

## **SEPARATING CROSS-CULTURAL AND CROSS-NATIONAL: INSIGHTS FROM THE EUROPEAN VALUES STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

Previous quantitative research on morality often uses data from European Values Study (EVS), as this longitudinal survey have a scale on morally debatable behaviors (MDBS). This work investigates the differences in moral values across 28 European countries, using data from the Morally Debatable Behaviors Scale (MDBS) in the European Values Study (EVS). The MDBS measures moral values by asking for justifications for different actions and events, from claiming social benefits to homosexuality and suicide. Results of multi-group confirmatory factor analysis followed by validity tests prove that the MDBS successfully measures the leniency of moral judgments. However, for a deeper understanding, the basis for intergroup analysis in the case of personal-sexual morality may be not countries but other cultural clusters. This paper explores alternative groupings that may explain differences in personal-sexual moral values and similarities between countries, such as religious constructs (based on denominations) and cultural zones (based on historical context, both religious and political). The preliminary findings of this paper support the results of previous research, arguing that while the legal-fair dimension is universal, the personal-sexual dimension depends on cultural context. It is demonstrated how researchers can use the MDBS to analyze and visualize value differences across Europe, drawing on insights from survey methodology and comparative social research.

**Keywords:** Comparative research, Values and Attitudes Measurement, Morally Debatable Behaviors Scale, European Values Study, Longitudinal and panel surveys, Questionnaire design and testing.