

Analysis of Comparative Surveys: What Has Changed?

Tenth or Eleventh International Workshop
On Comparative Survey
Design and
Implementation (CSDI)

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- WHY THIS SESSION WAS PROPOSED
- ARCHIVE PERSPECTIVE ON THE PROCESSING AND DISSEMINATION OF COMPARATIVE SURVEYS
- CHANGES IN METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES OVER MORE THAN 40 YEARS
- DATA QUALITY ISSUES
- RESEARCHER PERSPECTIVES

Reasons for this Session

- Discuss the continued usability of existing long term comparative time-series data in current research
- Emphasize role of social science data archives in making comparative survey data available to researchers
- Ask the money question: Are the significant resources currently expended on the many ongoing comparative surveys providing the kinds of data researchers want?
- Ask the quality question: How good are all these surveys in measuring attitudes and behaviors?
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY: HAVE AN ANALYST OR TWO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS TO THIS GROUP!**

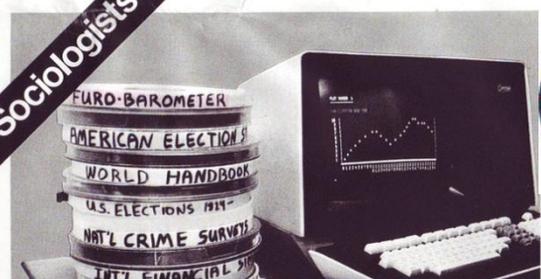
Archival Perspective

- Social science data archives instrumental in disseminating cross-national surveys
- Eurobarometer experience
 - Cooperation 'agreement' between ICPSR and Zentralarchiv in 1993
 - Resources expended: past and present
- Current processing and dissemination practices

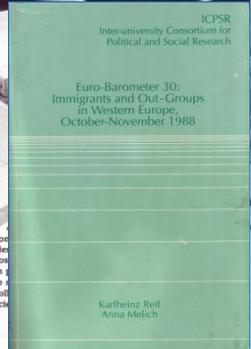
Data Access Opportunities for Researchers

- Not just downloading anymore but a set of integrated data services:
 - ZACAT at GESIS: data portal providing searching, browsing, online analysis, and download capabilities for Eurobarometers, ISSP, and European Values Study
 - Involvement of both social science data archives and university research centers with more recent surveys such as ESS and SHARE

Sociologists:



This vast archive provides data on social phenomena in more than 130 countries — surveys of mass and elite attitudes, census records, election returns, international relations, and legislative records. The data on individual and social science, economic, and public policy.



<XML> eXtensible Markup Language

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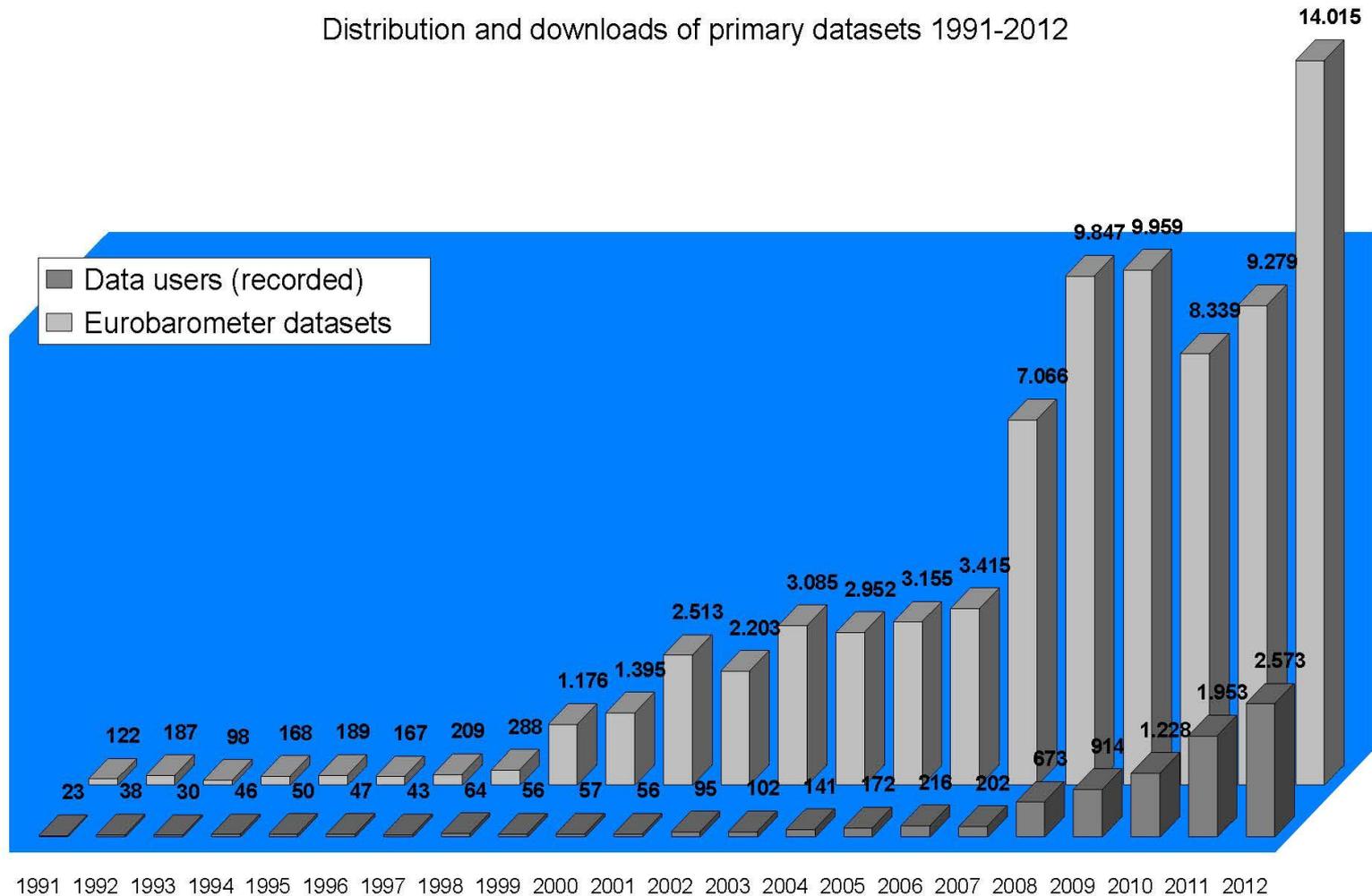


Eurobarometer Archive Data Service

- Four decades curating and providing access to primary data
- ICPSR /NSF grant due to close cooperation Rabier/Inglehart
- Cooperation agreement ICPSR with ZA / GESIS since 1993
- Central storage and version control / DOI since 2010
- International data service and data access
 - Archive data catalogues, GESIS website, mailing list
 - ICPSR direct, ZACAT, DBK-Download, CESSDA on-site service
- Data set formats (SPSS, STATA...) / DDI-XML documentation
- Cumulative trend datasets

Eurobarometer Data Service by GESIS

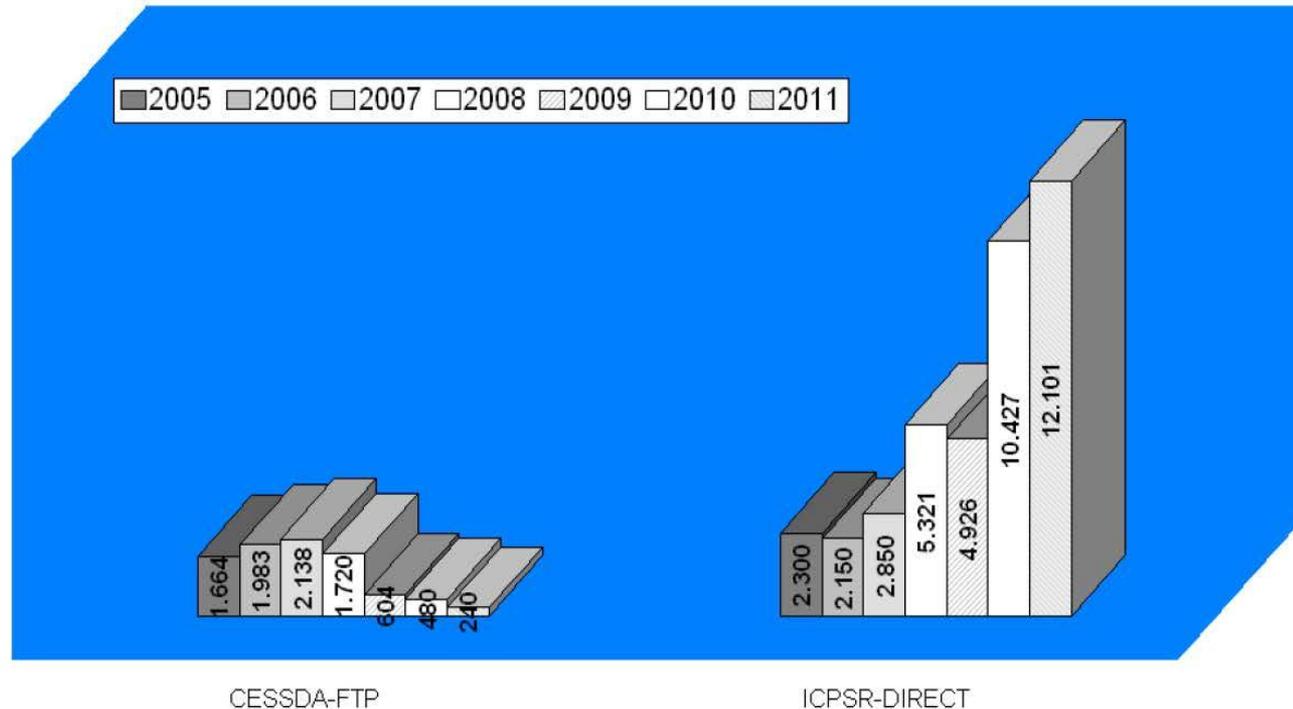
Distribution and downloads of primary datasets 1991-2012



Figures include Eurobarometer collections on **CD-ROM as of 2000**, national and international downloads via **ZACAT as of 2008**, complemented by **DBK-Download in 2012**. Eurobarometer (re-)distribution through the international data archive networks (CESSDA and ICPSR) is not included.

Eurobarometer Data Service - International

Dataset downloads by archives / via archive networks 2005-2011



Figures for member archives of the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA) refer to downloads by authorized archive staff from a dedicated ftp-server at GESIS. Multiple on-site distribution to local users is not reported. Figures for the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) are based on dataset downloads world wide at ICPSR member institutions and universities mainly through ICPSR-DIRECT. In 2011 these downloads were effected by almost 3000 individual users.

Data Use Challenges for Researchers

- Focus mainly on Eurobarometer and ESS
- Methodological differences between the two
(Coenders, M., Lubbers, M., and Scheepers, P. (2003) “Majority populations’ attitudes towards migrants and minorities”, Report for the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia)
- Extent of comparability and equivalence
- Presence of adequate documentation to assess and check quality standards and targets between these two survey series

Relationship of the surveys

- Academic justification for the ESS

(O'Shea, R., Bryson, C., and Jowell, R. (2007) "Comparative Attitudinal Research in Europe"
Round 1: ESS Deliverable number 1)

- Need for integrated and comprehensive time series on attitudes and values within the EU as well as associated and candidate countries
 - **Go beyond topics that serve interests of the EC;** enhance standards of research and data collection in all participating countries; make possible wholesale introduction of new topics of interest to broader group of researchers
- A natural evolution; a new generation of surveys to complement what has come before

Recent Researcher Criticisms of the Eurobarometer

- The institutionalization of a ‘European public opinion’

(Aldrin, P. (2011) “The Eurobarometer and the Making of European Opinion” in Gaxie, D., Hubé, N. and Howell, J., (eds). *Perceptions of Europe: A Comparative Sociology of European Attitudes*. Colchester, ECPR Press: 17-35).

- Importance of closed-ended questions
- Observation that the EB holds a virtual monopoly over the analysis of Europeans’ opinions and supports the European integration project

Recent Researcher criticisms of the Eurobarometer - 2

- Assertion that EB acts as an ‘oracle’ and has received little critical discussion over the years
(Also: Höpner, M. and Jurczyk, B. (2012) Kritik des Eurobarometers, Leviathan, 40, Jg., 3/2012, S. 326-349.)
- Focus on new ways of measuring attitudes toward ‘Europe’:
 - Concorde research project funded by the French National Research Agency (2006-2009)
 - Use of more in-depth survey techniques (semi-directive interviews, open-ended questions, organized focus groups)

Discussion

- Has the research use of the older comparative surveys changed over the years?
- Has the appearance of the newer surveys changed the ways that researchers use these older surveys?
- What effect have newer design, sampling, and data collection methodological approaches had on such issues as questionnaire development, field operations, and analytic techniques for all comparative survey programs?
- Do the older surveys continue to provide data that newer researchers want to use?
- Have the increasing number of comparative surveys produced more accurate and reliable measures of their populations?
- Do we have too much comparative data or not enough?