ADAPTING THE AUSTRALIAN STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF CULTURAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS (ASCCEG) FOR THE ESS

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ESS is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC)
Outline

- New ESS question on ancestry

- Challenges of operationalising ancestry across Europe

- Lessons for developing cross-national questionnaires and classifications
Adding ancestry to ESS

- Key issue in both popular and scholarly debate
- Socio-cultural origins related to range of core variables e.g. party id, political orientations, attitudes to immigration, wellbeing
- Origins more than country of birth
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BUT:

- Complex variation across 25+ countries
- Small N
F61 CARD 77 How would you describe your ancestry? Please use this card to choose up to two ancestries that best apply to you.

INTERVIEWER: code maximum of two ancestries in total.

If more than two are mentioned, ask respondent to select two.

If respondent is unable to do this, code first two ancestries mentioned.

INTERVIEWER PROBE ONCE: Which other?
2. The showcard

- Country specific showcards
- Consultation between ESS CST, ancestry experts and country experts (National Coordinators)
- Clear guidelines on categories and order
  - national majority
  - recognized subnational/indigenous groups
  - minorities from immigration
  - other
3. The classification

- European Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ESCEG)

- 5 digit hierarchical classification based on socio-cultural similarity
  - 1\textsuperscript{st} digit – Broad regional groupings e.g. European
  - 2\textsuperscript{nd} digit – Narrow regional groupings e.g. West European
  - 4\textsuperscript{th} digit – Cultural or ethnic unit groups which are national (e.g. Belgian) or extend across national boundaries (e.g. Silesian)
  - 5\textsuperscript{th} digit – Sub-national unit groups e.g. Wallonian, Flemish
Item fielded as part of ESS Round 7

- Data from 22 ESS countries (Fieldwork 2014/15)
- Questionnaire documentation, pre-test results, cognitive interviewing, consultation with National Coordinators pre and post-fieldwork
- Evaluate:
  - Is item fit for purpose i.e. are we measuring what we want to measure?
  - Can it be operationalized cross-nationally?
  - Does it add value to existing ESS core items?
Ancestry item generally worked well...

- Pre-test evidence suggests respondents understand and can answer question
- Item well received by NCs. No problems reported by interviewers or respondents
- Low item nonresponse (<1%)
- Low use of “OTHER” – showcard categories about right
- 2nd ancestry option used to varying degrees across countries
  - 59% BE, 49% ES, 39% FR, 33% UK
- Lots of scope for analysis
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Ancestry permanent addition to ESS core questionnaire from Round 8 ....
... but some issues with operationalization

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- Need for improved guidance e.g. treatment of 2nd ancestry, showcard order, data processing
Lessons learned

- Importance of pre-testing (dress rehearsal in each country)
- Consultation (with topic and country experts) is vital
- Clear guidelines required for each stage of process
- Need to be flexible …
  …during development process
  … across countries
- Classification just as important as source question