A Short Introduction to Survey Research

3

Abstract

This chapter offers a brief introduction into survey research. In the first part of the chapter, students learn about the importance of survey research in the social and behavioral sciences, substantive research areas where survey research is frequently used, and important cross-national survey such as the World Values Survey and the European Social Survey. In the second, I introduce different types of surveys.

3.1 What Is Survey Research?

Survey research has become a major, if not the main, technique to gather information about individuals of all sorts. To name a few examples:

- **Costumer surveys** ask individuals about their purchasing habits or their satisfaction with a product or service. Such surveys can gain and reveal consumer habits and inform marketing strategies by companies.
- **Attitudinal surveys** poll participants on social, economic, or cultural attitudes. These surveys are important for researchers and policy makers as they allow us to detect cultural values, political attitudes, and social preferences.
- **Election surveys** ask citizens about their voting habits. As such they can, for example, influence campaign strategies by parties.

Regardless of its type, survey research involves the systematic collection of information from individuals using standardized procedures. When conducting survey research, the researcher normally uses a (random or representative) sample from the population she wants to study and asks the survey subjects one or several questions about attitudes, perceptions, or behaviors. In the ideal case, she wants to produce a set of data on a given phenomenon that captures the studied concept, as

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well as relevant independent variables. She also wants to have a sample that describes the population she wants to study fairly well (Fowler 2009: 1). To provide a concrete example, if a researcher wants to gather information on the popularity of the German chancellor, she has to collect a sufficiently large sample that is representative of the German population (see Chap. 4 for a discussion of representativeness). She might ask individuals to rate the popularity of the German chancellor on a 0–100 scale. She might also ask respondents about their gender, age, income, education, and place of residency to determine what types of individuals like the head of the German government more and what groups like her less. If these data are collected on a regular basis, it also allows researchers to gain relevant information about trends in societies. For example, so-called trend studies allow researchers to track the popularity of the chancellor over time and possibly to associate increases and decreases in her popularity with political events such as the German reunification in 1990 or the refugee crisis in Germany in 2015.

3.2 A Short History of Survey Research

The origins of survey research go back thousands of years. These origins are linked to the understanding that every society with some sort of bureaucracy, in order to function properly, needs some information about its citizens. For example, in order to set taxation levels and plan infrastructure, bureaucracies need to know basic information about their citizens such as how many citizens live in a geographical unit, how much money they earn, and how many acres of land they own. Hints on first data collection efforts date back to the great civilizations of antiquity, such as China, Egypt, Persia, Greece, or the Roman Empire. A famous example of early data collection is the census mentioned in the bible during the time of Jesus' birth:

> In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. (Luke 2:1–5)

While it is historically unclear whether the census by Emperor Augustus was actually held at the time of Jesus' birth, the citation from the bible nevertheless shows that as early as in the ancient times, governments tried to retrieve information about their citizens. To do so, families had to register in the birth place of the head of the family and answer some questions which already resembled our census questions today.

In the middle ages, data collection efforts and surveys became more sophisticated. England took a leading role in this process. The first Norman king, William the Conqueror, was a leading figure in this quest. After his conquest of England in 1066, he strived to gather knowledge on the property conditions, as well as the yearly income of the barons and cities in the seized territories. For example, he

wanted to know how many acres of land the barons owned so that he could determine appropriate taxes. In the following centuries, the governing processes became increasingly centralized. To run their country efficiently and to defend the country against external threats, the absolutist English rulers depended on extensive data on labor, military capabilities, and trade (Hooper 2006). While some of these data were "hard data" collected directly from official books (e.g., the manpower of the army), other data, for example, on military capabilities, trade returns, or the development of the population, were, at least in part, retrieved through survey questions or interviews. Regardless of its nature, the importance of data collection rose, in particularly, in the economic and military realms. London was the first city, where statistics were systematically applied to some collected data. In the seventeenth century, economists including John Graunt, William Petty, and Edmund Halley tried to estimate population developments on the basis of necrologies and birth records. These studies are considered to be the precursors of modern quantitative analysis with the focus on causal explanations (Petty and Graunt 1899).

Two additional societal developments rendered the necessity for good data the more urgent. First, the adaption of a data-based capitalist economic system in the eighteenth and nineteenth century accelerated data collection efforts in England and later elsewhere in Europe. The rationalization of administrative planning processes in many European countries further increased the need to gain valid data, not only about the citizens but also about the administrative processes. Again, some of these data could only be collected by asking others. The next boost then occurred in the early nineteenth century. The Industrial Revolution combined with urbanization had created high levels of poverty for many residents in large British cities such as Manchester or Birmingham. To get some "valid picture" of the diffusion of poverty, journalists collected data by participating in poor people's lives, asking them questions about their living standard and publishing their experiences. This development resulted in the establishment of "statistical societies" in most large English cities (Wilcox 1934). Although the government shut down most of these statistical societies, it was pressed to extend its own data gathering by introducing routine data collections on births, deaths, and crime. Another element of these developments was the implementation of enquete commissions whose work looked at these abominable living conditions in some major English cities and whose conclusions were partly based on quantitative data gathered by asking people questions about their lives. Similar developments happened elsewhere, as well. A prominent example is the empirical research of medical doctors in Germany in the nineteenth century, who primarily examined the living and working conditions of laborers and the health-care system (Schnell et al. 2011: 13–20).

Despite these efforts, it was not until the early twentieth century until political opinion polling in the way we conduct it today was born. Opinion polling in its contemporary form has its roots in the United States of America (USA). It started in the early twentieth century, when journalists attempted to forecast the outcomes of presidential elections. Initially, the journalists just took the assessment of some citizens before newspapers came up with more systematic approaches to predict the election results. *The Literary Digest* was the first newspaper to distribute a large

number of postal surveys among voters in 1916 (Converse 2011). The poll also correctly predicted the winner of the 1916 Presidential Elections, Woodrow Wilson. This survey was the first mass survey in the United States and the first systematic opinion poll in the country's history (Burnham et al. 2008: 99 f.). At about the same time, the British philanthropists Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree chose interview approaches to explain the causes of poverty. What distinguishes their works from former studies is the close link between social research and political application. To a get valid picture of poverty in the English city of York, Rowntree attempted to interview all working-class people living in York. Of course, this was a long and tiring procedure that took several years. The Rowntree example rendered it very clear to researchers, journalists, and data collection organizations that collecting data on the population researchers want to study is very cumbersome and difficult to do. Consequently, this method of data collection has become very exceptional (Burnham et al. 2008: 100 f.; Schnell et al. 2011: 21–23). Due to the immense costs associated with complete enumerations, only governments have the means to carry them out today (e.g., through the census). Researchers must rely mainly on samples, which they use to draw inferences on population statistics. Building on the work of *The Literary Digest*, in the USA and various efforts on the continent, the twentieth century has seen a refinement of survey and sampling techniques and their broad application to many different scenarios, be they economic, social, or political. Today surveys are ubiquitous. There is probably not one adult individual in the Western world who has not been asked at least once in her lifetime to participate in a survey.

3.3 The Importance of Survey Research in the Social Sciences and Beyond

Survey research is one of the pillars in social science research in the twenty-first century. Surveys are used to measure almost everything from voting behavior to public opinion and to sexual preferences (De Leeuw et al. 2008: 1). They are of interest to a wide range of constituents including citizens, parties, civil society organizations, and governments. Individuals might be interested in situating their beliefs and behavior in relation to those of their peers and societies. Parties might want to know which party is ahead in the public preference at any given point in time and what the policy preferences of citizens are. Civil society organizations might use surveys to give credence to their lobbying points. Governments at various levels (i.e., the federal, regional, or local) may use surveys to find out how the public judges their performance or how popular specific policy proposals are among the general public. In short, surveys are ubiquitous in social and political life (for a good description of the importance of survey research, see Archer and Berdahl 2011).

Opinion polls help us to situate ourselves with regard to others in different social settings. On the one hand, survey research allows us to compare our social norms and ideals in Germany, Western Europe, or the Americas to those in Japan, China, or Southeast Asia. For example, analyzing data from a general cross-national social

survey provides us with an opportunity to compare attitudes and social behaviors across countries; for instance, we can compare whether we eat more fast food, watch more television, have more pets, or believe more in extensive social welfare than citizens in Australia or Asia. Yet, not only does survey research allow us to detect between country variation in opinions, beliefs, and behaviors but also within a country, if the sample is large enough. In Germany, for example, large-scale surveys can detect if individuals in the East have stronger anti-immigrant attitudes than individuals in the West. In the United States, opinion polls can identify whether the approval rating of President Trump is higher in Texas than in Connecticut. Finally, opinion polls can serve to detect differences in opinion between different cohorts of the population. For example, we can compare how much trust young people (i.e., individuals in the age cohort 18–25) have into the military compared to senior citizens (i.e., individuals aged 60 and older) both for one country and for several countries.

Survey research has also shaped the social- and political sciences. To illustrate, I will just introduce two classic works in political science, whose findings and conclusions are primarily based on survey research. First, one of the most outstanding political treatises based on survey research is *The Civic Culture* by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963). In their study, the authors use surveys on political orientations about the political systems (e.g., opinions, attitudes, and values) to detect that cultural norms must be congruent with the political system to ensure the stability of the system in question. Another classic using survey research is Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone; The collapse and revival of American community* (2001). Mainly through survey research, Putnam finds that social engagement had weakened in the United States during the late twentieth century. He links the drop in all types of social and political activities to a decrease in membership in all kinds of organizations (e.g., social, political, or community organizations), declining contract among individuals (e.g., among neighbors, friends, and family), less volunteering, and less religious involvement. It should also be noted that survey research is not only a stand-alone tool to answer many relevant research questions, it can also be combined with other types of research such as qualitative case studies or the analysis of hard macro-level data. In a prime example of mixed methods, Wood (2003), aiming to understand the peasant's rationales in El Salvador to join revolutionary movements in the country's civil war, uses first ethnographic interviews of some peasants in a specific region to tap into these motivations. In a later stage, she employs large national household surveys to confirm the conclusions derived from the interviews.

3.4 Overview of Some of the Most Widely Used Surveys in the Social Sciences

Governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and social research centers spend millions of dollars per year to conduct cross-national surveys. These surveys (e.g., the World Values Survey or the European Social Survey) use

representative or random samples of individuals in many countries to detect trends in individuals' social and political opinions, as well as their social and political behavior. We can distinguish different types of surveys. First, behavioral surveys measure individuals' political-related, health-related, or job-related behavior. Probably most prominent in the field of political science, election surveys gauge individuals' conventional and unconventional political activities in a regional, national, or international context (e.g., whether somebody participates in elections, engages in protest activity, or contacts a political official). Other behavioral surveys might capture health risk behaviors, employee habits, or drug use, just to name few. Second, opinion surveys try to capture opinions and beliefs in a society; these questionnaires aim at gauging individual opinions on a variety of topics ranging from consumer behavior to public preferences, to political ideologies, and to preferred free time activities and preferred vacation spots.

Below, I present three of the most widely used surveys in political science and possibly the social sciences more generally: the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), the World Values Survey (WVS), and the European Social Survey (ESS). Hundreds, if not thousands, of articles have emanated from these surveys. In these large-scale research projects, the researcher's duties include the composition of the questionnaire and the selection and training of the interviewers. The latter functions as the link between researcher and respondent. They run the interviews and should record the responses precisely and thoroughly (Loosveldt 2008: 201).

3.4.1 The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)

The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) is a collaborative program of cross-national research among election studies conducted in over 50 states. The CSES is composed of three tightly linked parts: first, a common module of public opinion survey questions is included in each participant country's post-election study. These "microlevel" data include vote choice, candidate and party evaluations, current and retrospective economic evaluations, evaluations of the electoral system itself, and standardized sociodemographic measures. Second, district-level data are reported for each respondent, including electoral returns, turnout, and the number of candidates. Finally, system- or "macro-level" data report aggregate electoral returns, electoral rules and formulas, and regime characteristics. This design allows researchers to conduct cross-level and cross-national analyses, addressing the effects of electoral institutions on citizens' attitudes and behavior, the presence and nature of social and political cleavages, and the evaluation of democratic institutions across different political regimes.

The CSES is unique among comparative post-electoral studies because of the extent of cross-national collaboration at all stages of the project: the research agenda, the survey instrument, and the study design are developed by the CSES Planning Committee, whose members include leading scholars of electoral politics from around the world. This design is then implemented in each country by that country's

foremost social scientists, as part of their national post-election studies. Frequently, the developers of the survey decide upon a theme for any election cycle. For example, the initial round of collaboration focused on three general themes: the impact of electoral institutions on citizens' political cognition and behavior (parliamentary versus presidential systems of government, the electoral rules that govern the casting and counting of ballots and political parties), the nature of political and social cleavages and alignments, and the evaluation of democratic institutions and processes. The key theoretical question to be addressed by the second module is the contrast between the view that elections are a mechanism to hold government accountable and the view that they are a means to ensure that citizens' views and interests are properly represented in the democratic process. It is the module's aim to explore how far this contrast and its embodiment in institutional structures influences vote choice and satisfaction with democracy.

The CSES can be accessed at http://www.isr.umich.edu/cps/project_cses.html.

3.4.2 The World Values Survey (WVS)

The World Values Survey is a global research project that explores peoples' values and beliefs, how they change over time, and what social and political impact they have. It emerged in 1981 and was mainly coined by the scientists Ronald Inglehart, Jan Kerkhofs, and Ruud de Moor. The survey's focus was initially on European countries, although since the late 1990s, however, non-European countries have received more attention. Today, more than 80 independent countries representing 85% of the world's population are included in the survey (Hurtienne and Kaufmann 2015: 9 f.). The survey is carried out by a worldwide network of social scientists who, since 1981, have conducted representative national surveys in multiple waves in over 80 countries. The WVS measures, monitors, and analyzes a host of issues including support for democracy; tolerance of foreigners and ethnic minorities; support for gender equality; the role of religion and changing levels of religiosity; the impact of globalization; attitudes toward the environment, work, family, politics, national identity, culture, diversity, and insecurity; and subjective well-being on the basis of face-to-face interviews. The questionnaires are distributed among 1100–3500 interviewees per country. The findings are valuable for policy makers seeking to build civil society and democratic institutions in developing countries. The work is also frequently used by governments around the world, scholars, students, journalists, and international organizations and institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations (UNDP and UN-Habitat). Thanks to the increasing number of participating countries and the growing time period that the WVS covers, the WVS satisfies (some of) the demand for cross-sectional attitudinal data. The application of WVS data in hundreds of publications and in more than 20 languages stresses the crucial role that the WVS plays in scientific research today (Hurtienne and Kaufmann 2015: 9 f.).

The World Values Survey can be accessed at http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/.

3.4.3 The European Social Survey (ESS)

The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted every 2 years across Europe since 2001. It is directed by Rory Fitzgerald (City University London). The survey measures the attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral patterns of diverse populations in more than 30 European nations. As the largest data collection effort in and on Europe, the ESS has five aims:

1. To chart stability and change in social structure, conditions, and attitudes in Europe and to interpret how Europe's social, political, and moral fabric is changing.
2. To achieve and spread higher standards of rigor in cross-national research in the social sciences, including, for example, questionnaire design and pre-testing, sampling, data collection, reduction of bias, and the reliability of questions.
3. To introduce soundly based indicators of national progress, based on citizens' perceptions and judgements of key aspects of their societies.
4. To undertake and facilitate the training of European social researchers in comparative quantitative measurement and analysis.
5. To improve the visibility and outreach of data on social change among academics, policy makers, and the wider public.

The findings of the ESS are based on face-to-face interviews, and the questionnaire is comprised of three sections, a core module, two rotating modules, and a supplementary questionnaire. The core module comprises questions on the media and social trust, politics, the subjective well-being of individuals, gender and household dynamics, sociodemographics, and social values. As such, the core module should capture topics that are of enduring interest for researchers as well as provide the most comprehensive set of socio-structural variables in a cross-national survey worldwide. The two rotating modules capture "hot" social science topics; for example, rotating modules in 2002 and 2014 focused on immigration, while the 2016 wave captures European citizens' attitudes about welfare and opinions toward climate change. The purpose of the supplementary questionnaire at the end of the survey is to elaborate in more detail on human values and to test the reliability and validity of the items in the principal questionnaire on the basis of some advanced statistical techniques (ESS 2017).

The European Social Survey can be accessed at http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/.

3.5 Different Types of Surveys

For political science students, it is important to realize that one survey design does not necessarily resemble another survey design. Rather, in survey research, we generally distinguish between two types of surveys: cross-sectional surveys and longitudinal surveys (see Frees 2004: 2).

3.5.1 Cross-sectional Survey

A cross-sectional survey is a survey that is used to gather information about individuals at a single point in time. The survey is conducted once and not repeated. An example of a cross-sectional survey would be a poll that asks respondents in the United States how much they donated toward the reconstruction efforts after Hurricane Katrina hit the Southern States of the United States. Surveys, such as the one capturing donation patterns in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, are particularly interesting to seize attitudes and behaviors related to one event that probably will not repeat itself. Yet, cross-sectional surveys are not only used to capture one-time events. To the contrary, they are quite frequently used by researchers to tap into all types of research questions. Because, it is logistically complicated, time-consuming, and costly to conduct the same study at regular intervals with or without the same individuals, cross-sectional studies are frequently the fall-back option for many researchers. In many instances, the use of cross-sectional surveys can be justified from a theoretical perspective; frequently, a cross-sectional study still allows researchers to draw inferences about relationships between independent and dependent variables (Behnke et al. 2006: 70 f.).

However, it is worth noting that the use of these types of surveys to detect empirical relationships can be tricky. Most importantly, because we only have data at one point for both independent and dependent variables, cross-sectional surveys cannot establish causality (i.e., they cannot establish that a change in the independent variable precedes a change in the dependent variable) (De Vaus 2001: 51). Therefore, it is important that findings/conclusions derived from cross-sectional studies are supported by theory, logic, and/or intuition (Frees 2004: 286). In other words, a researcher should only use cross-sectional data to test theories, if the temporal chain between independent and dependent variable is rather clear a priori.

If we have clear theoretical assumptions about a relationship, a cross-sectional survey can provide a good tool to test hypotheses. For example, a cross-sectional survey could be appropriate to test the linkage between formal education and casting a ballot at elections, as there is a strong theoretical argument in favor of the proposition that higher formal education will increase somebody's propensity to vote. According to the resource model of voting (see Brady et al. 1995), higher educated individuals have the material and nonmaterial resources necessary to understand complex political scenarios, as well as the network connections, all of which should render somebody more likely to vote. Vice versa, uneducated individuals lack these resources and are frequently politically disenfranchised. Practically, it is also impossible that the sheer act of voting changes somebody's formal education. Hence, if we analyze a cross-sectional survey on voting and find that more educated individuals are more likely to vote, we can assume that this association reflects an empirical reality. To take another example, if we want to study the influence of age on protesting, data from a cross-sectional survey could be completely appropriate, as well, to study this relationship, as the causal change clearly goes from age to protesting and not the other way round. By definition, the fact that I protest does not make me younger or older, at least when we look at somebody's biological age.

Nevertheless, empirical relationships are not always that clear-cut. Rather contrary, sometimes it is tricky to derive causal explanations from cross-sectional studies. To highlight this dilemma, let us take an example from American Politics and look at the relationship between watching *Fox News* and voting for Donald Trump. For one, it makes theoretical sense that watching *Fox News* in the United States increases somebody's likelihood to vote for Donald Trump in the Presidential Election, because this TV chain supports this populist leader. Yet, the causal or correlational chain could also go the other way round. In other words, it might also be that somebody, who decided to vote for Trump, is actively looking for a news outlet that follows her convictions. As a result, she might watch *Fox News* after voting for Trump.

A slightly different example highlights even clearer that the correlational or causal direction between independent and dependent variable is not always clear. For example take the following example; it is theoretically unclear if the consumption of *Fox News* renders somebody more conservative or if more conservative individuals have a higher likelihood to watch *Fox News*. Rather than one variable influencing the other, both factors might mutually reinforce each other. Therefore, even if a researcher finds support for the hypothesis that watching *Fox News* makes people more conservative, we cannot be sure of the direction of this association because a cross-sectional survey would ask individuals the same question at the same time.[1] Consequently, we cannot detect what comes first: watching *Fox News* or being conservative. Hence, cross-sectional surveys cannot resolve the aforementioned temporal aspect. Rather than a cross-sectional survey, a longitudinal survey would be necessary to determine the causal chain between being conservative and watching *Fox News*. Such a survey, in particular, if it is conducted over many years and if it solicits the same individuals in regular intervals, could tell researchers if respondents first become conservative and then watch *Fox News* or if the relationship is the other way round.

3.5.2 Longitudinal Survey

In contrast to cross-sectional studies, which are conducted once, longitudinal surveys repeat the same survey questions several times. This allows the researchers to analyze changing attitudes or behaviors that occur within the population over time. There are three types of longitudinal surveys: trend studies, cohort studies, and panel studies.

3.5.2.1 Trend Surveys

A trend study, which is frequently also labeled a repeated cross-sectional survey, is a repeated survey that is normally not composed of the same individuals in the different waves. Most of the main international surveys including the *European*

[1] In the literature, such reversed causation is often referred to as an endogeneity problem.

Social Survey or the *World Values Survey* are trend studies. The surveys of the different waves are fully or partly comprised of the same questions. As such they allow researchers to detect broad changes in opinions and behaviors over time. Nevertheless, and because the collected data covers different individuals in each wave of the study, the collected data merely allows for conclusions on the aggregate level such as the regional or the national level (Schumann 2012: 113). To highlight, most of the major surveys ask the question: How satisfied are you with how democracy works in your country? Frequently, the answer choices range from 0 or not satisfied at all to 10 or very satisfied. Since, citizens answer these questions every 2 years, researchers can track satisfaction rates with democracy over a longer period such as 10 years. Comparing the answers for several waves, a researcher can also establish if the same or different independent variables (e.g., unemployment or economic insecurity, gender, age, or income) trigger higher rates of dissatisfaction with democracy. However, what such a question/study cannot do is to track down what altered an individual's assessment of the state of democracy in her country. Rather, it only allows researchers to draw conclusions on the macro- or aggregate level.

3.5.2.2 Cohort Surveys

While trend studies normally focus on the whole population, cohort studies merely focus on a segment of the population. One common feature of a cohort study is that a central event or feature occurred approximately at the same time to all members of the group. Most common are birth cohorts. In that case, birth is the special event that took place in the same year or in the same years for all members of the cohort (e.g., all Americans who were born in or after 1960). Analogous to trend studies, cohort studies use the same questions in several waves. In each wave, a sample is drawn from the cohort. This implies that the population remains the same over time, whereas the individuals in the sample change. A typical example of cohort studies is the "British National Child Study" (NCDS). In the course of this study, 11,400 British citizens born between March 3 and 9, 1958, were examined with respect to their health, education, income, and attitudes in eight waves in a time span of 50 years (Schnell et al. 2011: 237 f.).

3.5.2.3 Panel Surveys

Panel studies normally ask the same questions to the same people in subsequent waves. These types of surveys are the most costly and most difficult to implement, but they are the best suited to detect causal relationships or changes in individual behavior. For example, a researcher could ask questions on the consumption of Fox News and being conservative to the same individual over the period of several years. This could help her detect the temporal chain in the relationship between a certain type of news consumption and political ideologies. Panel studies frequently have the problem of high attrition or mortality rates. In other words, people drop out during waves for multiple reasons, for example, they could move, become sick, or simply refuse further participation. Hence, it is likely that a sample that was representative from the outset becomes less and less representative for subsequent waves of the

panel. To highlight, imagine that a researcher is conducting a panel on citizens' preference on which electoral system should be used in a country, and they ask this question every 2 years to the same individuals. Individuals who are interested in electoral politics, and/or have a strong opinion in favor of one or the other type of electoral system, might have a higher likelihood to stay in the sample than citizens who do not care. In contrast, those who are less interested will no longer participate in future waves. Others, like old-age citizens, might die or move into an old people's home. A third group such as diplomats and consultants is more likely to move than manual workers. It is possible to continue the list. Therefore, there is the danger that many panels become less representative of the population for any of the waves covered. Nevertheless, in particular, if some representativeness remains in subsequent waves or if the representativeness is not an issue for the research question, panel studies can be a powerful tool to detect causal relationships. An early example of an influential panel study is Butler and Stokes' *Political Change in Britain: Forces Shaping Electoral Choice.* Focusing on political class as the key independent variable for the vote choice for a party, the authors conducted three waves of panels with the same randomly selected electors in the summer 1963, after the general elections 1964 and after the general elections 1966 to determine habitual voting and vote switching. Among others, they find that voting patterns in favor of the three main parties (i.e., the Liberal Party, Labour Party, and the Conservative Party) are more complex to be fully captured by class.

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Further Reading

Why Do We Need Survey Research?

Converse, J. M. (2017). Survey research in the United States: Roots and emergence 1890–1960. New York: Routledge. This book has more of an historical ankle. It tackles the history of survey research in the United States.

Davidov, E., Schmidt, P., & Schwartz, S. H. (2008). Bringing values back in: The adequacy of the European Social Survey to measure values in 20 countries. Public Opinion Quarterly, *72*(3), 420–445. This rather short article highlights the importance of conducting a large pan-European survey to measure European's social and political beliefs.

Schmitt, H., Hobolt, S. B., Popa, S. A., & Teperoglou, E. (2015). European parliament election study 2014, voter study. *GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA5160 Data file Version*, *2*(0). The European Voter Study is another important election study that researchers and students can access freely. It provides a comprehensive battery of variables about voting, political preferences, vote choice, demographics, and political and social opinions of the electorate.

Applied Survey Research

Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963). The civic culture: Political attitudes and democracy in five nations. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Almond's and Verba's masterpiece is a seminal work in survey research measuring citizens' political and civic attitudes in key Western democracies. The book is also one of the first books that systematically uses survey research to measure political traits.

Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, cultural change, and democracy: The human development sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. This is an influential book, which uses data from the World Values Survey to explain modernization as a process that changes individual's values away from traditional and patriarchal values and toward post-materialist values including environmental protection, minority rights, and gender equality.