



# University of Twente

**Cessda infrastructure and comparative social  
research: Siamese twins**

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# ESFRI report 2006

‘the CESSDA data archives have a long-standing record for the acquisition, support and supply of data range across official censuses and surveys, election studies, longitudinal and cohort studies, opinion polls, and surveys addressing most issues relating to society and human activity. The CESSDA organisations provide access gateways to important European (and International) data materials and EU investments such as the European Social Survey, the Euro-barometers, the International Social survey programme and the European Values Surveys.’

# Beliefs in government

- BIG
- > 60 scholars
- Five books OUP
- Objective: development people's belief in government
- < debate crisis/end of democracy
  - All kinds of arguments
  - Commonality:
    - Decrease political interest
    - Growing dissatisfaction
      - Government policy
      - Democratic institutions
      - Democracy as form of government
- Success < challenge widely held views
- No empirical evidence

# Beliefs in government

- Case in point:
  - How difficult comparative research can be
  - Importance comparable data
  - Invaluable role of data archives
- Relying on secondary data sources
  - European wide survey too expensive
  - Not very helpful for reconstruction of past

# Beliefs in government

- Identifying availability of data sources
- Hardly comparative surveys
- Finding relevant and compatible studies
- National data archives?
- Agreement CESSDA and ZA

# European Voter

- Objective: changes in electoral behaviour < similar developments
- Dependent on longitudinal data
- Easy?
- Logistical problems:
  - Written documentation in English
  - Data protection
- European National Elections Database
  - Involvement national data archives
  - ZA

# A new world of comparative social research

- New initiatives for really comparative research
- Different role of data archives

# Need of new initiatives

- BIG + European Voter: not ideal world
- Need of comparable instruments
- Hard to find in comparable research
- Same concepts, different operationalization

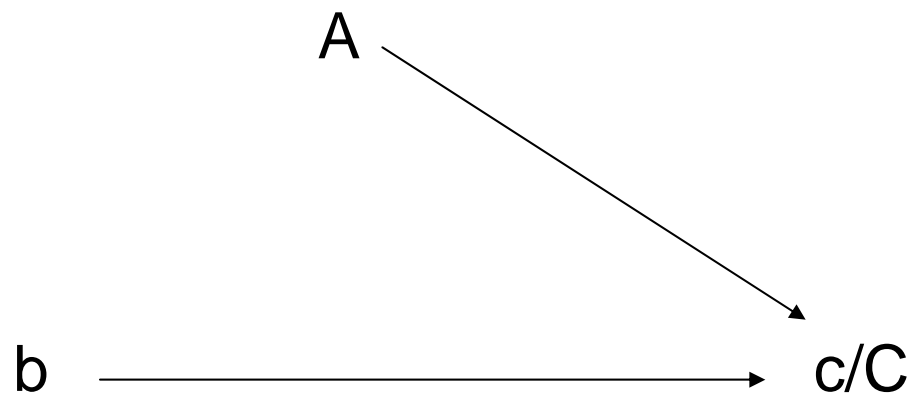


# New initiatives

- CSES
  - > 40 countries
  - Common module of questions
  - Collection macro data
- ESS
  - On ESFRI Roadmap
  - Continuous survey most European countries

- Investments justified?
- Opening up a new world for comparative social research
- Why comparative research?
  - Generalization:
  - All there is?

b  $\longrightarrow$  c



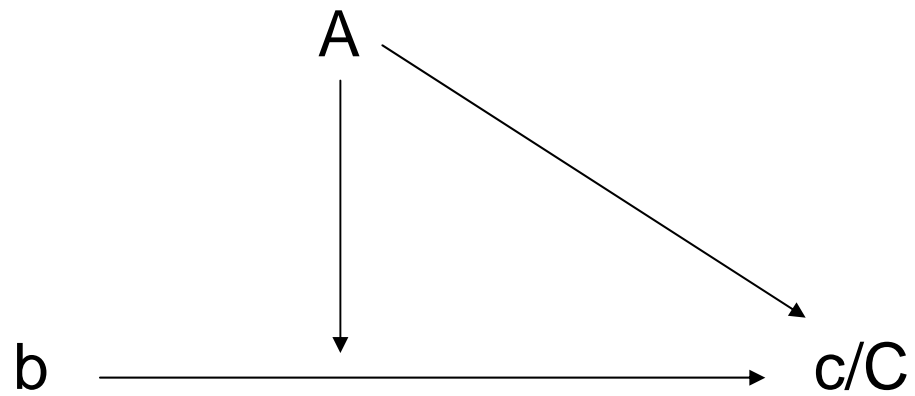
# Really comparative research example 1

- Turnout in European parliament elections
- Reflection of lack of support European Union?
- No relationship at individual level
- Distance in time between European and national elections
- Truly comparative research

# Truly comparative research: example 2

## Effects of welfare state

- Higher social security spending does *not* diminish individual acts of social support
- There is no evidence for the notion that the welfare state ‘crowds out’ social solidarity
- Economic security strengthens rather than weakens social ties, perhaps because individuals more readily turn their attention to others once their own basic needs are met.



# European Research Space

- A changing relationship
- ESS as case in point
  - Designed as infrastructure
  - For and by research community
  - Primary and secondary research
  - Public good
  - In public domain
  - Immediate access
  - Data archives vital part of infrastructure
  - Siamese twins
  - At European level
  - Centralised co-ordinating body needed