

## Introduction

# Special issue on attitudes, values and social structures in European countries

**Jorge Vala and Anália Torres**

This issue of the PJSS is the third and last part of the volume dedicated to an analysis of the attitudes, values and social structures in European countries, which is based on data from the European Social Survey 1 (ESS 1). The ESS is a research network on European social attitudes and an infrastructure of knowledge involving university institutions from more than twenty countries.

In the two previous parts of this special issue of the Portuguese Journal of Social Science we examined some topics that are central to an understanding of the dynamics and changing processes in Europe. They were: the structure of European social classes; social and subjective well-being; the structure and hierarchy of social values; dimensions of social capital; European attitudes towards immigration and immigrants and the specific dynamic of Greek national culture in a European context. The present issue addresses three new important topics: the attitudes of elites and working class; gender differences and social values and attitudes; and an analysis of the immigration thematic, which now focuses on the predispositions of Europeans towards different immigration policies.

Manuel Villaverde Cabral's paper analyses the 'effects of class'; more specifically, it looks at the differences in terms of political culture between elites and the working-class in Europe. Challenging the traditional approach to the study of political culture, Villaverde Cabral examines the hypothesis that differences between classes within countries are more important than differences between countries. Both the hypothesis and the answer are very important for an understanding of not only political culture and the crisis of representative systems, but also the analytical direction that should guide comparative studies. The results show that, in the European countries studied, the elites are systematically different from the working-class in matters concerning representations, attitudes and practises related to citizenship. However, the results also show the specificity of the Portuguese case. In fact, with respect to political citizenship, the Portuguese elites are far behind the levels of trust in working-class mobilization in the most developed European societies.

Anália Torres's and Rui Brites's paper systematically analyses the differences and similarities between the attitudes and values of men and

women. Going through the main topics of the questionnaire, the authors show that gender differences are not as important in predicting differences in attitudes and values as is normally held to be true. Their results challenge the traditional point of view that essentializes sex differences. However, they also show that there are divergences between men's and women's attitudes that suggest the transition from a *traditional gender gap* to a *modern gender gap*.

Enric Martínez-Herrera's and Djaouida Moualhi's paper analyses European opinions in relation to immigration policies. They classify these orientations into three groups: citizens' predispositions concerning the selection criteria of immigrants; attitudes towards models of integration; and attitudes towards immigrants' rights, including the right to stay in the host society. They start each section by comparing attitudes to each topic in the selected countries and subsequently explore the degree of coherence between citizens' attitudes and the policies implemented by their governments.

The guest editors of this special volume of the Portuguese Journal of Social Science would like to thank the journal's editorial board for their assistance and hope that this important knowledge infrastructure may contribute towards a more theoretical and empirical driven analysis of Europe and the Europeans.

Jorge Vala

E-mail: rui.brites@iscte.pt

Anália Torres

E-mail: analia.torres@iscte.pt

Copyright of Portuguese Journal of Social Science is the property of Intellect Ltd. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.