countries, using commercial market research companies. The *Pew Global Attitudes Project* is a series of worldwide public opinion surveys, originally of more than 38,000 people in 44 countries in 2002, and expanded in 2003 with additional surveys to a total of nearly 75,000 people among the 50 populations surveyed (49 countries plus the Palestinian Authority). The project encompasses a broad array of subjects ranging from people's assessments of their own lives to their views about the current state of the world and important issues of the day. The *Pew Global Attitudes Project* is chaired by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright. The *Pew Global Attitudes Project* is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, with a supplemental grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

*Bottom line:* The published reports are available online, attracting considerable media attention and interest in the State Department and the policy community, but the data is not yet released for secondary analysis.

### **8. Gallup International *Voice of the People***

The last survey under comparison, coordinated by Gallup International, is similar in orientation to the Pew survey but with a commercial orientation. In 2002 Gallup International conducted a worldwide survey of 60 nations monitoring attitudes towards issues such as the environment, terrorism, global issues, governance and democracy. In 2003 this survey was conducted again covering Western Europe, the USA and Canada but also Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Highlights of the results are published on their website but the published report (containing detailed cross-tabulations) and the electronic data are available only for purchase and Gallup International offers the opportunity for clients to add items to the questionnaire, also at cost. It is also not possible to evaluate the quality of the detailed methodology, sampling, and field-work practices in countries where surveys are uncommon, such as in the Middle East and Africa, from the publicly-available information released on Gallup's website.

*Bottom line:* Both Pew and Gallup are breaking new ground by expanding their geographic coverage in ambitious attempts to monitor public opinion around the world. This is a welcome addition to the available resources but it remains too early to evaluate the quality of these surveys, and unfortunately access to the data remains limited.

### **Conclusions:**

Opportunities for cross-national survey research have been transformed out of all recognition over the last twenty years. The multiplicity of surveys is to be welcomed by facilitating replication

both across years and among nations. Some of the more commercial initiatives may fail, for example if America withdraws into itself and turns away from the world again, in its periodic cyclical fashion. Yet it seems likely that the underlying momentum will continue in subsequent decades, as younger generations of social scientists trained in survey methods and public opinion analysis will develop in each region. Obvious questions can be raised about the quality of sampling and fieldwork in poorer, developing nations which have not built up experienced market research companies and social science institutes. But the replication allows some cross-checks to be developed across different surveys. Multiple familiar questions can be raised about the quality of questionnaire translations and the employment of equivalent standards across different nations - debates which have been with us ever since *The Civic Culture*. Yet in counterbalance there are certain distinct practical advantages associated with conducting surveys in developing nations, namely much lower refusal and non-response rates (currently approaching record levels for opinion polls conducted in the US), as well as relatively low budgets. Over time, as greater experience is gained, and as an institutional survey infrastructure is developed in the social sciences, these initiatives will mature.

**Biographical note:** Pippa Norris is the McGuire Lecturer in Comparative Politics at Harvard University. Her latest books are *Electoral Engineering* (based on the CSES) and *Sacred and Secular* (with Ron Inglehart, based on the WVS), both published this year by Cambridge University Press. She is currently writing *Radical Right* (based on the ESS and the CSES), also for CUP. Further details about these projects and the datasets discussed are available at [pippanorris.com](http://pippanorris.com).

**Table 1: Key features of the cross-national series of surveys**

	Series	Series started (i)	Frequency	Nations (latest survey) (ii)	Data downloadable (iii)	Coordinating Organization	Online resources Http://
1	Eurobarometer	1973	Bi-annual	25	Public archives	Antonis PAPACOSTAS Directorate General Press & Comms, European Commission	Organizing & reports: <a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/">http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/</a> Data and continuity guides from ZUMA, Cologne Archive: <a href="http://www.gesis.org/en/data_service/eurobarometer">www.gesis.org/en/data_service/eurobarometer</a>
2	World Values Study-European Values Study	1981-1983	Approx. 5 years	79	Public archives	Ronald INGLEHART, Institute of Social Research, University of Michigan	Organizing and data; <a href="http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/">www.worldvaluessurvey.org/</a>
3	International Social Survey Program (ISSP)	1985	Annual	38	Public archives	Secretariat: Bjørn HENRICHSEN, Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), Bergen	Organizing: <a href="http://www.issp.org/">www.issp.org/</a> Data and continuity guide from the ZUMA Cologne Archive: <a href="http://www.gesis.org/en/data_service/issp/">www.gesis.org/en/data_service/issp/</a>
4	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)	1996-2001	Module every 5 years	31	Public archives	Secretariat: David HOWELL, ISR, University of Michigan. Chair: Ian McAllister, ANU	Organizing and data: <a href="http://www.umich.edu/~cses/">www.umich.edu/~cses/</a>
5	Global-barometers, including:						<a href="http://www.globalbarometer.org/">www.globalbarometer.org/</a>
	New Europe Barometers	1991	Annual	16		Richard ROSE, CSPP, Strathclyde University	<a href="http://www.cspp.strath.ac.uk">www.cspp.strath.ac.uk</a>
	Afrobarometer	1999	Annual	15	Public archives	Michael BRATTON (Michigan State), Robert MATTES (IDASA, SA) and Dr E. GYIMAH-BOADI (CDD Ghana)	<a href="http://www.afrobarometer.org">www.afrobarometer.org</a>
	Latino-barometer	1995	Annual	17	Tables only	Marta LAGOS, MORI, Santiago	<a href="http://www.latinobarometro.org">www.latinobarometro.org</a>
	Asian barometer	2001	Annual	8		Yun-han Chu, Taiwan	<a href="http://www.eastasiabarometer.org">www.eastasiabarometer.org</a>
6	European Social Survey (ESS)	2002	Biennial	21	Public archives	Roger JOWELL, Center for Comparative Social Surveys, City University	Organizing: naticent02.uuhost.uu.net Data from the Norwegian archive: <a href="http://ess.nsd.uib.no">http://ess.nsd.uib.no</a>
7	Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002	Annual	49	Only tables released	Andrew KOHUT, Director, The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press	<a href="http://people-press.org/pgap/">people-press.org/pgap/</a>
8	Gallup International <i>Voice of the People</i>	2002	Annual	60	Only tables released	Meril JAMES, Secretary General Gallup International	<a href="http://www.voice-of-the-people.net/">www.voice-of-the-people.net/</a>

Notes: (i) In some cases there were often pilot studies and forerunners, such as the European Community Study, but this date is the recognizable start of the series in its present form. (ii) The number of countries included in each survey often varies by year. (iii) If not deposited in public archives or directly downloadable, access to some data may be available from the surveys organizers on request, but there might also be charges for access.

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<sup>1</sup> Although Transparency International have now launched the TI Global Corruption Barometer among a representative sample of the public. This is intended to be an annual series monitoring public opinion on this topic, carried as part of Gallup International's *Voice of the People Survey* in 2002 and 2003. See <http://www.transparency.org/surveys/index.html#barometer>

<sup>2</sup> For more details about the International IEA CIVED (Civic education) survey conducted in 28 nations see [http://iea-dpc.de/Home\\_e/Studies/CIVED\\_e/cived\\_e.html](http://iea-dpc.de/Home_e/Studies/CIVED_e/cived_e.html) and also <http://nces.ed.gov/Surveys/CivEd/>