

# WELCOME MESSAGE

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I'd like to welcome you to this microsite of the ESS website on measuring and reporting on European's wellbeing. This site provides findings on Wellbeing using data from the first 6 rounds of the European Social Survey.

Our aim is to showcase the wide range of scope that ESS data can provide for exploring the definition, distribution and drivers of subjective wellbeing across Europe and to encourage you to make full use of ESS data in advancing society's understanding of these important issues.

Questions of what constitutes subjective wellbeing and how both individual and societal wellbeing can be improved now occupy a prominent place in the research and policy agendas. Cross-national surveys such as the ESS which provide high quality comparative data on public attitudes and behaviour have an important role to play in answering these questions.

The core scientific team of the ESS European Research infrastructure has collaborated with leading experts in Europe as well as prominent experts in fields such as sociology, political science, psychology, demography and geography to identify some highlights from this rich data set into wellbeing being carried out using ESS data. By making a variety of innovative, methodologically sophisticated and policy relevant findings easily accessible via this interactive website, we hope to make a valuable contribution to both academic and policy debates around wellbeing.

Some of the highlights from the 10 contributions investigating wellbeing presented here on this site include an exploration of the complex, multi-dimensional nature of subjective wellbeing. ESS wellbeing data not only enables conceptual differentiation between being happy and flourishing but also provides a valuable source of data for exploring additional dimensions of individual wellbeing: Evaluative, emotional and community wellbeing as well as functioning, vitality, and supportive relationships.

ESS data can also be used to explore wider societal wellbeing and investigate whether people think they live in a decent society. Other contributions focus in-depth on specific aspects of wellbeing, including work-life balance or expressions of depression. Contributions draw on the rich variety of topics addressed by the ESS to fully explore drivers of wellbeing. For example, combining ESS data on wellbeing with data on Europeans' understanding and evaluations of democracy provides exciting new evidence of an important link between democratic performance and wellbeing.

The ESS data also allow researchers to explore the experiences of particular subgroups within the population – for example, migrants from eastern to Western Europe. Several of the contributions focus on differences in wellbeing between men and women. Comparing the wellbeing of parents and non-parents reveals that whilst fathers are generally happier than non-fathers, regardless of where they live, whether mothers are happier than non-mothers depends on whereabouts in Europe they reside.

All of the research presented here offers a comparative, cross-national perspective and illustrates how experiences of wellbeing can vary significantly across countries. Many of the contributions draw on contextual data from outside the survey to explore how institutional, societal and cultural differences between and within countries might explain this variation. For example, the gender gap in depression is found to be greater in more gender unequal societies. Within countries, we find that regional differences in air pollution may be linked to some national differences in life satisfaction.

We really hope that you enjoy exploring this site and finding out more about this and other aspects of wellbeing covered by the ESS. Of course, the site provides only a snapshot of research examining Europeans' wellbeing. There is plenty of scope to explore the further topic using ESS data. Throughout this site you will find links to find out more which we encourage you to explore.

Further access and resources about the ESS as well as the data themselves, all of which are free to access, are available at [europeansocialsurvey.org](http://europeansocialsurvey.org)

Finally, I'd like to give thank to the Economic and Social Research Council in the United Kingdom, whose generous support and funding this microsite has made it possible.