

Europeanizing Social Science - The case of the European Social Survey

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Abstract:

This paper sketch out and analyze the historical development of the European Social Survey (ESS). In the 1996 a group of European social scientist under the auspice of the European Science Foundation initiated what became one of the largest social scientific projects in Europe, a project that is now seen as the golden standard in transnational survey research. The first wave was launched in 2001 and has since been conducted biannual in an increasing number of European countries. From the first wave and onwards the ESS has been heavily funded through the European Union Frame Work Programs and National Research Councils. Simultaneously the ESS has been leading in developing and disseminating transnational surveys research techniques from items design through field works to data management and dissemination. Using documents and interviews, the paper analyses the case of the ESS shedding light two interrelate processes both very central to the analysis of the co-production of European social sciences and European society. First, it tells us about the current changes and developments of surveys research. Surveys research has been one of the most influential social scientific techniques, but the classical techniques of surveys research has in different ways been attached to the nation state. Thus, the paper analyses the relations between the social sciences and the EU. The social sciences has since their first institutionalization been closely entangled to the nation state, but how is this entanglement changes in the Europeanization process and with what consequences for the social scientific knowledge?