



CROSS-NATIONAL ONLINE SURVEY (CRONOS):

A WEB PANEL FOR
THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY



INTRODUCTION

The European Social Survey has produced high-quality social survey data across Europe since 2002/03. In recent years - in the context of falling response rates and interviewer capacity issues in some countries - efforts have been made to examine alternative modes of data collection.

The CROss-National Online Survey (CRONOS) Panel is currently being undertaken for the third time in 11 countries. It draws on the sample from the main stage European Social Survey (ESS) and offers additional data in a more timely manner, while maintaining the same rigorous methodological standards.

As a long-running time-series, questionnaire space for new items in the main stage survey is now at a premium. And with fieldwork occurring once every two years, it is not always possible to be responsive to emerging issues and events. CRONOS allows the ESS to expand its reach in terms of subject area, and supplement this data with all that collected in the main stage survey. Frequent waves shorten the journey of information from the field to the desktop of the analyst, which is especially welcome for those working in a policy environment.

This web panel therefore represents an exciting development, not only for the European Social Survey but for researchers in the social sciences and beyond.

Professor Ann-Helén Bay,
Oslo Metropolitan University
Chair of the ESS General Assembly



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FOREWORD

Sometimes, advances in social research can emerge from a context of adversity. When it became apparent at the start of the Coronavirus pandemic that the planned Round 10 face-to-face fieldwork would be impossible in many countries, the European Social Survey was swift to pivot to a self-completion mode in nine countries.

In the event this web-first approach to fieldwork exceeded our expectations and this led our Methods Advisory Board to recommend a self-completion future. Round 11 will be the final round to rely exclusively on face-to-face interviewing.

Countries will be expected to conduct Round 12 fieldwork using a mixed method approach: half the sample will be interviewed in person and the other half will complete the questionnaire via web and postal modes. And by Round 13 ESS will be entirely self-completion.

Fortunately, we have been able to draw upon lessons learned from the development of an online panel for almost a decade. The CROss-National Online Survey (CRONOS) Panel was the world's first large scale, cross-national, probability-based input-harmonised web panel. It was fielded in three countries - Estonia, Great Britain and Slovenia - between 2016 and 2018. This was funded as part of the Synergies for Europe's Research Infrastructures in the Social Sciences (SERISS) project (funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 654221).

The project acted as a feasibility study and its success led to a second iteration (CRONOS-2) as part of the subsequent Horizon 2020 project: ESS-SUSTAIN-2 (grant agreement 871063).

In CRONOS-2 we extended the number of countries to 12 and adopted a more substantive focus, including sets of items on a number of key topics during the period 2021-23. Two of the six waves carried content specific to individual participant countries. The success of this larger web panel is already being illustrated by the relatively large number of data downloaders for this subset of data from our Data Portal. Some of the emerging analysis of this dataset is included in this booklet.

We have started work on a third edition of the web panel as part of a new Horizon Europe project - 'Infra4NextGen'. CRONOS-3 will be an eleven-country panel with a specific orientation towards the five pillars of the Next Generation EU initiative - more evidence of ESS's value in informing the European Commission's policy-driven agenda.

It is arguable that the social and political challenges facing Europe are without precedent. By supplying analysts throughout the European Research Area - and within the European Commission - with data that can help shape policy, the ESS can play a part in helping navigate these uncharted waters.

This guide to - and prospectus for - CRONOS sets out the main principles underlying its implementation, reports on what has already been learned, and provides estimates of the costs of running a permanent follow-on web panel as part of the future of ESS. ◀

Professor Rory Fitzgerald
Director of the ESS



“ This web-first approach to fieldwork exceeded our expectations and this led our Methods Advisory Board to recommend a self-completion future. ”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The world's first large scale, cross-national, probability-based input-harmonised web panel has been developed since 2015.

The CRONOS web panel has enabled us to supplement a successful infrastructure with the know-how, skills, tools and expertise to conduct high-quality web panels in future. CRONOS-2 was a proven mechanism for obtaining high-quality comparable opinion data. CRONOS-3 promises to be a powerful and unique tool to supplement main stage ESS data and integrate longitudinal measurement for the first time.

A web panel is able to add value to the ESS main stage in a number of ways. Whilst the ESS is methodologically rigorous, representative and open access, the ESS has some downsides that can be alleviated by the implementation of a cross-national web panel. The main stage of the survey is relatively slow and usually includes eighteen months of preparation, six months of fieldwork and six months of archiving. This process means that the survey can only be implemented every two years and is not easily responsive or adaptable. Its content is also reflective of the period in which it was launched over twenty years ago.

The CRONOS model therefore offers a new resource that can be responsive to immediate policy needs. The implementation of CRONOS thus far has proved that it is possible to provide more timely data for the research community without sacrificing the methodological standards that are the hallmark of the ESS.

The ESS Core Scientific Team (CST) now has a wealth of experience in developing and implementing a representative web panel in 14 countries that have taken part at least once. A centrally coordinated approach means that costs can be kept to a minimum, and support can be offered to national teams at every stage of the process. A comprehensive and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant online data collection platform for cross-national surveys has now been developed.

Already a large number of users have downloaded the data from the second edition of the CRONOS panel and a flow of publications has begun. The policy focus of CRONOS-3 promises to give it greater reach and impact than ever before.

Preparations are being made to incorporate a follow-on panel element to the ESS from 2027, with countries covering their own costs of national data collection. The central costs of maintaining the panel and archiving the data would be borne by the ESS ERIC and shared between participating countries. ◀

“ A centrally coordinated approach means that costs can be kept to a minimum, and support can be offered to national teams at every stage of the process. ”

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HOW ESS DEVELOPED A WORLD'S FIRST

CROSS-NATIONAL ONLINE SURVEY (CRONOS) PANEL

Building on previous experience of mixed mode research, the ESS developed a CROss-National Online Survey (CRONOS) panel in 2016.

An initial web panel was the first attempt to establish a probability-based CROss-National Online Survey (CRONOS) with a harmonised approach - from the recruitment stage to data processing. This activity was implemented as a pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of panel recruitment on the back of an existing cross-national survey in terms of costs, sample representativeness, participation (and attrition rates) and data quality.

CRONOS was designed and implemented alongside ESS Round 8 (2016/17), as part of the Synergies for Europe's Research Infrastructures in the Social Sciences (SERISS) project (funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 654221).

After completing the ESS face-to-face interview, respondents in Estonia, Great Britain and Slovenia aged 18 or older were invited to participate in six 20-minute online surveys over twelve months. Respondents who did not have internet access for private use were offered a tablet and an internet connection for the duration of the project.

After implementing a harmonised recruitment approach, the CRONOS panel was managed centrally with continuous

and crucial support from relevant national teams. A central panel administration system was set up on Questback-EFS: waves were programmed, distributed and monitored centrally from this system.

The national teams translated and adapted all source documents (respondent communications, survey questions), sent out postal and SMS communications, set up experiments and maintained a helpline that panellists could contact for assistance or queries. In addition, national teams worked with the central team in the design of recruitment strategies and experiments.

Data collection took place between December 2016 and February 2018. After a short 10-minute welcome survey, waves 1 to 6 included around 100 questions on diverse topics, often borrowed from high-standard cross-national surveys (e.g., European Values Study, Generations and Gender Programme, International Social Survey Programme, European Quality of Life Survey). ◀

CROSS-NATIONAL ONLINE SURVEY 2 (CRONOS-2) PANEL

The CROss-National Online Survey 2 (CRONOS-2) panel was fielded in 12 countries - Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom - from November 2021 until March 2023.

CRONOS-2 was part of the ESS-SUSTAIN-2 project (funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 871063). At the end of the main ESS Round 10 (2020-22) questionnaire, respondents in each of the 12 countries were invited to participate in the online panel across six waves (only waves 1 and 2 were completed in Hungary).

Questions for cross-national waves 1, 2, 4 and 5 were selected for inclusion following an open competition.

Respondents were asked country-specific questions during waves 3 and 6 (country-specific waves), composed by ESS national teams in each country. CRONOS-2 enabled a longitudinal component to be added to the ESS for the first time (the modules on drivers of institutional trust, COVID-19 vaccination, perception of surveys, and financial wellbeing were repeated).

CRONOS-2 aimed to scale up the project from the original CRONOS by increasing the website interviewing capacity across Europe. It also hoped to provide data in

“ Questions measuring the mental health of respondents during COVID-19 were also included in Wave 4. ”

a timelier manner than the main stage ESS. By supplementing main stage ESS data with web panel data from some of the same respondents, the research community has additional substantive comparative data which allows researchers to undertake more complex analyses.

Wave 1 included questions measuring attitudes towards climate policies, specifically about taxes on fossil fuels and plastic products, subsidising renewable energy and banning the least energy efficient household appliances. The module also examined attitudes towards retraining workers who lose their jobs because of new environmental policies and taxes on imports of goods from countries with weaker environmental laws. Respondents were asked whether they would get and support voluntary or mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations in a module that was repeated in Wave 5.

Questions about trust in public services and the integrity of politicians focused on attitudes towards public services, health plans, business regulation, the integrity of politicians and local/regional political decisions. Wave 1 also included questions about the perceptions of surveys, specifically on whether people enjoy responding to surveys, whether surveys are important for society and if respondents are asked to complete too many.

Wave 2 included several items on welfare policies in Europe and the redistribution of wealth. Questions sought responses to whether European Union (EU) citizens

should be allowed the same welfare support as national citizens, the role of the EU in the welfare state and whether the EU should support income redistribution or provide financial support to member countries in emergencies.

A module on the beginning and end of life included questions previously asked in the European Values Study (EVS) on abortion, euthanasia, suicide and IVF, whilst two new items on surrogacy and triage were added. It also included items on religiosity, family and institutional trust. Questions about the financial wellbeing of respondents also featured in Wave 2 (and repeated in Wave 5). Data is available for respondents' perceived financial status, whether they feel knowledgeable about finance and their level of risk when it comes to financial investment. This wave concluded with questions on memory policies, a module which focused on attitudes towards commemorative ceremonies, memorials, and public speeches.

National teams in each country fielded their own questions for **Waves 3 and 6**.

Wave 4 included several items measuring attitudes towards technocracy and populism, which discovered people's opinions on the decision-making of politicians, whether politicians represent the people and if they have the necessary education and skills to govern effectively. A set of questions to measure attitudes towards family circumstances included items about whether children fare as well



with one or both biological parents, step parents or gay and lesbian parents and who they should live with in the event of parental separation.

Questions measuring the mental health of respondents during COVID-19 were also included in Wave 4, specifically the frequency of depressive symptoms, signs of anxiety and experience of post-traumatic stress. The final module in this wave focused on the culturally sensitive study of societal development, which aimed to establish what people think signifies a good society. It listed 15 items - including the eradication of poverty, health and longevity of citizens, good education, economic prosperity and protection of human rights - and asked respondents how much these elements should be prioritised.

Wave 5 measured trust in science, with questions on general trust in science, trust in specific scientific disciplines and agreement to a series of scientific statements on gender, wealth redistribution, the universe, antibiotics, climate and



CROSS-NATIONAL ONLINE SURVEY 3 (CRONOS-3) PANEL

CRONOS-3 is being implemented as part of the Infra4NextGen project (funded under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101131118).

The project is re-purposing and customising existing social science data to support the five themes of the NextGenerationEU programme. NextGenerationEU aims for Europe 'to build a greener, more digital and more resilient future' with a focus on five key areas: Make it Green; Make it Digital; Make it Healthy; Make it Strong; and Make it Equal.

In each of the five areas, an inventory of relevant items already fielded on cross-national surveys is being produced. This includes the ESS, Eurobarometer, European Quality of Life Survey, Generations and Gender Programme (GGP), European Values Study and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). Harmonised and merged extracts from existing datasets that reduce the burden on analysts and increase sample sizes are being produced.

Existing data from these surveys is being expertly analysed and summarised to produce a series of policy-relevant tabulations and visualisations available in an online portal. This initial analysis will be supplemented with new data collected on each topic via the CRONOS-3 web panel, fielded over five waves in 11 countries (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and the United Kingdom). This data is being collected from 2024-26.

These experts for each subject area are working closely with the ESS to develop a set of relevant questions to help address these NextGenerationEU themes. Advisory panels with representation from the European Commission Joint Research Centre are helping guide the choice of questions, to ensure they are policy relevant.

With a wealth of experience, the ESS is leading on the implementation of the panel and post-collection weighting of the data. New data on each NextGenerationEU theme is being processed and made rapidly available for the research community through a dedicated website, with all data organised by theme. An educational tool (E-NextGen) will allow for the data to be used in classrooms and by the general public. ☞

“ With a wealth of experience, the ESS is leading on the implementation of the panel and post-collection weighting of the data. ”

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

CROSS-National Online Survey (CRONOS) Panel:
Rounds 1-3

3 ROUNDS

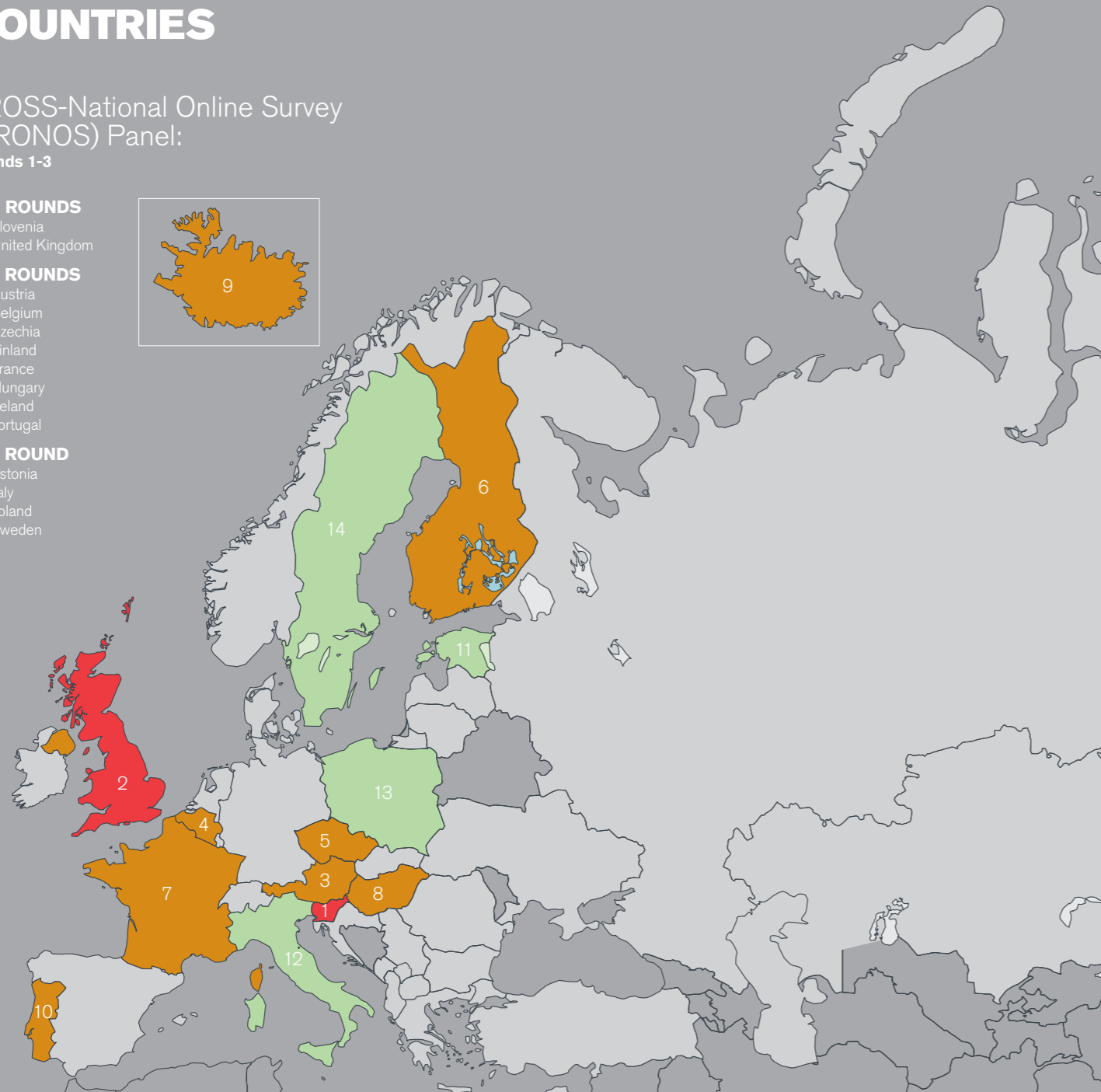
- 1 Slovenia
- 2 United Kingdom

2 ROUNDS

- 3 Austria
- 4 Belgium
- 5 Czechia
- 6 Finland
- 7 France
- 8 Hungary
- 9 Iceland
- 10 Portugal

1 ROUND

- 11 Estonia
- 12 Italy
- 13 Poland
- 14 Sweden



METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Sampling

Respondents for CRONOS have always been drawn from the same sample as the main stage ESS. The objective of the ESS sampling strategy is the design and implementation of workable and equivalent sampling plans in all participating countries. Sampling in the ESS is guided by the requirements outlined in the specification for participating countries and the following key principles:

- Samples must be representative of all persons aged 15 and over (no upper age limit) resident within private households in each country, regardless of their nationality, citizenship or language
- Individuals are selected by strict random probability methods at every stage
- Sampling frames of individuals, households and addresses may be used
- All countries must aim for a minimum 'effective achieved sample size' of 1,500, or 800 in countries with ESS populations of less than 2 million after discounting for design effects
- Quota sampling is not permitted at any stage
- Substitution of non-responding households or individuals (whether 'refusals', 'non-contacts' or 'ineligibles') is not permitted at any stage.

Country	Eligible ESS respondents	Recruited panellists	%
Austria	1686	796	47.2
Belgium	1173	888	75.7
Czechia	2257	1013	44.9
Finland	1407	1111	79.0
France	1693	1023	60.4
UK	989	752	76.0
Hungary	2330	632	27.1
Iceland	816	706	86.5
Italy	1850	641	34.6
Portugal	1231	719	58.4
Sweden	2197	1462	66.5
Slovenia	1008	731	72.5

Each National Coordinating team is responsible for identifying (or generating) a suitable sampling frame and producing a sample design suitable for implementation in their country. They are supported in this task by a member of the ESS Sampling and Weighting Expert Panel who is assigned to assist them.

Recruitment

Recruitment for all three rounds of CRONOS was undertaken using a piggy-back approach. Respondents to the main stage ESS Round 8 (CRONOS), Round 10 (CRONOS-2) and Round 11 (CRONOS-3) were invited to participate in the web panel at the end of their face-to-face interview. CRONOS-3 samples were supplemented with those who took part in CRONOS-2. The offline population was represented in CRONOS and CRONOS-3.

Incentives

Those who agreed to participate in CRONOS-2 were incentivised to complete the online surveys with an unconditional €5/£5 voucher before they were invited to complete each wave. No one-off incentives were offered in order to reduce attrition because of the possibility that panellists would complete early waves and lose interest. In some countries, the incentive was adapted.

Once recruited, panellists were sent pre-notification in the form of a postal letter, including the unconditional incentive. They were then sent the invitation for each wave via email, with a follow-up SMS. A reminder was then sent via SMS, with a follow-up via email. Where necessary, second and third reminders were sent via email, with a follow-up SMS. In some countries, further contact attempts were necessary to improve the overall response rate.

Translation

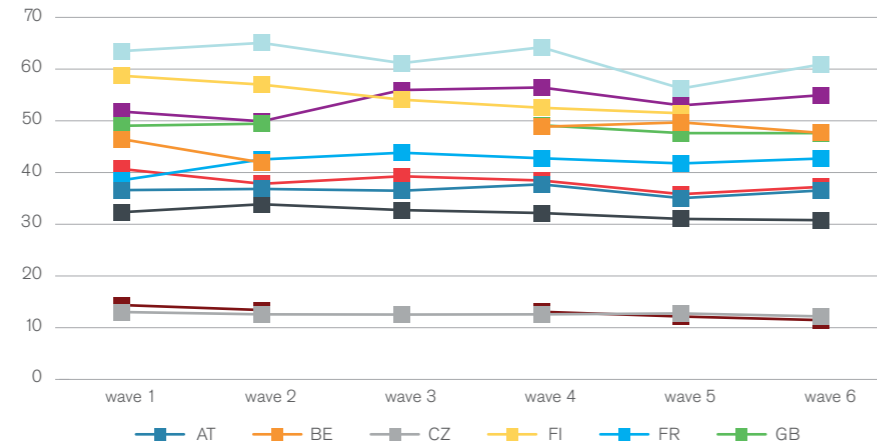
The translation process for an online web panel largely mirrors that undertaken for the main stage ESS. The core principles that underpin the current processes are adhered to; in that it is vital that translation is undertaken to the highest possible quality. Words and phrases such as 'democracy', 'social life' or 'unification' can mean different things to different people at different times in different countries. The ESS annotates its source questionnaire in an attempt to ensure that a translation conveying the same meaning can be used in all countries.

This same strategy has been employed across all three rounds of CRONOS. It means that CRONOS uses a team approach to translation involving several stages of review, adjudication, pre-testing and documentation. To ensure that the survey is fully representative of any given country, the questionnaire is translated into each language spoken as a first language by more than five per cent of each country's population.

The ESS strives to achieve a principle of equivalence with regard to its translations. Translation procedures of the ESS are guided by the requirements outlined in the survey specification and the following key principles:

- The ESS source questionnaire is designed in British English before it is translated. Each national team will translate it into one or more target languages.
- The ESS follows TRAPD methodology (Translation, Review, Adjudication, Pretesting and Documentation).
- All national teams are provided with detailed Translation Guidelines and a Translation Quality Checklist which outlines the procedures to be followed.

FIG. 1 RESPONSE RATES BY WAVE AND COUNTRY



Response Rates, Non response Bias and Weighting on CRONOS-2

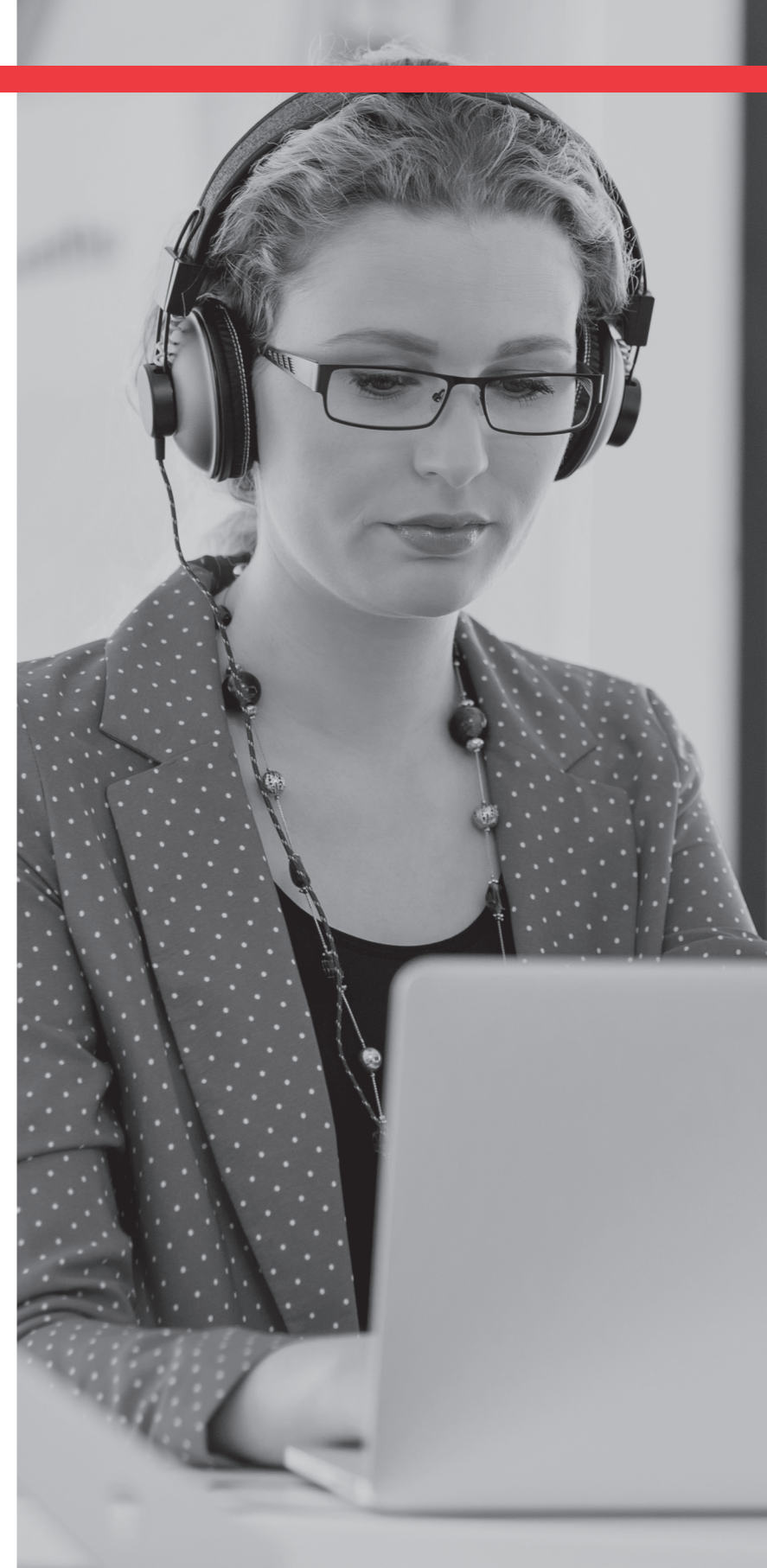
For any survey it is important to assess whether differential non-response between subgroups could have introduced bias into survey estimates. Where there is evidence of differential non-response, it is prudent to correct it through weighting. As the sample invited to take part in CRONOS-2 consisted of respondents to Round 10 of the ESS, the responses to questions are available for all CRONOS-2 sample members, regardless of whether or not they responded to CRONOS-2. These provide a rich basis for assessing nonresponse and deriving corrective weights.

CRONOS-2 response rates varied considerably between countries. The range at wave 1 was from 13.0% in Czechia to 63.5% in Iceland. However, within countries, response rates varied rather little across the six waves.

Finland was the only country in which a noticeable decline in response rates over time was detected, from 58.7% at wave 1 to 51.5% at wave 5 (Finland did not participate in wave 6).

Weighting

The post-stratified ESS Round 10 analysis weight (ANWEIGHT) was adjusted by the reciprocal of the predicted probability of CRONOS-2 response, to produce a weight for CRONOS-2 data users. These weights can therefore be used on their own for any analysis of CRONOS-2 data, as they incorporate the post-stratified Round 10 design weight and adjustments for non-response in the main stage ESS and the respective CRONOS-2 wave. These ensured that national samples have the same distribution across variables as the weighted Round 10 sample (note that Round 10 was post-stratified by age group, gender, region and education).



“ CRONOS-2 and CRONOS-3 data can be linked to the same respondents in the previous main stage ESS. This means that there is more potential for complex analyses by registered users. ”

Data Preparation and Deposit

With CRONOS data collected via the Centerdata platform, this is quickly added to the Sikt Data Archive. There are no restrictions on access, nor any privileged arrangements for certain users. So scholars, journalists, researchers, the general public and those most intimately involved in running the project all have equal and simultaneous access to the data. In addition, they have access to a comprehensive technical report and supporting data that describe and explain all aspects of the project. However commercial use of the data is not generally allowed.

CRONOS-2 and CRONOS-3 data can be linked to the same respondents in the previous main stage ESS. This means that there is more potential for complex analyses by registered users.

FIG. 2 NATIONAL COSTS OF PARTICIPATION

	Staff costs	Non-staff costs	Total costs (inc. overheads)
Lower cost country	48,037	65,491	141,910
Median	71,422	75,669	183,864
Higher cost country	101,230	103,111	255,426

Funding

The first three rounds of CRONOS have been funded by three European Commission Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe programme projects: SERISS, SUSTAIN-2 and Infra4NextGen. The total cost of implementing CRONOS-3 - a five-wave web panel in 11 countries over a two-year period (2024-25) - is €2.2m.

This represents a central cost of €900,000 that will cover the three main elements for the implementation of a web panel and all functions performed within the existing ESS Core Scientific Team (CST). This bulk of this is staff costs - overseeing the development and translation of the questionnaires, and the subsequent weighting of the data prior to its archiving and release. It also includes provision and maintenance of the GDPR-compliant Platform for administering the online surveys.

National costs vary widely and are particularly influenced by labour costs in each country. They depend in turn on sample sizes, the panellist recruitment process (low recruitment rates could require further efforts), respondent incentives and the number of waves fielded. Countries are forecast to use 14 person-months over the period of the project. For the 'median country' taking part in CRONOS-3 these amount to €71,422.

A significant amount of further national costs relate to the recruitment and incentivisation of respondents. These costs include aspects such as postage for invitation letters, incentives, and printing. The median figure for these costs in CRONOS-3 is €75,669.



Data and Documentation

All data collected via the CRONOS web panels is freely available through the ESS Data Portal. Datasets are freely available to download from the Data Portal for non-commercial use in three different formats: SPSS, STATA, and CSV file. Accompanying documentation published in the ESS Data Portal includes:

- User guide
- Weights description and how to use them
- Screenshots of all the surveys and for every language
- Questionnaires with survey flow and routing/survey logic, randomisation
- QDTs applications
- GDPR info provided to respondents for every language.

The new variable viewer on the Data Portal allows users to view weighted data from all 12 countries to each question asked.

There have been 1,884 downloads of CRONOS-1 and 1,251 downloads of CRONOS-2 data.

The CRONOS web panel is set up to be more responsive than the main stage ESS for supplying policy audiences with timely and relevant data to help guide their decisions. The potential impact of web panel data is therefore even higher than main stage ESS data. €

“ A significant amount of further national costs relate to the recruitment and incentivisation of respondents. ”

FINDINGS FROM CRONOS-2

CRONOS-2 IN THE UK

Alun Humphrey
National Centre for Social Research

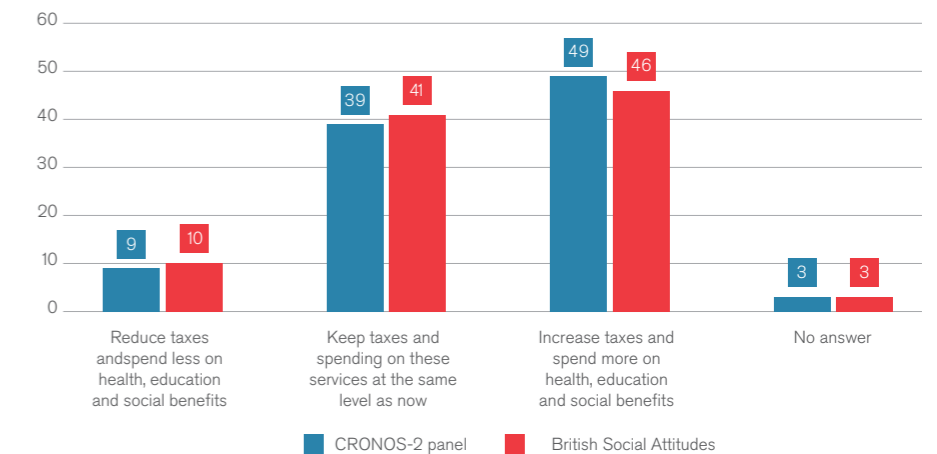
The UK has a long and successful association with the ESS, having participated in every round since 2002/03. Over the years, the survey has incorporated detailed question modules on topics such as immigration, health, climate change and democracy. Each of these 'rotating' modules necessarily takes time to develop, test, translate and field. Typically, the process from initial inception to publication takes several years.

In this context, the CRONOS panel represents an exciting and attractive opportunity to be part of. The idea is that once the panel is recruited, it should be possible to develop, test and field questions in just a few short months. This makes the ESS able to respond to changing policy interest far more quickly. It also significantly increases the capacity - where the main survey will usually include two rotating modules every two years, the CRONOS 2 panel enabled 16 separate question modules to be developed and fielded.

In the UK we were excited to be part of the panel, especially given that the UK was one of the three forerunner countries that took part in the first CRONOS pilot. It is impossible to reflect on anything that was scheduled to run in 2020 without mentioning the COVID pandemic. The idea was that the CRONOS panel would be recruited from respondents taking part in the main ESS surveys scheduled for the second half of 2020, with panel waves being run in 2021. The pandemic put paid to that.

In the UK, the impact on fieldwork capacity was severe. It meant that, even when fieldwork did start in autumn 2021, it took a

FIG. 3 CRONOS-2 V BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES DATA



year to complete. This introduced some very specific challenges for the panel. The much longer duration of main fieldwork meant that by the time we were ready to field the first panel waves in late 2022, it had been over a year since the first panellists had originally been recruited, leading to concerns about whether they would recall the original survey.

We were really pleased with the recruitment rates, which far exceeded our expectations. Among those eligible to be recruited, around three-quarters agreed to be part of the panel and all of them provided at least one means of contacting them. This turned out to be crucial as given the problems with the main ESS fieldwork, far fewer interviews were conducted than planned, meaning that the pool from which the panel could be drawn was much smaller.

A much better recruitment rate largely offset that meaning we had approximately the same number of panellists that was anticipated. This perhaps illustrated a key learning from the Panel. Response rates to each panel wave in the UK were broadly around 65%, which translated to around

“ We were really pleased with the recruitment rates, which far exceeded our expectations. ”

Alun Humphrey
National Centre
for Social Research

450-500 respondents. Although this provides a reasonable number for analysis at an overall level, it leaves very limited scope for comparison across sub-groups e.g., age. Planning for the next iteration of the CRONOS panel has therefore accounted for this and plans to retain as many of the CRONOS 2 panellists as are still willing to participate and bolstering that with additional freshly recruited panellists from ESS Round 11. This should substantially increase the sample sizes within each country.

Another key consideration was the profile of the responding sample. The response rate to each panel survey was around 65%, this was of course the final in three stages of non-response; response to the original ESS interview, agreement to join the panel and then actually taking part. This meant that the cumulative response rate of the panel from the original sample was approximately 9%.

Analysis of the panel suggests that it tended to over-represent the better educated, those more interested in politics and under-represented younger people. For example, around 41% of UK panellists were educated to degree level compared with around a third of the population. One potential consideration for the future panel might therefore be the use of differential incentives.

Of course, to some extent differences in profile can be controlled for through weighting. The panel included one wave where countries were able to design and develop their own questions. In the UK we included some questions that are also asked on the British Social Attitudes survey. Encouragingly, we saw some consistency in patterns of response to these questions. For example, BSA includes a standard question asking about attitudes to taxation and government spending. On BSA, 10% favoured reducing taxes and reducing spending with 46% saying that both taxes and spending should be increased (41% said they should stay the same). On the panel, the corresponding figures were 9%, 49% and 39% respectively. ◀



DRIVERS OF INSTITUTIONAL TRUSTWORTHINESS IN EUROPE

Santiago Gonzalez and Alexis Kyander, OECD

The 'honeymoon effect' in the political science literature refers to the period of about 100 days following elections when newly elected governments or governing coalitions enjoy early popularity or goodwill. Recent evidence suggests that honeymoon periods are shrinking or simply fading away because of increased polarization, higher exposure to social media or greater market volatility associated with newcomers and the uncertainty about their policy agenda.

The honeymoon period is important as it provides a window of opportunity for the new government to enact key policy changes and reforms without facing significant resistance. With public goodwill behind them, they may find it easier to garner support from other political parties, pass legislation, and implement their agenda effectively. It is also a period that allows the new government to establish relationships with key stakeholders, both domestically and internationally. This paper investigates the prevalence and size of the 'honeymoon' effect using trust in the national government as the proxy for government approval.

It is based on the ESS CRONOS-2 dataset, that brings together several unique characteristics. First it follows a panel structure based on the same sample characteristics than the core ESS and capture two data points for 11 countries in a relatively short period of time. Between both collections elections took place in five of the surveyed countries but not in the other six allowing to compare the effects of elections across respondents that were subject to an election versus those who weren't. This natural experiment allows for the specification of a differences in differences mode where treatments are individuals that were subject to a general election compared to those who weren't.

As any natural experiment it is cost effective and has real world validity as compared to experiments conducted under a controlled setting rendering the results more generalisable and it would provide valuable insights into the causal relationships between changes in trust and electoral processes. Preliminary results show a significant albeit small positive effect on trust associated with recent exposure to elections when compared to not being exposed. ◀

ATTITUDES TOWARDS TECHNOCRACY AND POPULISM

Levente Littvay
Central European University

ESS-CRONOS-2 Wave 4 included a battery on populist attitudes and technocracy proposed by Bernhard Wessels, Alexander Trechsel, and Levente Littvay to augment the ESS10 Democracy Module. The analysis presented explored the similarities and differences between the populist model of democracy and populist attitudes. It also offered a first look at unpacking the underpinnings of technocracy attitudes.

Countries included in the analysis were Italy (n=243), Czechia (n=284), Portugal (n=396), the United Kingdom (n=487), Iceland (n=525), Slovenia (n=569), Belgium (n=573), Austria (n=647), France (n=724), Finland (n=739), and Sweden (n=845). General experience using the data was that, with the exception of the two countries with sample sizes much below 400, CRONOS2 yielded reliable, predictable, and consistent results. After removing one survey item, the populist attitude measures included have high reliability in all countries (0.7 in Italy to 0.86 in Finland), but the correlation between populist attitudes and the populist model of democracy is weak (0.13 in Italy to 0.35 in Austria).

In a multivariate model controlling for demographics, the relationship remains weak and insignificant in Finland, Belgium, and Italy. A more extensive analysis is forthcoming in a new book - How Europeans View and Evaluate Democracy Revisited. Ten years later (Oxford University Press), edited by Hanspeter Kriesi and

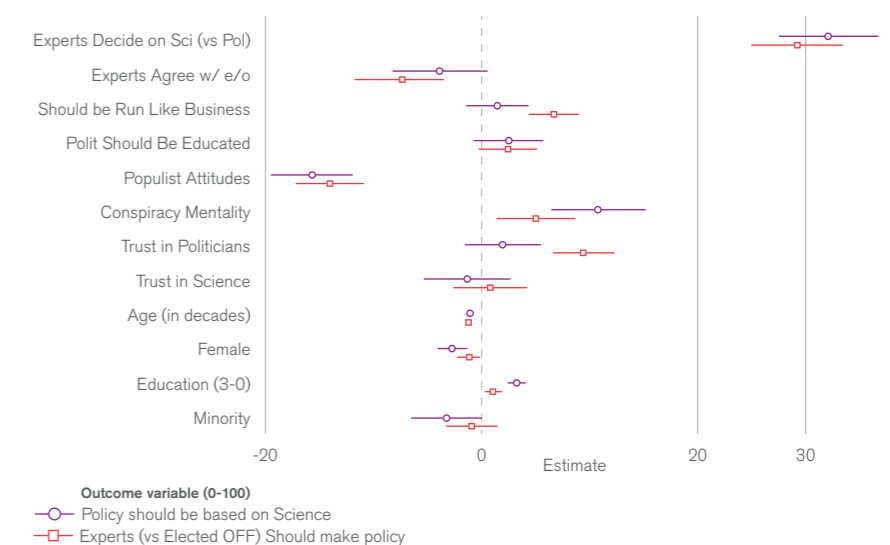
Monica Ferrin. Moving on to Technocracy Attitudes, we opted to measure them in two ways. The item, 'Should policy decisions be strongly based on scientific evidence, strongly based on political beliefs or somewhere in between?' emphasizes a policy focus and the process by which decisions are made, while 'Would the problems in [country] be better solved only by experts, only by elected politicians or somewhere in between?' stresses problems and the question of who should solve them.

Diverging results highlight the importance of how technocratic decisions are communicated. The strongest predictor of a preference for technocratic decision-making is one's sense that the "opinions of experts [are actually] based on scientific knowledge as opposed to political beliefs". Additionally, trust in politicians, age, and being female negatively, and trust in science and one's education positively predict technocratic preference regardless of the question's framing. But framing effects

diverge as populist attitudes, the belief that experts do not generally agree with each other, and the sentiment that government should be run like a business drive technocracy support in the personalized, problem-focused formulation. In contrast, self-reported minority groups support the process and policy-focused technocracy framing significantly less.

Contrary to expectations, conspiracy mentality and one's belief that politicians should be more educated than the public do not impact technocracy attitudes. We are more limited in our ability to break down the country-by-country variation in these technocracy attitudes. The results are a testament to CRONOS2's general usefulness for scientific research despite the small sample sizes, to the quality of the populist attitudes scale included, and offer insight as to how people think about technocracy, highlighting the importance of careful, nuanced communication by technocrats. ◀

FIG. 4 CRONOS-2 v BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES DATA



TRUST IN SCIENCE

Roderik Rekker
University of Gothenburg

Citizens' trust in science, as well as their factual beliefs more generally, are increasingly connected to their political ideology and party preference (Gauchat, 2012; Rekker, 2021). On a variety of issues such as COVID-19 and climate change, citizens' acceptance of scientific knowledge depends on where they stand on the political spectrum (Dunlap et al., 2016; Kerr et al., 2023).

Although the association between political leaning and science rejection is well established, this article argues that the existing literature has failed to provide a definitive answer to the crucial question where, exactly, this science polarization originates from. Rekker (2021) argued that science rejection can originate from four distinct levels of generalization.

Citizens can reject specific claims such as that global warming is manmade (Level 1) but also entire research fields such as environmental science (Level 2). Moreover, people can distrust science as a whole (Level 3) or, even more generally, the system and elite (Level 4). However, the empirical evidence for this model is currently incomplete because previous studies have examined only one or two of these levels at once.

This study fills this void by using structural equation modelling to investigate science polarization on all four levels simultaneously with new survey items that were included in the 'CRONOS-2 panel'. This online panel was fielded among 5,306 respondents from 10 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, and the

“The CRONOS-2 online panel was fielded among 5,306 respondents from 10 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) who previously participated in the European Social Survey (ESS).”

Roderik Rekker,
University of Gothenburg

United Kingdom) who previously participated in the European Social Survey (ESS).

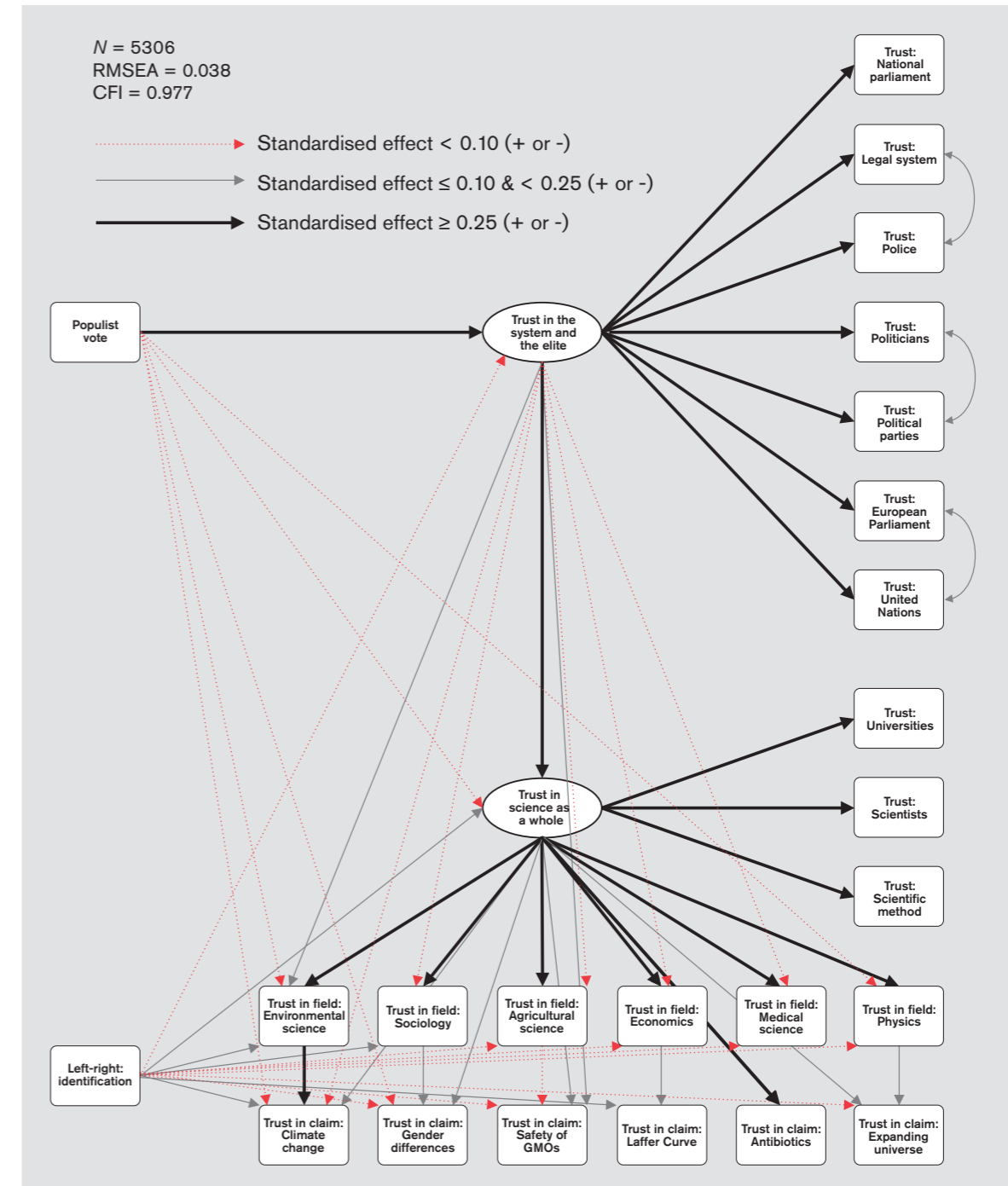
Respondents were inquired about their trust in six scientific claims (i.e., anthropogenic global warming, the social origins of gender roles, the safety of GM foods, the Laffer Curve of tax revenues, the application of antibiotics, and the expanse of the universe), the six research fields that made these claims, (i.e., environmental science, sociology, agricultural science, economics, medical science, and physics), three facets of science as a whole (i.e., universities, scientists, and the scientific method), and seven elite institutions (i.e., the national parliament, the legal system, the police, politicians, political parties, the European Parliament, and the United Nations).

By simultaneously examining how these four levels of trust relate to citizens' left-right ideology and support for populist parties, this study is uniquely positioned to answer questions such as whether right-wingers contest global warming above and beyond their rejection of environmental science as a field or whether populist voters distrust science more than should be expected based on their overall distrust in elite institutions.

The results demonstrate that a four-level model of science polarization indeed provides an accurate and parsimonious representation of how a variety of trust indicators relate to each other and to citizens' political leaning. Voters of populist parties distrust the system and elite in general, which indirectly fuels a broad science skepticism.

At another level, right-wingers have less trust in science as a whole than left-wingers. After accounting for this general skepticism, left-wingers and right-wingers are however equally prone to contest ideology-incongruent research fields and specific claims. The implications of these findings are threefold. First, research on science skepticism should carefully consider all four levels and their interplay. Second, the science polarization between populist and non-populist voters has fundamentally different origins than the effect of left-right ideology. Third, a four-level model can expose ideological symmetries in science rejection that have previously remained largely undetected. ◀

FIG. 5 TRUST IN SCIENCE - ESTIMATED MODEL



FUTURE CRONOS

Funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 871063, this brochure sets out how a future European Social Survey (ESS) web panel could be funded outside of European Union funding programmes.

Following the funding model of the main stage ESS, a future web panel funded by participating countries could bring many advantages to academics, researchers, policy makers and students.

The specific advantages of incorporating an ongoing online panel into the ESS are manifold, and primarily related to the increase in questionnaire space. It would allow us to:



- Field items/topics not included in the main stage ESS
- Field country-specific questions
- Explore in more detail a topic fielded in the main stage ESS (e.g. a follow-up on a rotating module)
- Repeat modules fielded in previous ESS Rounds (protecting and enhancing time-series)
- Field brand new items/module on a more timely basis
- Field policy-led topics as well as academic ones
- Foster collaboration with other European or non-European institutions/surveys (e.g. fielding same items).

CONTACT US

Membership enquiries should be directed to the Director of ESS ERIC using the contact details below.

If you have a general enquiry about the European Social Survey or would like to find out more, please contact the ESS team based at City, University of London:

ESS ERIC Headquarters
City, University of London
Northampton Square
London, EC1V 0HB
United Kingdom
+44 (0)20 7040 4901

✉ ess@city.ac.uk

🌐 europeansocialsurvey.org



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ESS

The European Social Survey is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC) that provides cross-national data about public attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

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City, University of London
Northampton Square
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United Kingdom
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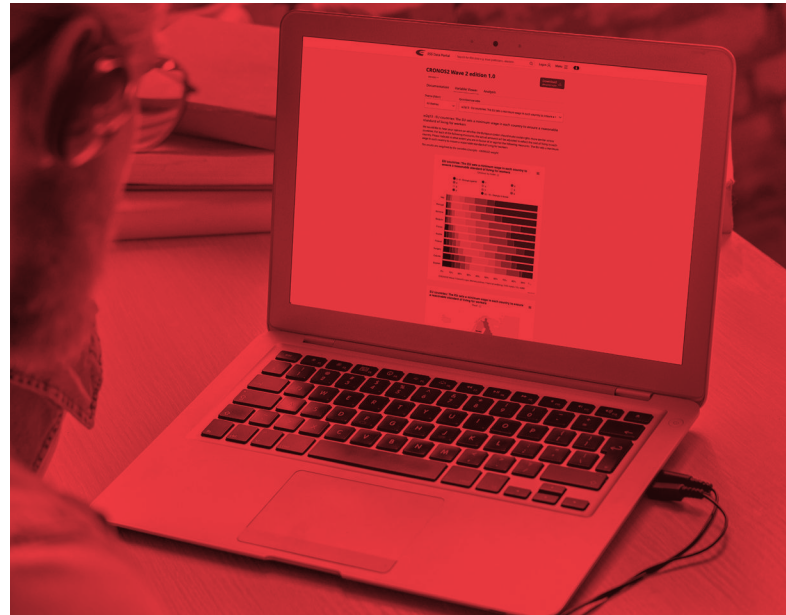
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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 871063.



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CRONOS

The CROss-National Online Survey (CRONOS) Panel has been implemented three times following on from the main stage European Social Survey.

If you have a general enquiry about CRONOS or would like to express an interest in joining future rounds of CRONOS, please contact Gianmaria Bottoni via email.