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Four Decades of Surveying Europe – Perspectives on Academic Research with the European Commission’s Eurobarometer Surveys

Eurobarometer & Co. compared – different surveys, different results?

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This presentation...

Thematic interest:

- Anti-immigrant attitudes
- Group-threat theory
- „Are more liberal immigrant integration policies associated with decreased threat perceptions?“

Methodological interest:

- Cross-national comparative research
- Cross-validation of results using empirical sources
- Standard Eurobarometer 71.3 & European Values Study 2008/2009
- „Do we find evidence for a convergence or divergence of results from different cross-national comparative surveys?“
This presentation...

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- Standard Eurobarometer 71.3 & European Values Study 2008/2009?
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Outline

• Thematic Background

• Measurement of „perceived group threat“: Data triangulation
  – Eurobarometer 71.3
  – European Values Study 2008/9

• Analysis & Results
  - Measurement equivalence
  - Means and standard deviations
  - Bivariate correlations
  - Hierarchical linear regression models

• Discussion
Background: Group threat approach

• Prominent framework for explaining anti-immigrant attitudes and behaviors

• Majority members view immigrants as competitors for important group-level resources

  Employment opportunities, physical safety...

• Perceived group threat:

  Negative consequences seen to be posed by immigrants to the interests of one’s ingroup (Stephan & Renfro 2002)
Background: Group threat approach

• Many cross-national comparative studies seeking to explain perceived group threat
  
  
  – all using various Eurobarometer Surveys (EB 33, EB 47.1)

• Focus on immigrant group size

• Few studies examine the role of institutional characteristics
  → Immigrant Integration Policies

• Policies as ‘normative environment’ for what is seen as appropriate intergroup relations

• „Are more liberal (restrictive) immigrant integration policies associated with decreased (increased) threat perceptions?“
Why use multiple surveys?

• Idea of cross-validation/data triangulation

  - Use multiple studies or data to reduce the risk of erroneous conclusions

  - But despite the increasing availability of international survey data, most studies still use a single data set only
Data & operationalization

Eurobarometer 71.3:

• Residents 15 years & older
• Multistage random sample
• Face-to-Face & CAPI Interviews
• 30343 respondents in 32 countries
• This study: 25 countries

European Values Study 2008/2009:

• Residents 18 years or older
• Multistage random sample
• Face-to-Face & CAPI Interviews
  Few exceptions
• 67786 respondents in 47 countries,
• 27 countries (+ Norway & Switzerland)
Eurobarometer 71.3 (2009)

Instruction: „For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you tend to agree or tend to disagree“.

Immigrants can play an important role in developing greater understanding and tolerance with the rest of the world.

People from other ethnic groups enrich the cultural life of [our country].

The presence of people from other ethnic groups increases unemployment in [our country].

We need immigrants to work in certain sectors of our economy.

dichotomous response options (1) = tend to agree (2) = tend to disagree, after reverse coding higher scores = more perceived group threat
Data & operationalization: Item wording „perceived group threat“

European Values Study 2008/2009

Instruction: “Please look at the following statements and indicate where you would place your views on this scale”

Immigrants take jobs away from natives in a country vs. Immigrants do not take jobs away from natives in a country.

A country’s cultural life is undermined by immigrants vs. A country’s cultural life is not undermined by immigrants.

Immigrants make crime problems worse vs. Immigrants do not make crime problems worse.

Immigrants are a strain on a country’s welfare system vs. Immigrants are not a strain on a country’s welfare system.

response options from (1) to (10), after reverse coding higher scores = more perceived group threat
Analyses:

Do we find evidence for a convergene or divergence of results from the Standard Eurobarometer 71.3 & European Values Study 2008/2009 in terms of...

0. Measurement equivalence between countries (separately for the EB & EVS)

1. Mean scores for perceived group threat

2. Bivariate correlations between perceived group threat & Immigrant integration policies

3. Results from hierarchical linear regression models
Results: Measurement equivalence

Eurobarometer:

Multigroup CFA for categorical data

Partial scalar invariance (CFI = 0.971; TLI = 0.958; RMSEA = 0.077)

European Values Study 2008:

Multigroup CFA

Partial metric invariance (CFI = 0.979; TLI = 0.974; RMSEA = 0.075)
Results: Measurement equivalence

Eurobarometer:

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Partial metric invariance (CFI = 0.979; TLI = 0.974; RMSEA = 0.075)

For each survey, one single underlying latent variables with comparable parameter estimates between countries
Results: Index „perceived group threat“

With very few exceptions, higher (lower) mean values based on the EB correspond to higher (lower) mean values based on the EVS.
For each survey, more liberal immigration policies (X-axis) are associated with decreased perceptions of group threat (Y-axis) at the country-level.
### Results: Hierarchical linear regression models

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<tr>
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<th>Eurobarometer</th>
<th>European Values Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within-Countries</strong></td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
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<td><strong>Between-Countries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigrant integration policies</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.35**</td>
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Std. regression weights; ***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05

For each survey, more liberal immigration policies (X) are associated with decreased perceptions of group threat (Y) at the country-level.
Conclusion:

- Multiple cross-national comparative surveys might offer the possibility to cross-validate various constructs
  - Attitudes
  - Self-reported behaviors

- Example: “Perceived group threat“, secondary analyses of EV and EVS-Data

- Converging findings regarding a) factor structures and b) associations with country- and individual-level covariates

- Potential influences of different dates of data collection, sampling frames or modes of data collection should not be disregarded
Thank you for your attention!