

How to use the Survey of International Social Surveys?

The Survey of International Social Surveys provides a synthetic overview of 81 of the most important cross-national social surveys worldwide.

For each individual survey, you find:

- The title of the survey
- The name of the entity organising the survey and responsible for data collection; key data on the entity's membership, governance arrangements, source of funding, etc.
- A historical sketch of the initiation and origin of the survey
- The link to the website(s) of the responsible organization
- The frequency or repetitions of the survey
- A description of the survey's content
- An outline of the type of sample used, and the main data collection methods employed
- An account of the availability of the data to researchers, and access restrictions
- The questionnaires (in English)
- The countries included in the different rounds
- The link to a cumulative file of the various rounds, if it exists
- Publications based on the data
- Remarks
- Sources

The various surveys are grouped under a few categories, of which the first four are based on a classification developed by Ineke Stoop and Eric Harrison:

- A) Comparative surveys on attitudes, values, beliefs and opinions
- B) Comparative surveys on elections
- C) Comparative surveys on living conditions
- D) Comparative surveys on literacy and skills
- E) Comparative elite studies
- F) Comparative studies on crime

Category A is the largest, arguably because attitudes, values and beliefs are difficult to tap by other types of data, whereas various types of data can be used for the other categories. There are relatively few surveys on elections (category B) because most election survey programmes are strictly national, and not cross-national/comparative.

Within each category, the surveys expected to be followed up in new rounds are listed first. The surveys conducted once, or no longer conducted are listed in a sub-category ("historical").

Most, but not all of the cross-national surveys documented in this overview are freely available and can be downloaded for individual researchers from various social science open data systems. Increasingly, the comparative survey data can be downloaded directly from the survey organisations' websites. Most of them are delivered in clear and limpid formats.