

The Globalization of Surveys

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## **Introduction**

As both a product of and facilitator for globalization, survey research has been expanding around the world. Even before the invention and transmission of national and cross-national surveys, Western scholars and missionaries who visited other areas of the world often conducted or facilitated small-scale surveys in an effort to better understand the local societies. For example, even though the first nationwide survey in the most populous China was not implemented until 2004 by the Chinese General Social Survey, local social surveys had been carried out under the guidance of individual American scholars as early as 1917-19 near Beijing (<http://www.chinagss.org/>; Han 1997). The continued, more collective efforts helped grow into national surveys, not only in Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Russia, but also in Asia and Latin America (Heath et al. 2005; Worcester 1987; Smith 2012).

In the later stage of globalization, surveys are being conducted in more and more countries and cross-national studies are both increasing in number and encompassing a larger number of participating countries. As with other economic, social and cultural institutions, the integration or interconnectedness of surveys emerges as a manifestation of the worldwide spread of ideas and practices. The opportunity for the scientific, worldwide, and comparative study of human society has never been greater, but the challenges to conducting such research loom large. The total-survey-error paradigm indicates that achieving valid and reliable results is a difficult task (Lessler, 1984; Smith, 2011). The difficulty is greatly magnified when it comes to comparative survey research. Cross-national/cross-cultural survey research not only requires validity and reliability in each and every survey, but functional equivalence across surveys and populations must

be achieved (Harkness, 2009; Harkness et al., 2010; Johnson, 1998; Smith, 2010b; Verma, 2002). By achieving this, the full potential of global, survey research would be realized.

This chapter covers: 1) the development of cross-national, survey research in general, 2) the contemporary situation, including conditions in a) the academic, governmental, and commercial sectors, b) contemporary coverage and limitations, c) data archives, d) international academic, professional, and trade associations, e) journals, f) cross-national handbooks and edited volumes, and g) international standards and guidelines, 3) the concept of world opinion, 4) alternative sample designs for a global survey, and 5) prospects for additional developments and methodological improvement.

### **Historical Development**

Cross-national, survey research has progressed through three distinct stages of development (Smith, 2010a). The first ran from the advent of public opinion polls in the 1930s until about 1972. During it, comparative, survey research 1) consisted of a relatively small number of studies that covered a limited number of societies, 2) was directed by a small group of researchers, and 3) was conducted on a one-time, topic-specific basis. Shortly after the start of national, representative surveys in the United States in the mid-1930s (Converse, 1987), survey research took root in other countries (Worcester, 1987). Gallup took the early lead in the spread of survey research. In 1937, Gallup established a counterpart in the United Kingdom, and at least as early as 1939, American and British Gallup were fielding parallel questions. By the mid-1940s, Gallup established affiliates in a dozen countries and a spin-off of the Roper Organization, International Research Associates, also set up survey-research organizations around the world.

During and immediately after World War II, the Allies also promoted the spread of survey research and established local organizations in the occupied countries. The first major comparative example of coordinated, cross-national, survey research by the Allies was the Strategic Bombing Surveys carried out by the US government in Germany and Japan at the end of World War II to measure the impact of the Allied bombing on civilian populations (MacIsaac, 1976).

Social scientists also promoted cross-national collaborations. These included the How Nations See Each Other study in nine countries in 1948-49 by William Buchanan and Hadley Cantril (1953); the Comparative Study of Teachers' Attitudes in seven countries (Rokkan, 1951); the Civic Culture study in five nations in 1959-60 by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963); the Pattern of Human Concerns study by Cantril (1965) in 14 countries in 1957-1963; the Attitudes toward Europe Study in five countries in 1962 as part of the European Community (EC); and the Political Participation and Equality Study in seven nations in 1966-1971 by Verba, Norman Nie, and Jae-On Kim (1978).

While cross-national, most of these early collaborations were Eurocentric. Two of these early studies (Teachers and Attitudes toward Europe) were restricted to Europe and with the notable exception of Cantril's Human Concerns study, the rest focused on Europe, with 13 surveys from Europe and 8 from the rest of the world (Smith, 2010a).

The second stage ran from 1973 to 2002 during which comparative, survey research 1) expanded in scope, 2) became sustained, and 3) became collaborative. First, both the number of studies increased and the number of countries included in many studies greatly expanded. Second, rather than one-time, intermittent enterprises, cross-

national research was increasingly conducted on a continuing basis. Finally, rather than being led by a small cadre of researchers from a few countries, survey research was increasingly headed either by collaborative teams of social scientists drawn from most, if not all, of the participating societies, or involved studies formally representing an association of countries such as the EC. This second stage was heralded by the launch of the EC's Eurobarometer which developed from the earlier Attitudes towards Europe Study and the two rounds of the European Communities Studies in 1970-71 ([www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=2911](http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=2911)). It was established as a biannual study in 1973-1974 and has grown over time as the European Union (EU) has expanded (see [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)).

Equally important was the founding during this period of a substantial number of ongoing, collaborative, research programs organized by social scientists:

1. The associated European and World Value Surveys (EVS/WVS) started in 1981 and, across five rounds, have grown from 20 to 48 countries (plus 8 countries with partial versions). ([www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org) and <http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu>)
2. The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) has conducted 29 annual studies from 1985 through 2013 while expanding from 4 to 49 countries (Smith, 2007b; [www.issp.org](http://www.issp.org)).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The ISSP started as a collaboration between existing social-indicators program in the US (the National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey (GSS)), Germany (the Zentrum fuer Umfragen und Methoden's ALLBUS), the UK (Social Community Planning Research's British Social Attitudes Study),

3. The Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP) started in the late 1980s and has had three rounds and 20 participating countries. ([www.cnep.ics.ul.pt](http://www.cnep.ics.ul.pt))
  
4. The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) has completed three rounds ([www.cses.org](http://www.cses.org)), expanding from 33 countries in round 1 to 44 countries in round 3.
  
5. The various, loosely-related Global Barometers ([www.globalbarometer.net](http://www.globalbarometer.net)) (Lagos, 2008) consists of the New Democracies/New European Barometers (1991-2005) ([www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=3293](http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=3293)), the Latinobarómetro (1995-present) ([www.latinobarometro.org](http://www.latinobarometro.org)), the Afrobarometer (1999-present) ([www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)), the Asian Barometer (2001-present) ([www.asianbarometer.org](http://www.asianbarometer.org)), and the Arab Barometer (2005-present) ([www.arabbarometer.org](http://www.arabbarometer.org)).<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, the ad hoc studies that characterized the first period continued during the second stage. These also often increased in scope. Examples include the World Fertility Study, carried out in 61 countries (including 41 developing nations) from 1974

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and Australia (Australia National University's National Social Science Survey) and extended bilateral studies carried out as part of the GSS and ALLBUS in 1982-1984.

<sup>2</sup> Despite the overlapping use of the term "barometer" there is limited connection between these later organizations and the EC's Eurobarometer. There are also other organizations using the term "barometer" such as the Asia Barometer ([www.asiabarometer.org](http://www.asiabarometer.org)) that are unconnected with the Global Barometers. The New European Barometer does not appear to be a formal member of the Global Barometers, but has had some connection (Lagos, 2008). A new entity, the Eurasia Barometer, is an outgrowth of the New Democracies/New European Barometers.

to 1982 (Cleland and Scott, 1987; Cornelius, 1985), and the International Social Justice Project, in 12 countries in 1991 with follow-ups in some countries (<http://www.isjp.de>).

During the third stage starting in 2002, cross-national, survey research became part of the social-science infrastructure. In particular, the degree of central coordination and control notably increased. The establishment of the biennial European Social Survey (ESS) in 2002 capstoned this advance (Jowell et al., 2007) ([www.europeansocialsurvey.org](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org)). While the ESS, like the WVS, ISSP, and CSES, is a collaboration of social scientists, unlike those earlier consortia, it has centralized funding for the design, direction, and methodological monitoring of the national surveys. While the data collection is funded nation-by-nation, their notable level of centralized resources and coordination distinguishes the ESS from the earlier collaborations.

Other developments during this third period have been a continuing expansion in the number and size of cross-national studies and more cross-project collaboration. The Arab Barometers, East Asian Social Surveys ([www.eassda.org](http://www.eassda.org)), and ESS are examples of new cross-national studies initiated in recent years. Also, as indicated above, the major global collaboration (CSES, Global Barometers, ISSP, WVS) have all expanded coverage. Likewise, the new Gallup World Poll grew from covering an average of 113.5 countries in 2006-07, to 122 in 2008-10, to 145 in 2011-12. In terms of inter-study collaborations, the ESS and GSS have carried out joint projects, and the CSES and ISSP have organized workshops, sponsored joint conference sessions, and discussed other collaboration.

### **International and Cross-National Surveys**

Globalization has triggered both the necessity for and existence of international survey research. The number of countries conducting surveys, the number of surveys

conducted in each country, and the number and size of cross-national, comparative surveys have all expanded. There are several types of contemporary, cross-national surveys.

First, there are the global, general-topic, general-population, social-science collaborations discussed above (e.g. the CNEP, CSES, Global Barometers, ISSP, and WVS). These are large, on-going, and expanding collaborations that seek information on a wide range of topics and coverage of societies across the globe (Smith, Kim, Koch, and Park, 2006). They have been widely used in scholarly publications.<sup>3</sup>

Second, there are global, general-population studies on specialized topics, such as the International Mental Health Stigma Survey ([www.indiana.edu/~sgcmhs/index.htm](http://www.indiana.edu/~sgcmhs/index.htm)), the World Mental Health Survey ([www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/wmh/index.php](http://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/wmh/index.php)), the International Adult Literacy Survey/Adult Literacy and Life Skills Surveys (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/all>), the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (<http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/#d.en.221854>), the Demographic and Health Surveys ([www.measuredhs.com](http://www.measuredhs.com)), the Multinational Time Use Study ([www.timeuse.org/mtus](http://www.timeuse.org/mtus)), the World Health Survey ([www.who.int/healthinfo/survey/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/healthinfo/survey/en/index.html)), the International Crime Victims Survey (<http://rechten.uvt.nl/icvs>), and the World Internet Project ([www.worldinternetproject.net](http://www.worldinternetproject.net)). These include scholarly collaborations, United Nations (UN) affiliated projects, and programs by other international organizations, such as the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

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<sup>3</sup> Cross-national survey research has produced a large and invaluable body of findings. For example, the CSES lists 601 publications using its surveys, the WVS's bibliography has about 3,350 entries, and the ISSP's bibliography has 5,566 references.



Third, there are global, special-population studies on specialized topics such as student surveys, like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA; [www.pisa.oecd.org](http://www.pisa.oecd.org)), the Relevance of Science Education (ROSE; [www.ils.uio.no/english/rose](http://www.ils.uio.no/english/rose)), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS; <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls>), and the Trends in International Mathematical and Science Study (TIMSS; <http://nces.ed.gov/timss>).

Fourth, there are regional, general-population, general-topic, social-science surveys, such as the ESS ([www.europeansocialsurvey.org](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org)), the East Asian Social Survey (EASS; <http://www.eassda.org>), the Latin American Public Opinion Project ([www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop)), and the various regional barometers (Lagos, 2008). Like the global, general-topic surveys, these operate on a continuing basis under the leadership of social scientists.

Fifth, there are regional, special-population, special-topic surveys like the Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE; [www.share-project.org](http://www.share-project.org)), the European Working Conditions Survey ([www.eurofound.europa.eu/euro/ewcs/surveys](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/euro/ewcs/surveys)), the European Election Studies ([www.ees-homepage.net](http://www.ees-homepage.net)), and the European Quality of Life Survey ([www.eurofound.europa.eu](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu)). These are especially common in the EU.

Sixth, there are global polls conducted by large commercial companies such as Gallup Inc. ([www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com)), GfK (<http://www.gfk.com>), Harris Interactive ([www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com)), ICF International (<http://www.icfi.com>), Ipsos ([www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)), and TNS/Kantar Group ([www.tnsglobal.com](http://www.tnsglobal.com) and <http://www.kantar.com>). There have been a series of mergers creating larger and more international commercial firms (e.g. Ipsos taking over Synovate and GfK acquiring NOP).

Rather than primarily engage in comparative studies, these firms collect national as well as international data. They mostly conduct market research, but also cover public opinion and other areas.

Seventh, there are consortia of commercial firms. Some represent long-term, general collaborations such as the WIN/Gallup International Association (GIA), which was formed in 2010 when the World Independent Network of Market Research and GIA merged.<sup>4</sup> ([www.gallup-international.com](http://www.gallup-international.com)) and Globescan ([www.globescan.com](http://www.globescan.com)), established in 1987, and others are more project-specific collaboration, such as the Pew Global Attitudes project in 2002-2013 (<http://pewglobal.org>).

Finally, there are harmonization projects that merge and make more comparable studies not originally designed for comparative purposes such as the Luxembourg Income Study ([www.lisproject.org](http://www.lisproject.org)), the International Stratification and Mobility File ([www.sscnet.ucla.edu/issr/da/Mobility/mobindex.html](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/issr/da/Mobility/mobindex.html)), the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International (IPUMS, International; <https://international.ipums.org/international>), and the many efforts of the UN (<http://unstats.un.org>) and Eurostat (<http://epp.eurostat.europa.eu>).

These cross-national surveys have been integrated or interconnected broadly by two approaches. The first approach is top-down: a survey organization or company, often Western-based, initiates a cross-national survey series by either sponsoring surveys in other countries or asking local agencies to seek funding to implement the surveys. The

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<sup>4</sup>Gallup Inc. is the company founded by George Gallup Sr. and is headquartered in the US. GIA and WIN merged in 2010. The WIN/GIA is not affiliated with Gallup Inc. and is headquartered in Switzerland. GIA was formed in 1947 and some affiliates had ties to George Gallup and Gallup Inc. in the past. In 2013, WIN/GIA had affiliates in 73 countries. A few members of WIN/GIA are also affiliated with TNS.

content and methods of the top-down surveys are often predetermined or decided by the dominating organization or company. The second approach tends to be bottom-up: national teams collaborate and launch cross-national surveys, and teams from other countries join them later. As a rule, the content and methods of the bottom-up surveys are decided collectively, with each team being responsible for its own costs of survey operation. The so-called safari surveys are the extreme example of the top-down model (Kuechler, 1987; Smith, 2004). As globalization further develops and the continued adoption of the survey innovation becomes more self-sustaining given favorable political and economic circumstances, the shift over time has clearly gone from top-down to a more collaborative, bottom-up approach. The Afrobarometers are an interesting example. They started with major leadership from American scholars, but have become much more Afro-centric over time.

### **Contemporary Coverage and Limitations**

Both the global expansion of survey research and its limitations are evident by analyzing participation in major cross-national surveys. A comparison across the CSES, Global Barometers, ISSP, and WVS found that 65.3% of the world's countries were covered in one or more study. The completely missed countries fell into three main categories. First, countries that were small in both area and population and often geographically isolated (e.g. islands) were often not covered. These principally included the microstates of Europe (e.g. Monaco, San Marino, Vatican City), Pacific islands (e.g. Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga), and Caribbean islands (e.g. Barbados, Dominica, St. Lucia). Second, strongly authoritarian countries such as Myanmar, North Korea, and Uzbekistan were generally missed. For the nine countries that Freedom House listed in 2013 as the

worst of the worst on political rights and civil liberties, only two were included in any of these cross-national studies, with Syria and Sudan each being included in just one of the four cross-national studies. Finally, countries undergoing sustained civil wars and other internal unrest were often not covered (e.g. Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan).

An analysis of the Gallup World Polls (GWPs) produced similar results. From 2006 to 2012, the GWPs conducted surveys in 162 countries or territories, thus covering 78.7% of generally recognized countries plus a few other areas (e.g. Hong Kong and Puerto Rico). While covering more countries, the GWPs essentially missed the same types of areas as the four cross-national collaborations discussed above did. Moreover, neither the GWPs nor the major academic collaborations covered all countries and regions equally well. Looking across the seven rounds of the GWPs, a coverage completeness statistic was computed. It took the total number of countries in a region times the number of rounds (7) and compared that base to the number of surveys conducted in the GWPs from 2006 to 2012. South America had the highest completeness level (85.7%), followed by Asia (77.8%), Europe (72.9%), Africa (55.3%), North America (43.9%), and Other (Oceania and Pacific islands – 13.2%). However, if the regions are realigned as Latin America and the Caribbean vs. the remainder of North America (Canada and the United States), the completeness rates are respectively 32.8% and 100.0%. Similarly, if Australia and New Zealand are separated from Other, their completeness rate is 85.7% and the remaining Other area's completeness rate falls to 0.0%. Thus, the so-called First World has the most complete coverage and Third-World regions the lowest.

In addition to the coverage of countries discussed above, territories and contested areas are also usually missed. These include many island dependencies especially in the Caribbean and Pacific, which are missed just like many of the independent nations from these same regions, and other areas such as Greenland (part of Denmark, but routinely excluded from Danish samples) and French Guiana. Also, typically missed are contested areas like Northern Cyprus, Transnistria, and Western Sahara. Among the few areas in these groups that are occasionally included in cross-national surveys are Puerto Rico and Palestine.

While surveys are being conducted both in more countries and more frequently, there are still many legal constraints on the conducting of surveys and dissemination of survey results. In 2012, the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) updated its Freedom to Publish Opinion Poll Results (Chang, 2012). Information was collected about government restrictions on surveys in 85 countries/jurisdictions. The publication of pre-election polls had blackout periods in 46% of countries lasting from 1 to 45 days. In 16% of countries, exit polls of voters were either forbidden or severely limited. In 14% of countries, the specific questions or subjects of surveys were restricted (and in another 9% of countries, the situation was unclear). China illustrates this situation. Questions about consumer-preferences and other market-research topics are widely conducted and essentially unrestricted, questions about the Communist party are strictly prohibited, and in between is a huge gray area of uncertainty.

Nor is the situation improving. Between 2002 and 2012, 13 countries increased embargoes on pre-election polls and 11 reduced their embargoes (Chang, 2012). In just the last two years, WAPOR combated political efforts to restrict surveys in Mexico, Peru,

Russia, and Ukraine. Likewise, ESOMAR has been involved regarding regulations in France and the European Union.

Another limitation lies in the types of surveys that cross national borders. The existing cross-national surveys are largely limited to cross-sections, rather than panels. Like cross-sectional surveys, panel surveys have spread from the West to other parts of the world, with projects from different countries focusing on very similar topics. Due to the temporal complexity added to survey design and operation, however, national panel surveys have not been well integrated or interconnected. Furthermore, some of these late-coming surveys modify the unit of their panels based on the core cultural values that matter more in the countries of the surveys. For example, the Panel Survey of Family Dynamics (PSFD), which has been conducted in China and Taiwan, treats family as a complicated social institution in Chinese societies and thus includes key family members as the targets in the panels ([http://psfd.sinica.edu.tw/plan\\_01en.htm](http://psfd.sinica.edu.tw/plan_01en.htm)). Even though it is difficult to integrate panel surveys across national borders, one of the most established panel survey programs, the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics (PSID), does work with comparative panel surveys from other countries to produce a cross-national equivalence file, or CNEF (<http://www.human.cornell.edu/pam/research/centers-programs/german-panel/cnef.cfm>). The CNEF incorporates panel data collected by non-Western countries, such as Korean Labor and Income Panel Study, alongside panel survey series from Western countries. The equivalence file such as this somehow compensates for the lack of cross-national panel surveys, and should contribute to the rapidly rising data archiving as a result of the globalization of surveys.

## Data Archives and Data Sources

Microdata from most of the cross-national surveys carried out by social scientists and governments and microdata from some surveys conducted by commercial firms are stored in and accessible from major, international, survey archives such as the following:

Association of Religion Data Archives, Pennsylvania State University — <http://www.thearda.com>

Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research, University of Michigan — [www.icpsr.umich.edu](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu)

IPUMS, International — <https://international.ipums.org/international>

Latin American Public Opinion Project, Vanderbilt University — <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop>

Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut — [www.ropercenter.uconn.edu](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu)

EU's Eurobarometer — [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)

GESIS Data Archive for the Social Sciences (formerly the Central Archive for Empirical Social Research at the University of Cologne) — [www.gesis.org/en/institute/gesis-scientific-sections/data-archive-for-the-social-sciences](http://www.gesis.org/en/institute/gesis-scientific-sections/data-archive-for-the-social-sciences)

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (Norwegian Social Science Data Services), University of Bergen — [www.nsd.uib.no](http://www.nsd.uib.no)

Social Science Japan Data Archive at the University of Tokyo — <http://ssjda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en>

UK Data Archive, University of Essex — [www.data-archive.ac.uk](http://www.data-archive.ac.uk)

All of these have extensive international and cross-national holdings, but none focuses on comparative, survey-research data.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For other European archives see the members of the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (<http://www.cessda.org/about/members>)

Of particular value are several question-level, online repositories of data: 1) IPOLL at the Roper Center ([http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/CFIDE/cf/action/home/index.cfm?CFID=28311&CF\\_TOKEN=35566476](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/CFIDE/cf/action/home/index.cfm?CFID=28311&CF_TOKEN=35566476)), 2) Polling the Nations (<http://poll.orspub.com>), 3) the UK Data Service Variables and Question Bank at Essex (<http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/variables>), and 4) ZACAT at GESIS (<http://zacat.gesis.org/webview>). These allow searches for specific question wordings and present basic results. Only the UK Data Service and ZACAT are free.

Also, many cross-national programs provide documentation and data from their project websites. These include the CSES, ESS, ISSP, and WVS. Also, some commercial projects make available reports, and sometimes data, at corporate websites. However, full access is usually limited to subscribers or otherwise restricted.

Other sites of particular interest include World Public Opinion of the Program on International Policy Attitudes ([www.worldpublicopinion.org](http://www.worldpublicopinion.org)) and the Pew Global Attitudes Project (<http://www.pewglobal.org>).

### **International Academic, Professional, and Trade Associations**

Academic, professional, and trade associations are another important component of the comparative, survey-research community. There are various types of associations such as 1) the main academic and professional associations in the social and statistical sciences — the International Political Science Association ([www.ipsa.org](http://www.ipsa.org)), the International Sociological Association ([www.isa-sociology.org](http://www.isa-sociology.org)), the International Statistical Institute (<http://isi.cbs.nl>), and its affiliate the International Association of Survey Statisticians (<http://isi.cbs.nl/iass>); 2) academic and professional associations



related to survey research, like the market-research-oriented ESOMAR (formerly the European Society for Opinion and Market Research; [www.esomar.org](http://www.esomar.org)), the Asian Network for Public Opinion Research (ANPOR; <http://anpor.org/en/index.php>), the European Survey Research Association (ESRA; <http://esra.sqp.nl/esra/home>), and the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR; [www.wapor.org](http://www.wapor.org)); 3) trade associations, like the Council of American Survey Research Organization (CASRO; <https://www.casro.org>), European Federation of Associations of Market Research Organisations (EFRAMRO; <http://www.efamro.com>), and ESOMAR (which has both individual and organizational members); 4) social-science, archival organizations like the International Association for Social Science Information, Service, and Technology ([www.iassistdata.org](http://www.iassistdata.org)), the Council of European Social Science Data Archives ([www.nsd.uib.no/CESSDA/home.html](http://www.nsd.uib.no/CESSDA/home.html)), and the International Federation of Data Organizations for the Social Sciences ([www.ifdo.org](http://www.ifdo.org)); 5) survey-research-methodology collaborations such as the Comparative Survey Design and Implementation Workshop (CSDI; [www.csdiworkshop.org](http://www.csdiworkshop.org)), the series of International Workshops on Household Survey Nonresponse ([www.nonresponse.org](http://www.nonresponse.org)), and the loosely-connected International Conference series starting with the International Conference on Telephone Survey Methodology in 1987 through the International Conference on Methods for Surveying and Enumerating Hard-to-Reach Populations in 2012; and 6) other social-science associations and organizations from long-established organizations as the UN's International Social Science Council (ISSC; [www.unesco.org/ngo/issc.org](http://www.unesco.org/ngo/issc.org)) and the US-based Social Science Research Council ([www.ssrc.org](http://www.ssrc.org)) to new entities like the ISSC's

World Social Science Forum (2009-2013)

([www.unesco.org/ngo/issc/3\\_activities/3\\_worldforum.htm](http://www.unesco.org/ngo/issc/3_activities/3_worldforum.htm)).

More and more, these associations and organizations are collaborating to advance survey research around the world. For example, WAPOR and ESOMAR have regularly held joint meetings since 1949, have published a number of coordinated reports such as the ESOMAR/WAPOR Guide to Opinion Polls (<http://wapor.unl.edu/esomarwapor-guide-to-opinion-polls>) and the joint report on polling in Georgia (Frankovic et al., 2013), and have participated in the development of the International Organization of Standardization (ISO) standards (see below). Similarly, WAPOR and the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) also regularly have joint conferences, have jointly approved *Standard Definitions: Final Disposition of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys* ([http://www.aapor.org/Standard\\_Definitions1.htm](http://www.aapor.org/Standard_Definitions1.htm)), and both back AAPOR's Transparency Initiative ([http://www.aapor.org/Transparency\\_Initiative.htm](http://www.aapor.org/Transparency_Initiative.htm)).

### **Survey-Research and Social-Science Journals**

Major survey-research journals include *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Survey Practice*, and *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology* of AAPOR (with the last journal co-published with the American Statistical Association), WAPOR's *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, ESRA's *Survey Research Methods*, Statistics Sweden's *Journal of Official Statistics*, Statistics Canada's *Survey Methodology*, and *Field Methods*. There are also various journals on social-science methodology such as the *Bulletin of Sociological Methods*, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *Quality and Quantity*, *Sociological Methods*, and *Sociological Methods and Research*. In

addition, there are many comparative and international journals in the social sciences. A few examples from sociology are *Acta Sociologica*, *Comparative Sociology*, *European Sociological Review*, *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, *International Journal of Socio-Economics*, *International Journal of Sociology*, and *International Sociology*.

### **Cross-national Handbooks and Edited Volumes**

There are of course thousands of books using survey research with an international perspective and a similarly large number dealing with survey-research methodology. Examples of books that bring the two topics together include: Christof Wolf, Dominique Joye, Tom W. Smith, and Yang-chih Fu, eds. *Sage Handbook of Survey Methodology*; Edith D. de Leeuw, Joop J. Hox, and Don A. Dillman, eds., *International Handbook of Survey Methodology* (2008); Wolfgang Donsbach and Michael Traugott, eds., *Sage Handbook of Public Opinion Research* (2008); John G. Geer, ed., *Public Opinion and Polling around the World: A Historical Encyclopedia* (2004); Peter V. Marsden and James D. Wright, eds., *Handbook of Survey Research* (2010); Juergen H.P. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik and Christof Wolf, eds., *Advances in Cross-National Comparison: A European Working Book for Demographic and Socio-Economic Variables* (2003); Roger Jowell, Caroline Roberts, Rory Fitzgerald, and Gillian Eva, eds., *Measuring Attitudes Cross-Nationally: Lessons from the European Social Survey* (2007); Janet A. Harkness, Michael Braun, Brad Edwards, Timothy P. Johnson, Lars Lyberg, Peter Ph. Mohler, Beth-Ellen Pennell, and Tom W. Smith, eds., *Survey Methods in Multinational, Multiregional, and Multicultural Contexts* (2010); and Janet A. Harkness, Fons van de Vijver, and Peter Ph. Mohler, eds., *Cross-Cultural Survey Methods* (2003).

## **International Standards and Guidelines**

Recently, international standards for survey research have been developed and their adoption is spreading (Lynn, 2003; Smith, THIS VOLUME). The most authoritative are the Standards for Market, Opinion, and Social Research which were first issued by the ISO in 2006 and revised in 2012 (<http://www.iso.org>). Other examples are *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys*, initially created by AAPOR in 1998 and later adopted by WAPOR, the ISSP, and other groups ([www.aapor.org/responseratesanoverview](http://www.aapor.org/responseratesanoverview)); the International Guidelines for Opinion Surveys of the OECD ([www.oecd.org/dataoecd/3/20/37358090.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/3/20/37358090.pdf)); and the Cross-Cultural Survey Guidelines of the CSDI Guidelines Initiative (<http://projects.isr.umich.edu/csdi/>).

## **The Concept of World Opinion**

One aspect of the globalization of survey research is the expansion of the concept of “world opinion.” There are however, very different ways in which world opinion is conceptualized and used. One prominent approach sees it as reflecting the collective judgment of the international community about the actions of nations or other actors. Rusciano and Fiske-Rusciano (1990; 1998; 2001; 2010), as a part of their work on global opinion theory, consider world opinion from a spiral-of-silence perspective. They indicate that public opinion “consists of attitudes or behaviors which an individual can or must express in order to avoid social isolation” and following from this that “world opinion refers to the moral judgments of observers which actors must heed in the international area or risk isolation as a nation.” They typically have measured world opinion by analyzing articles in newspapers (1990; 2001), but have since indicated

(2010) that one should look “for evidence in the relevant discourse of international affairs – e.g. the news media, policy statements or papers, United National proceedings, and global opinion polls.” Stearns’ (2005) views of world opinion generally overlap with those of the Ruscianos. He states that it involves “the capacity to react to developments (real or imagined) in distant parts of the globe with some sense of impassioned outrage and a belief that there are or should be some common standards for humanity, plus a recognition in many societies... that such evidence of outrage may need to be accommodated...” He further indicates that world opinion goes beyond “polling results...in that it involves more active expressions through petitions, demonstrations, and boycotts, though polling may confirm the strong views involved.” Goot (2004) also mention protests (e.g. boycotts, demonstration, and acts of terrorism) as part of world opinion, but measures these only via general surveys.

Another perspective thinks of world opinion as the attitudes of people around the world, typically as measured by cross-national surveys. This is the approach implicitly or explicitly adopted by the major cross-national projects introduced above. It does not assume there is or should be any global consensus, nor that world opinion is restricted to attitudes or standards that are formed by the global community and directed at wayward nations and other actors. This approach heavily depends on the collection, comparison, and aggregation of national opinion surveys.

### **Alternative Sample Designs of Global Surveys**

The dominate approach to conducting a global survey has been to conduct comparable, national surveys in as many countries as possible. But some have instead advocated a more directly global survey in which worldwide and not country-specific

results are the primary goal. Rusciano and Fiske-Rusciano (1998) outline a general model for doing a global survey of world opinion. Stearns (2005) also seems to advocate a more global rather than nation-by-nation measure of world opinion, but does not discuss how this might be achieved. The most detailed attempt to operationalize such an approach has been developed by Gilani and Gilani (2013), in what they call the “global-centric method of sampling and surveys.” They have collected a sample frame of blocks that represent 99.5% of the world’s population and propose drawing samples proportional to size without first selecting country as a sampling unit.

Tom W. Smith and the late Roger Jowell once discussed the merits of the traditional country-by-country vs. direct global sampling approaches. Smith described a hybrid approach. He indicated that if one considered the larger nations as in one stratum, one could include these with certainty and then sample proportional to population countries in several regional, non-certainty strata. This could lower the number of countries that needed to be sampled, reduce the total number of interviews that would be needed, and produce a merged sample that was more representative of and generalizable to the world in general. Jowell noted that countries were an important organizing unit both politically and culturally, and that one wanted to maximize the number of countries covered to both exploit and understand the inter-country variation. Both were of course correct.

### **Future Prospects**

While impediments remain to achieving global survey research, the political and economic barriers to survey research have diminished over time, and it is probable that coverage will continue to expand. National surveys are conducted in most countries, and

in both the commercial and academic sections, comparative surveys are routinely carried out both regionally and globally.

But notable challenges stand in the way of achieving valid, reliable, and comparable measurements across surveys. Minimizing total, survey error in a single survey is difficult, doing so in multiple surveys conducted in one society is still more difficult, and doing this in many surveys across languages, societies, and cultures is the most difficult of all (Harkness et al., 2010; Smith, 2007a; 2010b; 2011). Conducting multiple surveys is naturally more difficult and error prone simply because there are more moving parts that must be designed, operated, checked, and coordinated. But cross-national/cross-culture surveys are especially difficult to successfully design and execute because measurement and content are easily confounded, and this often makes methodological and substantive explanations for differences both plausible. To reliably and validly ascertain the actual cross-national/cross-cultural differences and similarities that prevail across societies, one must ensure that measurement error has been minimized and that functional equivalence has been achieved.

Achieving functional equivalence is impeded by several factors. First, while notable progress has been made to improve survey methodology, much more research is needed about a) the sources of measurement error and how to minimize these and b) maximizing measurement comparability. Second, comparative surveys often do not utilize the best existing methods and therefore do not achieve the best possible results permitted by the current state of the art of survey methodology. While this may come from lack of expertise on the part of the principal researchers and/or data collectors, it usually reflects a lack of resources. Although the technical knowledge and the intent to

quality research may exist, the necessary resources to design and conduct top-flight research and optimal comparisons are often not available.

In 1987 to mark the 50th anniversary of *Public Opinion Quarterly* (POQ), Robert Worcester (1987) wrote the following on the “internationalization” of survey research...

In another 50 years someone may be asked by the editor of POQ to look back on 100 years of public opinion research and will perhaps chronicle the development of public opinion research in what we now know as the Third World to First World standards; the true World Poll dream of George Gallup and Jean Stoetzel as a regular tool of guidance for world organizations in the way the Euro-Barometer provides input to the EEC and its member countries; developments in technology and polling methodologies to extend the usefulness, timeliness, and accuracy of poll findings; the ‘cinematographic poll’ providing a moving picture of public opinion on an ongoing basis; developments in question wording techniques, sampling, analysis, and reporting; and, hopefully, the defeat of efforts, well-meaning or not, to limit the taking and publication of well-founded expert public opinion polls.

We are now halfway to that 50-year mark and have generally made progress along these lines. But much work still remains especially in the methodological advances that are needed to ensure functional equivalence and high data quality in cross-national surveys.



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