The Atlas of European Values: Trends and Traditions at the turn of the Century, summarizes the values, beliefs, opinions, and attitudes of Europeans on a wide range of topics in nearly 200 informative graphs, charts, and maps. These images are based on survey data conducted within the framework of the European Values Study (EVS), a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research program on basic human values. The program was initiated by the European Value Systems Study Group (EVSSG) in the late 1970s. The initial researchers aimed at exploring the moral and social values underlying European social and political institutions and governing conduct. Questions were raised such as: Do Europeans share common values? Are values changing in Europe and, if so, in what directions? Do Christian values continue to permeate European life and culture? Is a coherent alternative meaning system replacing that of Christianity? What are the implications for European unity? These questions and issues are still relevant today.

To answer these questions, a survey was planned in all member states of the European Community. This survey was fielded in 1981 and interviews were conducted in ten countries. In order to explore value changes, successive waves of surveys were carried out in 1990, 1999 and, recently, in 2008. Each successive wave covered a broader range of countries than the previous one. The latest 2008 survey includes all European nations from Iceland to Turkey, and from Portugal to Russia. Thus, this Atlas of European Values graphically illustrates the rich diversity of values and beliefs of the more than 800 million Europeans living inside and outside the European Union today, revealing unity and diversity in Europe at a glance.

Data spanning a full generation
Today, the European Values Study spans a full generation, which makes it possible to compare the findings from earlier waves with the latest data. The current Atlas depicts some examples of these trends in value patterns since the 1980s. In-depth analyses of these findings reinforce the impression that a profound transformation of modern culture is taking place in Europe, although not at the same speed in all countries. Cultural and social changes appear to depend on the stage of socio-economic development and historical factors specific to a given nation.

The findings of the European Values Study are of interest to a broad audience, from social scientists, to politicians, administrators, managers, church leaders, journalists, trade unions and... all Europeans. Both scientific and more popular publications provide profound insights into the value patterns of Europeans and give interpretations of the differences and similarities in values between Europeans, in trends over time, and in the implications of these for European institutes, politics, and policies. All publications using data from the European Values Study can be found in the EVS Repository (see www.europianvaluesstudy.eu/publications).

In addition, the data collected by the European Values Study are a valuable resource for the education of young people about Europe, helping them to better understand each other. After all, unknown is unloved. On the website www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu, pupils of secondary education can make their own maps and charts based on EVS data. In addition, assignments for pupils, complete with background information, including possible answers, for teachers, are available sorted by school subject. These assignments can be used in the class-room or for independent work, and are currently available in the languages Dutch, English, German, Serbian, Slovak, and Turkish. The ultimate goal of this educational project of Tilburg University, Fontys University of Applied Sciences, and other partners, is to be accessible in all European countries and languages.

Countries participating in EVS

Since 1981
Since 1990
Since 1999
Since 2008
This Atlas of European Values: Trends and Traditions at the turn of the Century, presents a selection of the data from the European Values Study surveys. More than 200 informative graphs, charts, and maps, show the data from the latest 2008 wave. In order to detect trends of stability or change in value patterns since the 1980s, these findings were compared with the data of the previous EVS waves. The first wave of the European Values Study was conducted in 1981, when citizens of the 15 European Union member states of that time were interviewed. The second wave occurred in 1990; surveys were carried out in 27 European countries. The wave in 1999 was administered in 33 countries. Several new issues, such as questions on solidarity, social capital, democracy, and work ethics were added to the questionnaire of this third wave. The fourth wave was carried out in 2008 and included a total of 47 European countries/regions. New questions in this wave concerned immigration, nationalism, and environment.

For each wave, a master questionnaire was produced in the English language, which was translated into the national languages. A special, online computer program was developed to monitor the translation process in the various countries. In all countries, the surveys were performed through face-to-face interviews from samples of all adult citizens aged 18 years and older. No upper age limit was imposed. Great efforts were taken to guarantee high scientific standards in developing, translating, and precoding the master questionnaire and the field questionnaires, high-quality fieldwork, and standardized data processing and documentation. A set of guidelines and recommendations was set up and the whole process of data collection and processing was guided and monitored by the EVS Methodology Group. Detailed information on the translation of the questionnaire, the sampling procedures, fieldwork, weighting, national codes etc. can be found on the European Values Study website: www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu. All data and documentation are freely available and can be obtained through this website at the GESIS Data Archive for the Social Sciences in Cologne through their online download and analysis facility ZACAT.

In 1999, the data of some European countries included in this atlas were collected within the framework of the World Values Survey (WVS). Data from the WVS wave 1994-1999 were used for Armenia, Georgia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, and Serbia. In the final chapter, in order to compare Europe to some other countries in the world, data from WVS wave 1995-2009 were used for USA, China, Brazil, Ghana, and India. More documentation on the World Values Survey can be found at the WVS website www.worldvaluessurvey.org.

Maps and charts

The maps presented in this atlas are not entirely geographically accurate. In order to include all European countries in a way that properly distinguishes the nuances of each country, the maps have been slightly adjusted, which may yield a geographically distorted picture of Europe. For example, Malta is depicted larger than in reality, and details of the coastal line of Norway are left out. On the maps, the differences in value orientations are indicated by a variety of colors. The color grey is used when no or no comparable data were available.

In some charts and overviews, we combined countries to show the values of inhabitants within and outside the European Union. The EU 27 include Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Cyprus (CY), the Czech Republic (CZ), Germany (DE), Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Spain (ES), Finland (FI), France (FR), Great Britain (GB), Greece (GR), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Italy (IT), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Latvia (LV), Malta (MT), Northern Ireland (NIR), the Netherlands (NL), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Sweden (SE), Slovenia (SI), and Slovakia (SK). Countries outside the European Union which are labeled as ‘non EU’ are: Albania (AL), Armenia (AM), Belarus (BY), Switzerland (CH), Estonia (EE), Georgia (GE), Croatia (HR), Iceland (IS), Kosovo (KOS), Moldova (MD), Montenegro (ME), Macedonia (MK), Northern Cyprus (NCY), Norway (NO), Serbia (RS), Russia (RU), Turkey (TR), and the Ukraine (UA).

Throughout this Atlas, we differentiated between four age groups: 18-30, 31-45, 46-60, and over 60. In addition, three levels of education (low, middle, and high) were distinguished, based on a question about the highest level of education the respondent had reached. ‘Low’ level indicates no education, inadequately completed primary education, completed (compulsory) primary education, or first stage of basic education. ‘Middle’ level education includes secondary education and post-secondary non-tertiary education. A ‘high’ level of education means a tertiary education certificate. Finally, level of income was also divided into three categories (low, middle, and high), each representing a third of the population in each country. This means that level of income is measured on a relative rather than an absolute scale.

In each chapter, the characteristics of a typical European concerning a specific value or attitude are given. For example, we show who are the largest Europe supporters - and haters- in Europe, or who are the most satisfied and dissatisfied workers. These characteristics are based on the results of (logistic) regression analyses including the following features: gender, age, level of education, level of income, religious denomination, level of urbanization, marital status, having children, being employed, a housewife, retired or unemployed, and country of residence.

Special thanks

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