

One Europe or many?

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As attention on the economic differences between European countries continue following the Great Recession, the European Social Survey reveals significant differences in moral and social attitudes too.

Newly published findings from the European Social Survey (ESS), which has collected data from more than 30 European countries over the last ten years, have revealed significant differences in [attitudes](#) on moral and social issues such as trust in the police and homosexuality.

Based at City University London, the ESS has become one of the largest and most reliable sources of data about Europe's evolving social, political and moral fabric. They have found differences in political and [social attitudes](#) are especially noticeable between eastern and western Europe but with increasing differences in some areas between North and South.

Key findings include:

- Attitudes to [homosexuality](#) have become more permissive across many European countries. However, in much of Eastern Europe there is very little agreement that gay people should be free to live their lives as they wish.
- On average women in Europe, even if they work full-time, are still responsible for around two-thirds of the total time heterosexual couples spend on [housework](#). The division of household labour between the sexes is most unequal in southern Europe.
- Workers in Nordic countries appear to have been significantly

less severely affected by the economic crisis than workers in other areas of Europe.

- Following the economic crisis political legitimacy has fallen most notably in Eurozone countries, where the ability of governments to respond unilaterally is most constrained.
- Nordic countries are also most trusting of their police and courts and believe that their institutions are legitimate holders of power and authority; while eastern, and sometimes southern, European countries are notably less trusting
- Immigrants, across Europe, play an active role in civil society either through activities such membership of a trade union or political party, volunteering for an action group. They are increasingly likely to do so the longer they have lived in a country.

Director of the ESS, Rory Fitzgerald, said: "While most recent comparisons of European countries have focused on economic issues, the ESS sheds light on the moral and social dimension which is equally important. In European democracies it is critical that the attitudes and values of the population are clearly articulated, both to policy makers and in society more generally. This findings booklet makes an important contribution to debate on some of the key social issues facing Europe".

Established in 2003, the Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, which is based at City University London, is host to the European Social Survey (ESS), a multi-nation initiative designed to monitor and explain trends in attitudes, beliefs and values across countries in Europe (and its close neighbours).

Six ESS surveys have now been conducted, carried out every two years and covering more than 30 countries throughout Europe. Further rounds are planned to paint an accurate picture of European attitudes.

Provided by City University London

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