

# Quality matrix for the European Social Survey, Round 8

COUNTRY REPORT: ISRAEL

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## INTRODUCTION

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From its foundation in 2001, the European Social Survey has prioritized methodological rigour and comparability across countries and over time. Quality assurance and control procedures have been adopted to verify and monitor quality at different stages of the survey lifecycle. At the end of each survey round, the quality of the collected data and the overall data collection process is assessed in view of both the ESS quality commitment to data users and continuous quality improvement.

This report offers a country-specific assessment of the data quality and the data collection process for Israel in Round 8. The purpose of this report is to inform you as National Coordinator, and other members of the National Coordinating team and the survey agency, on the strengths and relative weaknesses in the different stages of the (national) survey lifecycle, to identify necessary and potential improvements for future rounds, and to provide a common basis for those involved in the preparations for Round 9. It is part of a set 18 reports, one for each of the Round 8 first release countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom).

For some elements in the survey lifecycle, the ESS specifications (European Social Survey, 2015) provide clear benchmarks. Deviations from the specifications are necessarily highlighted, even if you may already be well aware (and some may even have been planned). For other elements, other countries and/or previous rounds may offer suitable reference points. Contextual factors also have to be acknowledged. Some of the elements of the data collection process are (partially) beyond the control of the national teams. The survey climate and survey population characteristics (e.g. at-home patterns, language barriers), survey capability and infrastructure, available funding and regulations, may facilitate or impede compliance, even if they do not justify deviations. Most of the specifications are formulated with respect to survey design choices, procedures and documentation. Compliance is no guarantee for high data quality and falling short does not necessarily mean that data quality is poor, but deviations do increase the risk of serious threats to data quality.

This assessment mainly draws on ESS data and documentation that is publicly available, i.e. the main questionnaire, interviewer questionnaire and contact form data, the data documentation report (based on the submitted National Technical Summaries) and documents such as advance letters to respondents. Stages in the survey lifecycle which are sparsely documented additionally draw on information from the ESS Sampling Expert Panel, Translation Team, SQP Team, Fieldwork Team and country contacts.

It is hoped that this report is informative and useful in the preparations for Round 9. The National Coordinating team is invited to discuss the conclusions and the desirable course of action with their country contact and the dedicated expert teams. Please also do not hesitate to report any national circumstances which have been incorrectly represented or misinterpreted.

The following section presents a summary of the assessment for Israel. The summary is structured as a SWOT matrix, distinguishing strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and threats in the national data collection. Note that the information that is available and on which this report is based, mainly allude to strengths and weaknesses, but are less suited to identify the main opportunities and threats faced by each country. In addition, the large efforts already undertaken in many countries often leave few opportunities for further improvement. The subsequent sections, which are tailored for each country, provide a more detailed description and evaluation for each stage of the survey lifecycle.

## SUMMARY

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### STRENGTHS

- The remarks on the translated questionnaire from cApStAn (although many of the suggested corrections were not accepted, at least justifications were properly provided) and the SQP Team were adequately followed up on (see Section 3.3, p. 14).
- A shared language consultation with Estonia (although not with Russia and Lithuania) took place. The main *unnecessary* differences in wording should thereby have been eliminated, contributing to cross-national comparability (see Section 3.2, p. 14).
- A national pretest took place, with a large number of pretest interviews (see Section 4.2, p. 17).
- All interviewers attended an in-person ESS-specific briefing (see Section 5.3, p. 19).
- The overall interviewer capacity appears to have been adequate. Interviewer workloads were rather low and none of the interviewers exceeded the workload limit of 48 sample units (see Section 5.1, p. 19).
- Although a small number of interviewers were new to face-to-face interviewing, the majority of the interviewers worked for the ESS before. This should be an asset, but it may be a challenge to encourage experienced interviewers to pay full attention to the specifics of the survey project during the briefing (see Section 5.2, p. 19).
- A response rate above 70% has been maintained, despite a weak contact strategy. The survey population appears particularly cooperative (see Section 6.3, p. 25).
- Interviewer observations on dwelling and neighbourhood were recorded for all sample units (see Section 8.1, p. 53).
- Media claims were properly recorded (although starting 6 days rather than a full week before the start of the fieldwork) (see Section 8.2, p. 55).

### WEAKNESSES

- Although fieldwork started on time, an extension of the fieldwork period was needed, so that fieldwork was completed only in February (see Section 1.2, p. 7).
- Although most preparatory activities required to start the fieldwork with the Hebrew and Russian questionnaires were completed in time for the planned fieldwork start, translation and verification of the Arabic questionnaire was only finalised during the fieldwork (although before any interviews in Arabic were conducted). Fieldwork for the different language groups is therefore not synchronised (see Section 1.2, p. 7).
- Some attention should also be paid to submitting the Fieldwork Questionnaire and fieldwork projections sufficiently ahead of the start of the fieldwork (see Section 1.2, p. 7).
- The gross sample size was insufficiently large to reasonably expect an effective net sample size of 1500 (see Section 2.3, p. 12).

- Although a large number of respondents were back-checked, the back-check procedure did not (but almost) produce the required number of back-checks with refusals (see Section 6.8, p. 39).
- Weak contact strategy in terms of number and timing of personal visits. Many non-contacts were left without being visited at least four times, with at least one visit in the evening and one at the weekend and (especially) with visits spread over at least two weeks (see Section 6.4, p. 28).
- Interviewer effects are very large, suggesting that interviewers do not strictly adhere to the principles of standardised interviewing. Insufficient adherence to standardised interviewing impedes the quality of completed interviews and inflates the number of interviews that have to be completed to reach the minimum effective sample size (through a large design effect) (see Section 7.6, p. 47).
- No complete deposit of data and documentation deliverables was made by the end of February. Although most data and documentation deliverables were deposited not very long after the end of the fieldwork, the deposit was only considered complete with the very late deposit of the contact form data file (more than four months after the end of the fieldwork) (see Section 9.3, p. 56).
- Only up to 12 household members were recorded in the paper contact forms and questionnaire (see Section 9.5, p. 57).

## OPPORTUNITIES

- The questionnaire was administered by PAPI. CAPI should streamline the interview process (e.g. automatic routings and randomisation, dynamic number of household members recordable). The transition from PAPI to CAPI administration of the questionnaire is to be made in the next round (see Section 4.1, p. 17).
- It may be possible to reduce interviewer effects by additional training and practice in standardised interviewing and/or checks and feedback on completed interviews (see Section 5.3, p. 19).
- Third party interference appears to have recently decreased to a somewhat more acceptable level. Although the observed decrease may be due to a change in *reporting* of interference by the interviewers, the improvement suggests that it may well be possible to further reduce the influence of other people on the answers given by respondents (see Section 7.1, p. 40).
- Some last basic checks, in the first place on the consistent use of (respondent and interviewer) identification numbers across data files, right before deposit could expedite the processing (see Section 9.4, p. 57).

## THREATS

- Although the population register can be accessed for the purpose of drawing a sample, the place of residence information in the population register is not sufficiently reliable to draw a sample of individual persons (see Section 2.1, p. 9).
- Updates on the fieldwork progress were provided, but rather infrequently and on an ad hoc basis. With paper questionnaires and contact forms being used, it may be difficult for the national team to monitor the fieldwork progress (see Section 6.7, p. 39).
- A large number of respondents did not use all applicable showcards or even refused or were unable to use the showcards at all. If possible, interviewers should insist on using the showcards so that all

and the same response options are salient to all respondents. Standardised interviewing is impeded if showcards are not (cannot be) used (see Section 7.1, p. 40).

# 1 SURVEY PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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## 1.1 SURVEY PROJECT TEAM CONFIGURATION AND EXPERIENCE

Israel has participated in the ESS in all previous rounds, except Rounds 2 and 3. Each survey round can be considered as a distinct survey project, completed by a national team that combines expertise in the different stages of the survey lifecycle at the national level. The National Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the activities, so that the national data collection is completed on time and in accordance with the ESS specifications and quality standards. However, many other people are involved and contribute to the successful completion of the project. Although the ESS specifications differentiate between the National Coordinating team and a survey agency, both sets of tasks are carried out by the same organisation in Israel.<sup>1</sup>

The Round 8 National Coordinator, affiliated with the university which also undertook the 'survey agency' tasks, was appointed in all previous rounds (in which Israel participated). The Round 8 'survey agency' was responsible for fieldwork tasks in all previous rounds as well.

## 1.2 TIMING OF ACTIVITIES

Figure 1.1 shows a timeline with the key milestones in the Round 8 data collection for Israel. Relative to the timetable proposed in the ESS specifications,<sup>2</sup> the pretesting was completed on schedule, but the other preparatory activities were completed late. SQP coding took place only by the second week of July 2017. Fieldwork started in the second week of September 2016, as planned, and took about 5 months (with fieldwork being extended by about 1 month), to the second week of February 2017.

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<sup>1</sup>We will therefore tend to make abstraction of the distinction in the following sections of this assessment, and simply refer to a 'national team'.

<sup>2</sup>Sampling preparations by the end of June, fieldwork questionnaire by the end of July, fieldwork projections by the middle of August, translation and pretesting by the end of August, in view of starting fieldwork in September 2016.



**Figure 1.1** Timeline, Israel, Round 8

**Note:** The planned fieldwork period is shaded in red. Milestones related to translation are marked for the latest among the language versions. ‘Deposit’ marks the date at which the deposit was initially considered complete. Based on ESS8 Data documentation report, information from the Sampling Expert Panel, Translation Team, SQP Team, Fieldwork Team and Archive.

## 2 SAMPLING

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National teams are expected to develop and implement the best sampling strategy possible, in close collaboration with the Sampling Expert Panel (replaced by the Sampling and Weighting Expert Panel in Round 9) and in accordance with the following three guiding principles (The ESS Sampling Expert Panel, 2016).

1. A sampling frame (preferably a list of named individuals) that provides the best possible coverage of the target population
2. Use of random probability methods at all stages
3. A gross sample size that can reasonably be expected to yield, given the design and results in the previous rounds, the targeted level of statistical precision

The planned sampling strategy has to be documented and signed off by the Sampling Expert Panel before the start of the fieldwork, and a sample design data file has to be deposited along with the main data.

As shown in Figure 1.1 (p. 8), the sampling design for Israel was signed off about 1 month before the start of the fieldwork. The sampling design data file was deposited about 4 and a half months after the end of the fieldwork (about 2 months after the main data).

### 2.1 SELECTION AND/OR CREATION OF THE SAMPLING FRAME

In Israel, a sample of addresses was drawn from an existing list, derived from the central population register.<sup>3</sup> The population register was used since Round 4.

#### 2.1.1 Coverage of the target population

In principle, the ESS covers the whole territory of participating countries. In some countries, however, certain (small) geographic regions such as remote, sparsely populated areas or overseas territories are excluded from the sampling frame for practical reasons. For Israel, the Palestinian population residing in the disputed region of the West Bank was not included.

Population registers usually provide good coverage. Whether any target population groups (other than the geographic regions deliberately excluded) may be missing from the sampling frame should nonetheless be carefully assessed by the national team.

Some undercoverage issues particular to population registers that may deserve some attention:

- Illegal and recent immigrants are often not (yet) registered. In addition, some countries maintain separate registers for foreign residents and/or asylum seekers, or do not register them at all. In Israel, (registered) foreign residents (staying more than a year) were reported to be included. Whether this extends to asylum seekers was not explicitly reported.
- In some countries, an opt-out list of people who should not be contacted for marketing or research purposes is maintained. Such cases should not be excluded from the frame, but identified by empty rows and treated as 'Refusal by opt-out list' if selected. No such opt-out list exists in Israel.

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<sup>3</sup>The place of residence information in the population register is not very reliable (30-35% incorrect). The register is therefore used as address frame.

No other undercoverage issues were reported for Israel.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 CHOICE AND APPLICATION OF (RANDOM PROBABILITY) SELECTION PROCEDURES

Sampling designs vary considerably between countries, from unstratified, simple random samples to multi-domain designs with multiple stages and complex stratification schemes. In Israel, a multi-stage cluster design in a single domain was implemented.

### 2.2.1 Stratification

The Sampling Expert Panel has strongly recommended a sampling design with stratification.<sup>5</sup> (Proportionate) stratification ensures that the distribution in the gross sample matches the population distribution for the stratification variables, and can increase the statistical precision of survey estimates. Stratification can either be explicit (sampling units drawn independently from distinct subgroups which are defined by the stratification variables, e.g. geographic regions) or implicit (sampling units drawn by systematic random sampling from a list which is sorted by the stratification variables, e.g. age or geolocation).

In Israel, the sample was explicitly stratified by geographic regions, dominant nationality and education level, and area size class. Some explicit or implicit stratification was used in all but 1 of the other first release countries. Table 2.1 shows an overview of the countries' key sampling design characteristics and stratification variables. Some general remarks based on the reported stratification schemes:

- Stratification by geographic regions is most commonly used. A few countries also stratified by address (e.g. Finland, Ireland) to ensure that the sample is geographically evenly spread.
- Not all countries deriving a sample of individual persons from the population register appear to have taken advantage of (or had access to) individual-level stratification variables such as age and gender. Other individual-level socio-demographic characteristics such as citizenship, household composition, employment status or education level, which may be even more strongly related to survey items (although often not available or of low quality), were not used in any country.
- When clusters such as municipalities or settlements are drawn in the first step of a multi-stage cluster design, the size of these clusters is frequently used as a proxy for urbanicity.
- Some countries have also made use of other relevant area characteristics, such as socio-economic indicators in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and dominant nationality in Israel.

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<sup>4</sup>Undercoverage issues may not all be reported. Unfortunately, coverage of sampling frames is not consistently documented across countries, and the distinction between ineligibles that are rightly excluded and members of the target population that are not covered is sometimes obscure. In some cases, relevant information on coverage issues may be all too obvious to national teams, but should still be informative to those that are less familiar with the national context.

<sup>5</sup>The new Sampling and Weighting Expert Panel has elaborated on this general recommendation with practical tips for Round 9 (The ESS Sampling and Weighting Expert Panel, 2018).

**Table 2.1** Key sampling design characteristics and stratification, first release countries, Round 8

Country	Domains	Clustering	Explicit stratification variables	Implicit stratification variables
<b>Existing list of individual persons</b>				
Netherlands	No	No	-	-
Czech Republic	No	Yes	-	NUTS3 regions and settlement size
Ireland <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes	-	address cluster location and socio-economic class and address
Israel	No	Yes	geographic regions, dominant nationality and education level, and area size class	-
United Kingdom <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes	-	NUTS1 regions and postcode sector socio-economic class
Austria	Yes	Yes	urbanicity domains, and districts (urban centre) or NUTS3 regions (rural domain)	-
France	Yes	Yes	urbanicity domains, and districts (urban centres) or NUTS2 regions (rural domain)	NUTS3 regions and address cluster size (rural domain)
Estonia	No	No	NUTS3 regions, gender	age
Finland	No	No	-	gender, address and date of birth
Norway	No	No	NUTS2 regions, gender and age group	-
<b>Existing (household) address list</b>				
Sweden	No	No	NUTS2 regions	-
Switzerland <sup>3</sup>	No	No	-	NUTS2 regions
Belgium	No	Yes	NUTS2 regions	municipality size and gender and age
Germany <sup>4</sup>	No	Yes	NUTS3 regions and municipality size class	-
Slovenia	No	Yes	-	NUTS3 regions and settlement size
Iceland	Yes	Yes	urbanicity domains, and geographic regions (rural domain)	-
Poland	Yes	Yes	urbanicity domains, and districts (urban centres) or NUTS2 regions and municipality size class (rural domain)	-
<b>Field enumeration</b>				
Russian Federation	Yes	Yes	urbanicity domains, and districts (urban centres) or geographic regions (rural domain)	settlement size (rural domain)

**Note:**

Based on ESS8 Data documentation report and Sampling sign-off forms.

<sup>1</sup> Socio-economic class is based on the percentage residents in higher professional/managerial group.

<sup>2</sup> Socio-economic indicators used: level of deprivation (IMD), percentage households that are privately rented, percentage residents who are pensioners.

<sup>3</sup> The geographical distribution of the sample is controlled through Poisson sampling with joint inclusion probabilities adjusted for NUTS2 regions.

<sup>4</sup> A systematic random sample was drawn from lists ordered by name for practical reasons rather than for the purpose of improving statistical precision.

### 2.2.2 Within-household selection

In Israel and the other countries that draw a sample from a list of (household) addresses, target respondents need to be selected by the interviewer at the doorstep. Neither the ESS specifications nor the sampling guidelines for Round 8 specified, or recommended, a particular within-household selection method. Any (quasi-)random method is in principle allowed. Two acceptable methods which have been commonly used in the ESS are the Kish grid method and the (last, next or nearest) birthday method.<sup>6</sup> The birthday method was used in Israel and 6 other first release countries. The Kish grid method was used in 3 countries.

Whichever within-household selection method is used, its application in the field should be monitored. Some interviewers may try to deliberately manipulate the selection procedure to secure a completed interview with a cooperative household member. Such substitution is explicitly not allowed. Back-checks can be used to verify that the correct target respondents were interviewed.

## 2.3 SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

The third key step in the development of the sampling strategy is to determine the gross sample size, the number of addresses which have to be drawn and assigned to interviewers in the field, to meet the level of statistical precision targeted in the ESS.

The ESS specifications require a minimum 'effective' sample size of 1500 (800 in countries with a target population size below 2 million). Supported by the ESS Sampling Expert Panel, each national team has to determine a gross sample size sufficiently large to reach this target based on realistic estimates of the ineligibility rate, response rate and design effect. The design effect is a summary measure of the relative loss in the accuracy of estimates under the chosen sampling design compared to a simple random sample. Both clustering in a multi-stage cluster sampling design and unequal selection probabilities resulting from, for example, within-household selection, add to the design effect. Design effects have to be compensated for by additional completed interviews in order to reach the targeted level of statistical precision (an 'effective' sample size of 1500).

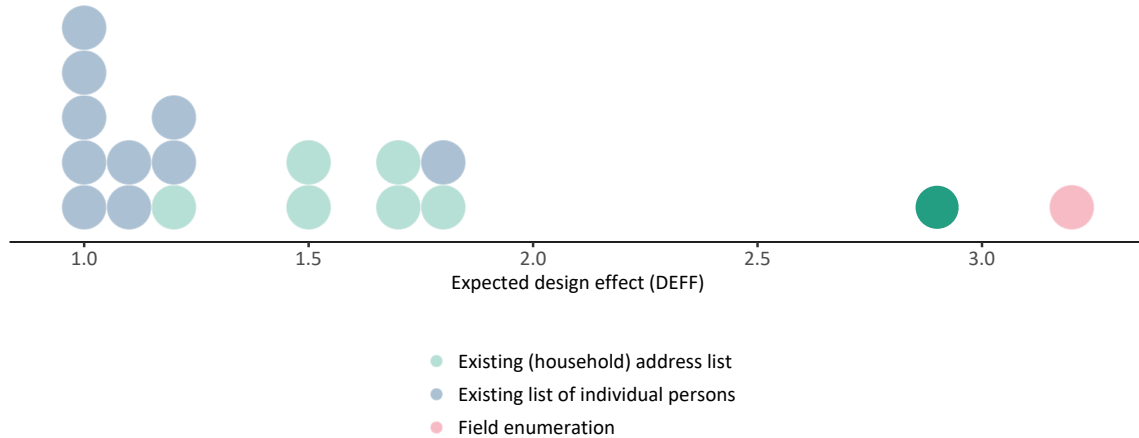
The design effects which were expected for the first release countries are presented in Figure 2.1 (with the dot colour indicating the type of sampling frame). In 5 first release countries no design effect ( $DEFF = 1$ ) had to be taken into account because a sample was drawn without clustering from a list of individual persons. The expected effective sample size simply equaled the target net sample size. In several other countries, a design effect close to 1 was anticipated.

In Israel, the expected design effect was very large ( $DEFF = 2.87$ ). Design effects of this magnitude very rapidly drive up the number of completed interviews necessary to achieve the required effective sample size.

The design effect from unequal selection probabilities will need to be taken as given in future rounds if no adequate sampling frame of individual persons is available or accessible. The design effect from clustering can be reduced either by increasing the number of selected PSUs (i.e. reducing the PSU sample size) or by reducing the cluster homogeneity. Even if an unclustered sampling design may not be feasible given the geographical dispersion of the population and the available interviewer capacity, the potential benefits of smaller clusters have to be weighted against the costs associated with larger interviewer travel distances.

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<sup>6</sup>The new Sampling and Weighting Expert Panel has elaborated on the relative benefits of the two methods and express a preference for the Kish grid method (The ESS Sampling and Weighting Expert Panel, 2018).



**Figure 2.1** Expected design effect, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot (in green, to indicate that the sample was drawn from an existing (household) address list) represents Israel. Based on ESS8 Sampling sign-off forms.

Cluster homogeneity is very high in Israel. In this context it should be highlighted that the level of cluster homogeneity may be (partially or even predominantly) driven by interviewer effects (see Section 7.6, p. 47) rather than spatial clustering in the population. Focusing efforts at reducing interviewer effects, by additional interviewer training and/or stricter monitoring, may simultaneously improve the quality of completed interviews and effectively reduce the design effect.

A gross sample of 3500 sample units was planned in Israel. The planned gross sample size of 3500 would, given an ineligibility rate of 2% and a response rate of 75%, yield a net sample size of 2572, which in turn would, given an expected design effect of 2.87, yield a net effective sample size of 896.<sup>7</sup> The minimum effective sample size of 1500 was thus not even expected to be met. A gross sample of 3500 units was actually drawn and issued.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Reported figures are rounded to the nearest whole number, except for the reported expected design effect, which is rounded to two decimal places. Because of rounding in sample size calculations, the expected net sample size and effective sample size reported here may diverge slightly from the corresponding figures reported in the Sampling documents.

<sup>8</sup>Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

### 3 TRANSLATION AND ADAPTATION OF THE SOURCE QUESTIONNAIRE

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The ESS commitment to cross-national comparability has been translated into fairly strict adaptation and translation procedures, to make sure that country questionnaires measure the concepts as intended in the source questionnaire. Translation of the source questionnaire into the target languages (all languages used as a first language by 5% or more of the population) requires the following key steps (European Social Survey, 2016).

1. Translation, review and adjudication (including shared language consultation) using a committee or team approach
2. Assessment of the linguistic quality by cApStAn
3. Assessment of the comparability of questionnaire items' formal characteristics by the SQP Team
4. National pretesting (see Section 4.2, p. 17)

#### 3.1 ADAPTATION

Several items in the source questionnaire require country-specific answer categories and/or show cards. To assure cross-national comparability in the (harmonised) variables, the items on education level, partnership, income and ancestry require formal signing off by the CST before the start of the fieldwork. In Israel, as in all other first release countries, the respective consultation documents were properly signed off.

Although neither recommended nor customary, country-specific questions may be added at the end of the questionnaire, conditional on approval by the CST. In Israel, 21 country-specific questions were added on respondents' religious and ethnic identity.

#### 3.2 TRANSLATION, REVIEW, ADJUDICATION AND SHARED LANGUAGE CONSULTATION

In Israel, the source questionnaire was translated into Hebrew, Arabic and Russian.<sup>9</sup> Figure 3.1 illustrates how languages are shared across the Round 8 countries. In Israel, there were 3 target languages, and a language was shared with 3 other countries. A harmonisation consultation did take place.

#### 3.3 CAPSTAN VERIFICATION

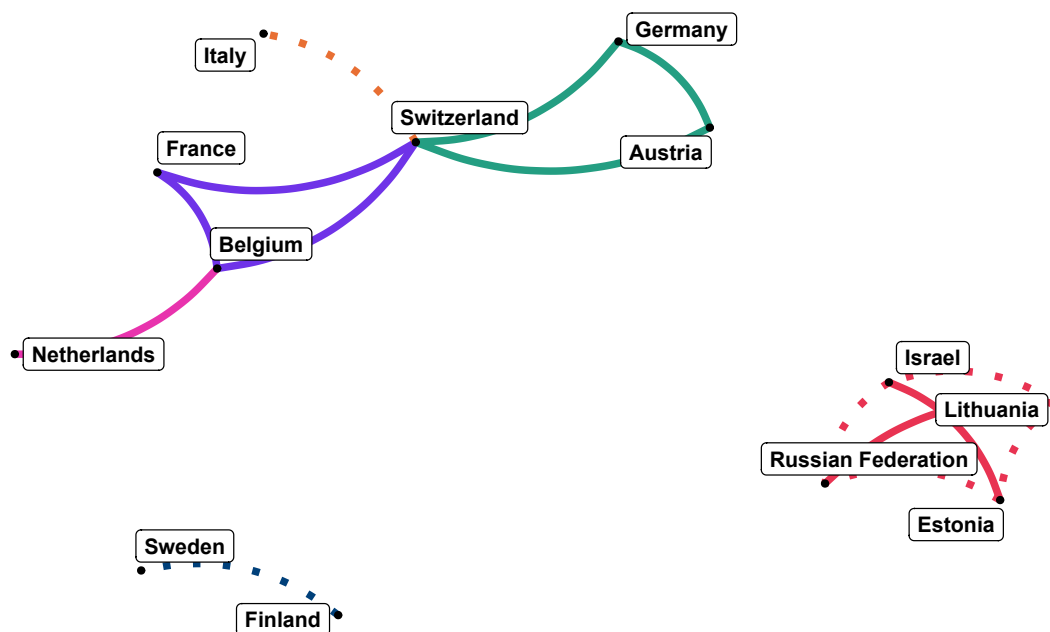
Once the Translation, Review, Adjudication, and shared language consultation steps in the translation process are completed, the linguistic quality of the translated questionnaires is assessed by cApStAn, an external verifier, on the basis of the Translation and Verification Follow-up Form(s) (TVFFs).

As shown in Figure 1.1 (p. 8), the TVFFs for Israel were sent to cApStAn by the second week of September 2016 and were verified by the beginning of October 2016 (with verification taking about 3 weeks).

cApStAn suggested 44 corrections related to layout and/or typo's and 95 major corrections that required follow-up. Fairly large numbers of both types of suggestions were made in many of the first release countries. Relative to the other countries (and taking into account the number of language versions), the number of

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<sup>9</sup>Information on countries' translation team composition and implementation of the Translation, Review and Adjudication steps has been collected but is still to be processed by the Translation Team.



**Figure 3.1** Shared languages and consultations, Round 8

**Note:** Based on information from the Translation Team.

minor corrections suggested for Israel was moderate but the number of suggestions requiring follow-up was rather small (Figure 3.2).<sup>10</sup> In most of the countries, including Israel, the more serious translation issues outnumber the layout and/or typo errors that could have been avoided and were easily corrected.

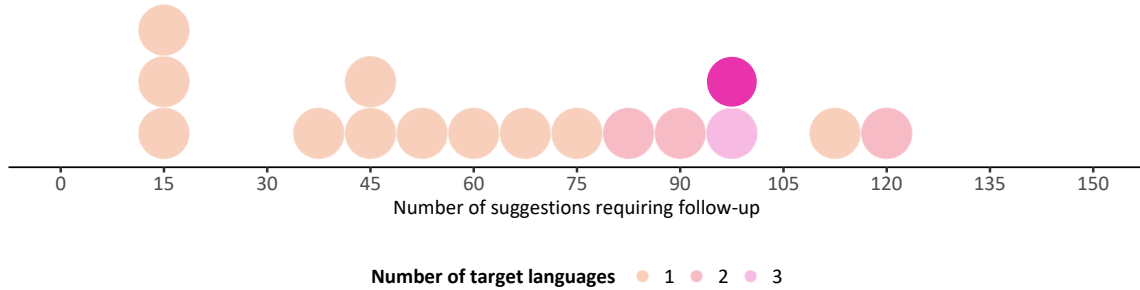
In Israel, corrections were made in accordance with only 85% of the suggestions. About half of the first release countries accepted 91% or more of the proposed suggestions. As in all other countries, justifications were provided for the suggestions that were not applied.

### 3.4 SQP CODING

In the final step in the production of the translated questionnaires before the national pretesting, comparability of the formal characteristics of items is assessed for a set of questionnaire items (17 in Round 8) via the Survey Quality Predictor (SQP) platform. National teams are required to code item characteristics, and the SQP Team provides corrective suggestions for harmonisation with the corresponding items in the source questionnaire.

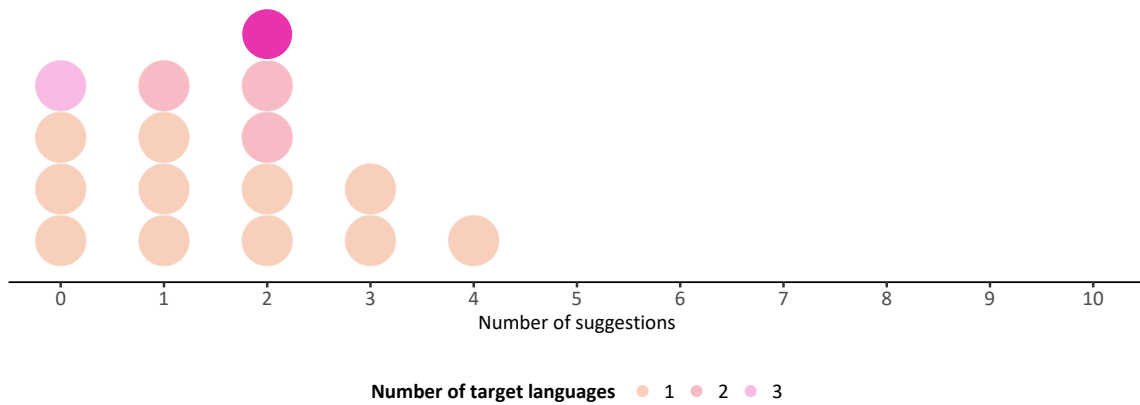
SQP coding in Israel started in the second week of July 2017 (Figure 1.1, p. 8). In 4 first release countries, no corrective suggestions were made (Figure 3.3). In Israel, 2 suggestions were made, and all corrections were made in accordance.

<sup>10</sup>The number of interventions made by cApStAn is highly dependent on individual verifiers' way of working and is therefore not a reliable indicator of translation quality.



**Figure 3.2** Number of corrective suggestions on the basis of cApStAn verification, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Numbers are aggregated for Hebrew, Arabic and Russian. The United Kingdom and Ireland are not represented. Based on information from the Translation Team.



**Figure 3.3** Number of corrective suggestions on the basis of SQP coding, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Numbers are aggregated for Hebrew, Arabic and Russian. The United Kingdom and Ireland are not represented. Based on information from the SQP Team.

## 4 SURVEY INSTRUMENT IMPLEMENTATION AND PRETESTING

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The next step in the survey lifecycle is to program or print the translated questionnaire(s), and to test the survey instrument. The mode by which the questionnaire is to be administered is obviously an essential factor in the design and implementation of the survey instrument. National teams have to make sure that the survey instrument implements the translated questionnaire(s) (including routings) correctly and completely, and a national pretest has to take place.

### 4.1 (MAIN) QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION MODE

The ESS specifications require the complete questionnaire (including the modules which were previously part of the supplementary questionnaire) to be administered to all respondents using face-to-face interviewing. Computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) is strongly recommended. As of Round 9, paper-and-pencil interviewing (PAPI) will no longer be allowed.

As required, the complete ESS questionnaire was administered by face-to-face interviewing in all countries. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, half of the first release countries administered the (main) questionnaire by PAPI in the early rounds, but most have already moved to CAPI. In Round 8, the Czech Republic completed the transition from PAPI to CAPI administration. Only 3 of the first release countries (Israel, Poland and the Russian Federation) are still to make the transition to CAPI in the next round.

### 4.2 NATIONAL PRETESTING

The ESS specifications require a national pretest of the survey instrument with a quota-controlled, demographically-balanced sample of at least 30 people. Cognitive interviewing, audio or video recording and debriefings with respondents and/or interviewers are recommended.

A national pretest took place in Israel to check the translations and PAPI questionnaire. The pretest sample size ( $N = 60^{11}$ ) was sufficiently large, as in most other first release countries (Figure 4.2). Thirty or more pretest interviews were conducted in all previous rounds in Israel as well.

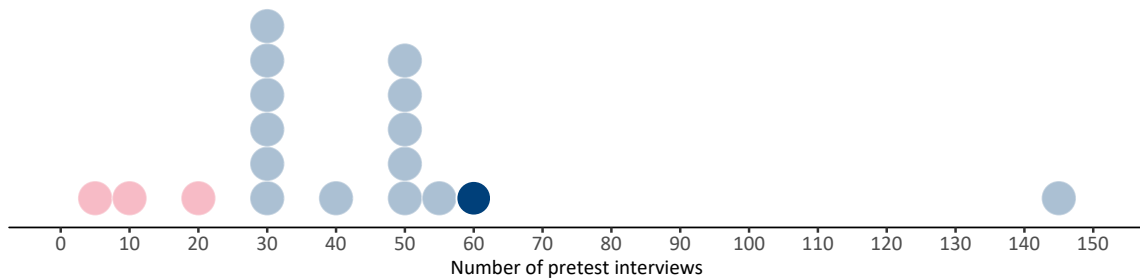
Pretesting started *before* cApStAn verification, and was completed about 1 month before the start of the fieldwork. Pretest interviews were conducted over a period of about 3 weeks.

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<sup>11</sup>20 pretest interviews for each language were reported in previous rounds.



**Figure 4.1** (Main) questionnaire administration mode, first release countries, Rounds 1-8  
**Note:** The highlighted row represents Israel. Based on ESS1-ESS8 Data documentation reports.



**Figure 4.2** Number of pretest interviews, first release countries, Round 8  
**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.

## 5 INTERVIEWER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

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### 5.1 INTERVIEWER CAPACITY AND WORKLOAD

A sufficient number of interviewers should be engaged, both for the purpose of launching and maintaining a powerful fieldwork (see Section 6.2, p. 23), and for the purpose of limiting the negative effect of interviewers' individual systematic differences in administering the questionnaire on the effective net sample size (see Section 7.6, p. 47). The ESS specifications therefore limit the interviewer workload (the total number of sample units assigned to each interviewer) to 48 sample units.<sup>12</sup>

In Israel, 138 interviewers were engaged in the fieldwork.<sup>13</sup> This amounts to one interviewer approximately per 25 sample units.

Figure 5.1 shows the distribution of interviewer workloads for Israel in Round 8. The workloads range between 6 and 42, with the average interviewer having worked on 25.36 sample units ( $SD = 6.07$ ,  $N = 138$ ).<sup>14</sup> Relative to the other first release countries, interviewer workloads were moderate. About half of the first release countries also managed to keep the average interviewer workload below 28 (Figure 5.2). Note that not only larger but also more unequal workloads across interviewers contribute to interviewer-induced variance inflation. In Israel, workloads were not excessively unequally distributed. None of the interviewers in Israel had workloads exceeding the workload limit of 48 sample units. Overall, these results would suggest that the overall interviewer capacity was adequate.

### 5.2 INTERVIEWER EXPERIENCE

Interviewers are expected to have been appropriately trained and have relevant experience. In Israel, about 81% of the interviewers had at least some experience in face-to-face survey interviewing and about 63% previously worked for the ESS.

In most other first release countries, all or almost all of the interviewers had face-to-face experience. Many other countries were also able to engage large numbers of ESS-experienced interviewers. The number of interviewers with ESS experience in Israel was rather large (Figure 5.3).

### 5.3 INTERVIEWER BRIEFING

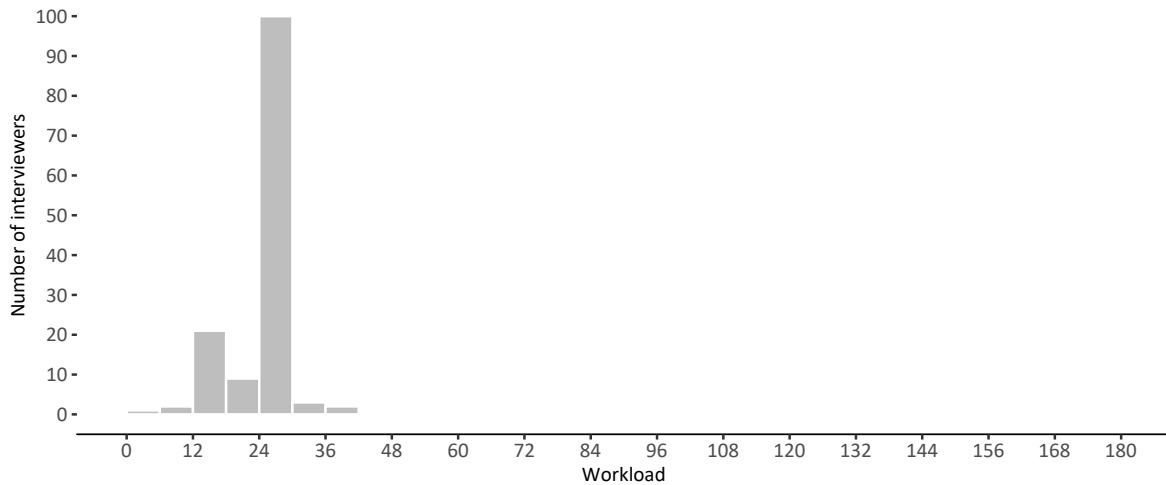
The ESS specifications require that interviewers attend an ESS-specific interviewer briefing before starting their work. This briefing should cover the ESS questionnaire and procedures. A number of briefing materials were provided by the CST.

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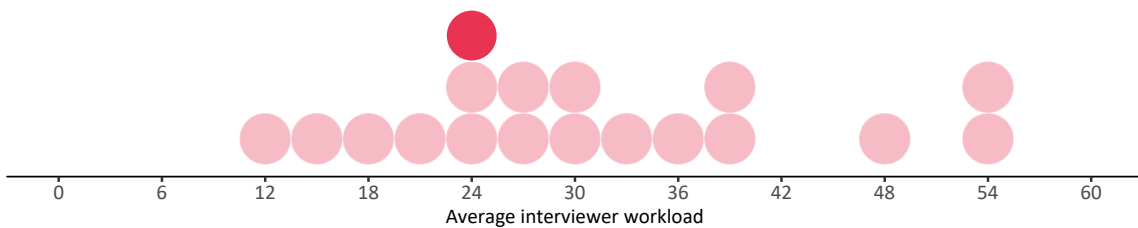
<sup>12</sup>Some countries explicitly target even lower workload limits. This is not the case for Israel.

<sup>13</sup>Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0 and ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0. Only 67 interviewers were reported for Israel in the documentation.

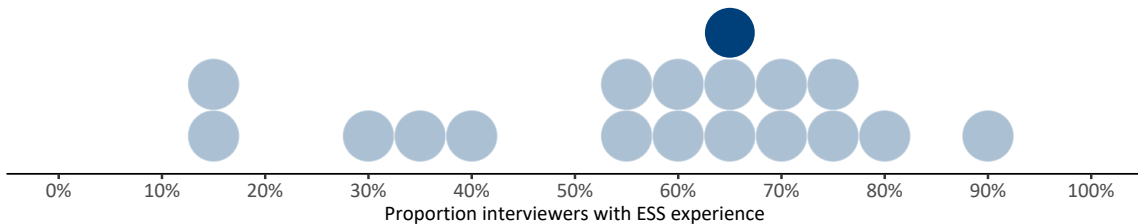
<sup>14</sup>In some countries, telephone calls are made by interviewers without strict assignment of particular sets of sample units. The 'workloads' for these interviewers can be extremely large. For this reason, only sample units for which at least one attempt by personal visit was made are included in the interviewers' workload figures.



**Figure 5.1** Interviewer workload, Israel, Round 8  
**Note:** Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.



**Figure 5.2** Interviewer workload, first release countries, Round 8  
**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.



**Figure 5.3** Interviewer experience, first release countries, Round 8  
**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.

All interviewers in Israel attended an in-person ESS-specific briefing. The briefing sessions took 4-8 hours. Most other first release countries also organised half-day or full-day sessions, as recommended. Briefing sessions were organised (and materials provided) in Hebrew but not in Arabic and Russian.<sup>15</sup>

Some of the ESS briefing materials were used in Israel:<sup>16</sup>

- The ESS briefing slides were used.
- Doorstep situations were practiced via role playing.
- Administering the ESS questionnaire was practiced via role playing. Neither the ESS example interview (“dummy interview”) nor the interviewing video clips were used.
- Completing the contact form was illustrated using the actual contact form, but without making use of the doorstep video clips.
- The (translated and adapted) ESS Interviewer Manual was provided to the interviewers. The manual was properly deposited.

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<sup>15</sup>Based on the deposited fieldwork and interviewer instructions.

<sup>16</sup>Based on ESS8 Data documentation report and deposited Fieldwork and Interviewer instructions, cross-checked with information provided via the Interviewer Briefings Evaluation Questionnaire. The available information on the briefing content and materials generally does not allow drawing hard conclusions on whether the briefings were adequate, given the country-specific context.

## 6 FIELDWORK PROCESS

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As shown in Figure 1.1 (p. 8), fieldwork in Israel started in the second week of September 2016 and was not completed in the specified four-month period September-December, mainly because of the prolonged fieldwork period (about 5 months).

The fieldwork strategy has to be documented via the Fieldwork Questionnaire and signed off by the Fieldwork Team at least 4 weeks before the start of the fieldwork. Fieldwork projections have to be submitted at least two weeks before the start of the fieldwork.

The Fieldwork Questionnaire for Israel was signed off by the end of August 2016, 1 week before the start of the fieldwork, which is not early enough. Fieldwork projections were submitted by the beginning of September 2016, only 5 days before the start of the fieldwork (also rather late).

The following subsections describe some important features of the Round 8 fieldwork process and results,<sup>17</sup> including the fieldwork flow, the number of active interviewers over the fieldwork period (interviewer capacity utilisation), the contact procedure, outcome rates, monitoring and quality-control backchecks.

### 6.1 FIELDWORK FLOW

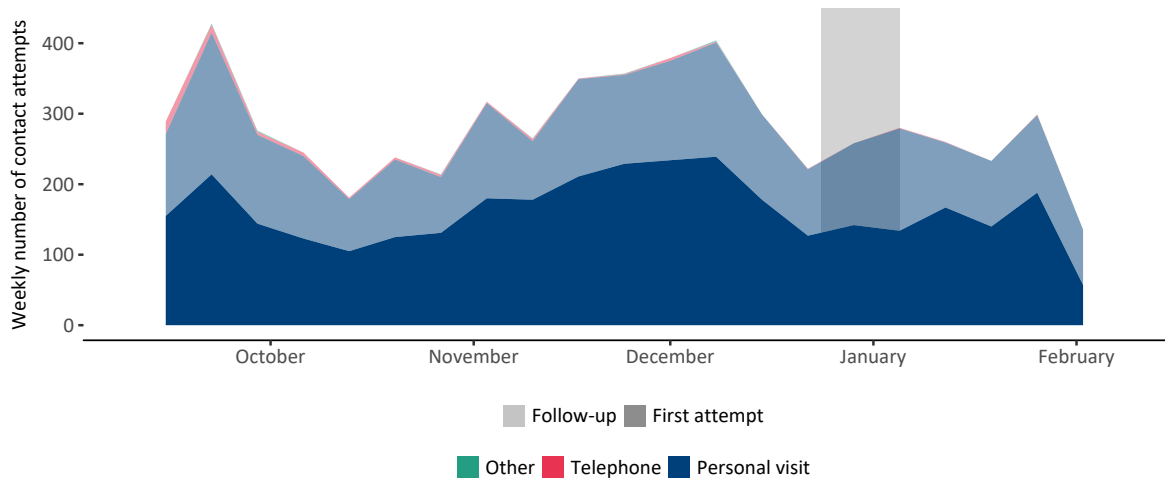
Figure 6.1 visualizes the intensity of fieldwork efforts, in terms of the weekly number of contact attempts, over the fieldwork period. The area colour indicates the mode of the contact attempts and the shade differentiates first contact attempts, indicative of sample units being released, from follow-up attempts.

Sample units were planned to be released in waves or batches. The fieldwork flow graph suggests that sample units were released (or, at least, were approached for the first time) throughout most of the fieldwork period. It may be that some interviewers delayed first contact attempts to sample units assigned to them. By the end of the fourth week of fieldwork (the second week of October 2016), a first contact attempt was recorded for only 19% of sample units. By the end of the eighth week of fieldwork (the beginning of November 2016), a first contact attempt was recorded for only 35% of sample units. Overall fieldwork efforts roughly follows the pattern of first contact attempts, as follow-up contact attempts did not proportionally increase but remained fairly constant over the fieldwork period. Fieldwork in Israel slowed down during festivities in October rather than at the end of December as is in most other countries.

For reference, consider Figure 6.2, which shows small multiples of the fieldwork flow graph for all first release countries. Note that the vertical axis is scaled differently by country to accommodate differences in gross sample size and, in particular, the volume of telephone contact attempts in some countries. The horizontal axis, which represents the time frame of the fieldwork, is fixed across countries. Both the timing of the fieldwork period and the shape of the fieldwork flow differs markedly between countries. In most countries, the first contact attempts are concentrated in the first half of the fieldwork, leaving the second half for follow-up attempts. The Christmas holidays tend to disrupt the fieldwork flow when the fieldwork starts late or is extended beyond the second half of December.

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<sup>17</sup>The analysis is based mainly on the Contact forms data. This is a complex dataset, prone to errors and inconsistencies. Even if most inconsistencies are resolved during processing, some cannot be resolved, and incomplete contact forms obviously cannot be reconstructed. The validity of the presented results hinge on the quality of the contact forms completed by the interviewers (see Section 8.1, p. 53) and a degree of caution must be exercised when interpreting the results.



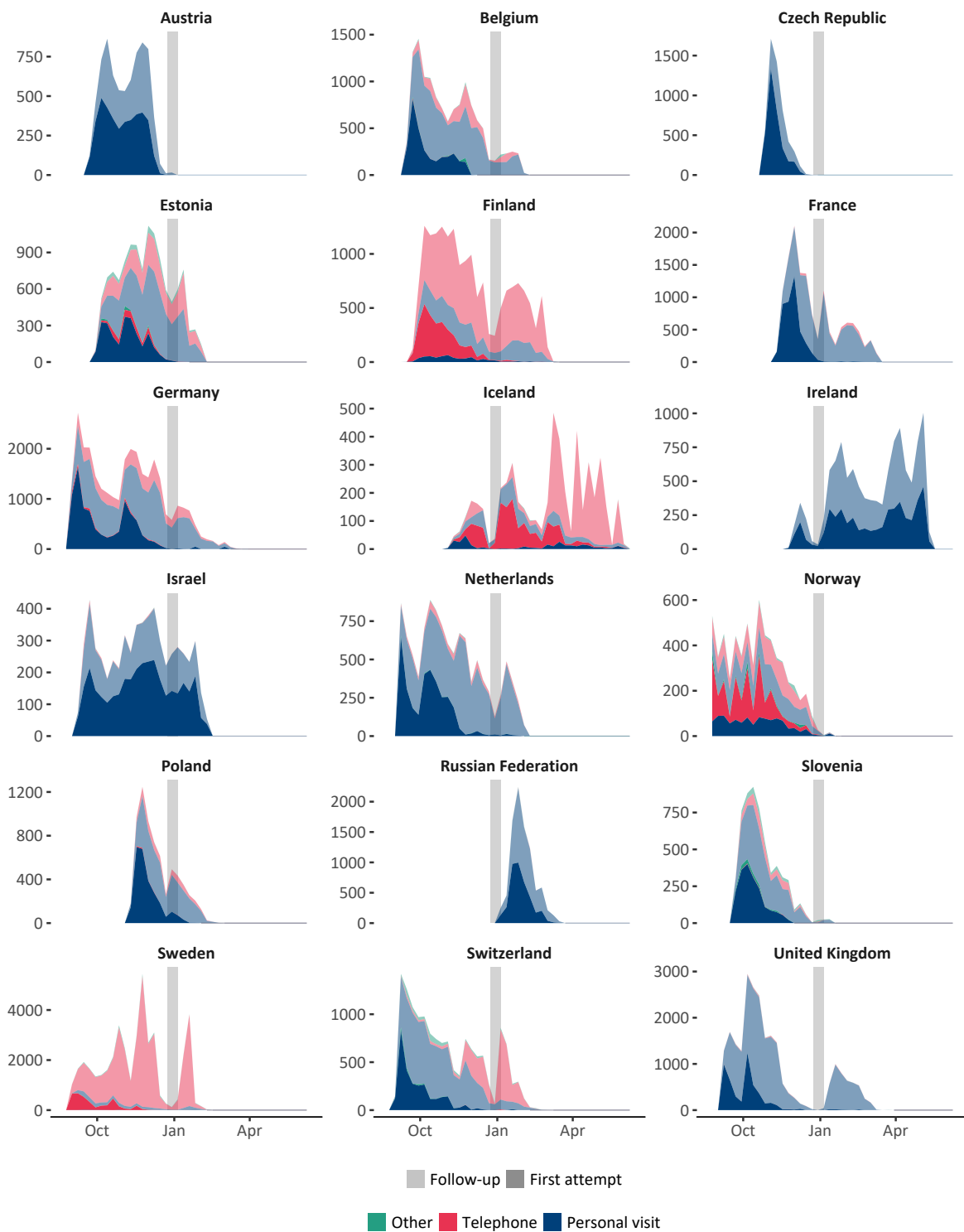
**Figure 6.1** Fieldwork flow, Israel, Round 8

**Note:** The Christmas period (23 December to 5 January) is highlighted. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. Automated telephone calls, as enumerated under NUMTEL and NUMTELA, are not included since they are not dated (not applicable for Israel).

## 6.2 INTERVIEWER CAPACITY UTILISATION

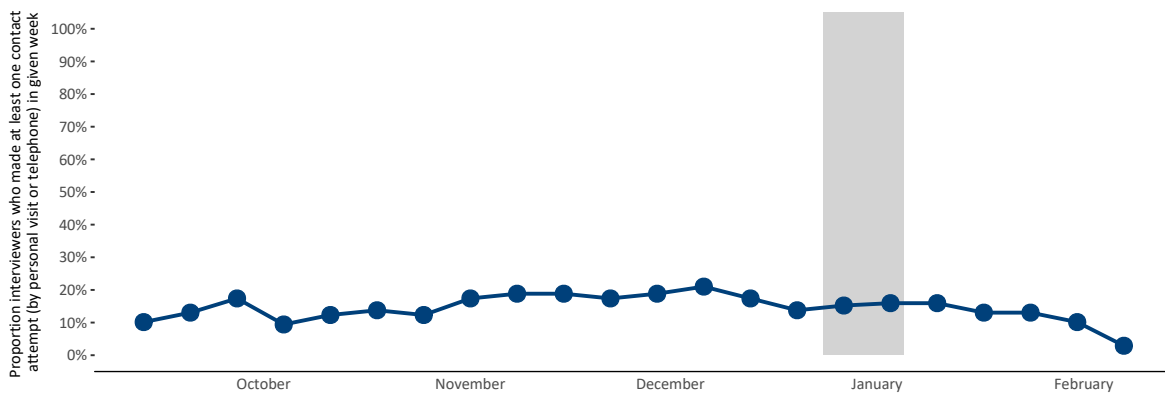
Interviewer capacity is not only a question of how many interviewers are available, but also of engaging the full potential throughout the fieldwork period. Figure 6.3 shows the number of active interviewers per week relative to their total number (see Section 5.1, p. 19) for Israel.

The number of active interviewers remained fairly constant around 15% throughout most of the fieldwork period.



**Figure 6.2** Fieldwork flow, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The Christmas period (23 December to 5 January) is highlighted. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. Automated telephone calls, as enumerated under NUMTEL and NUMTELA, are not included since they are not dated.



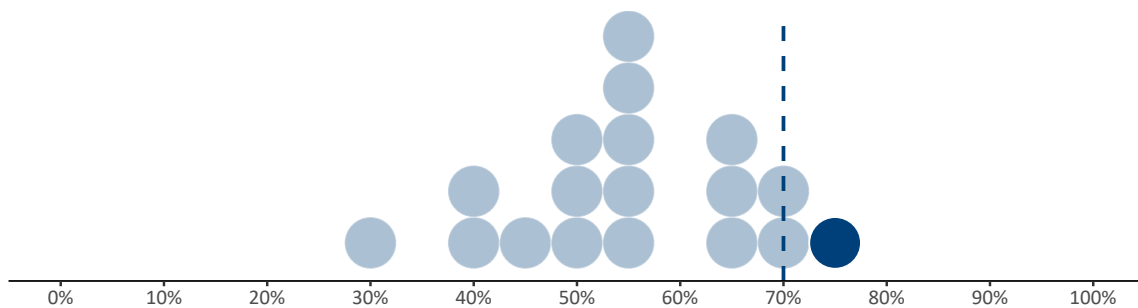
**Figure 6.3** Active interviewers over the fieldwork period, Israel, Round 8

**Note:** The Christmas period (23 December to 5 January) is highlighted. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. Automated telephone calls, as enumerated under NUMTEL and NUMTELA, attempts with date missing or date outside reported fieldwork period are not included in the determination of interviewer activity

### 6.3 RESPONSE RATE

The ESS has traditionally targeted a response rate of 70%. The response rate for Israel in Round 8 is 74%.<sup>18</sup> In fact, Israel is one of the few countries that managed to reach the (for many countries quite ambitious) response rate target. About half of the first release countries also managed to reach a response rate of 54% or higher (Figure 6.4).

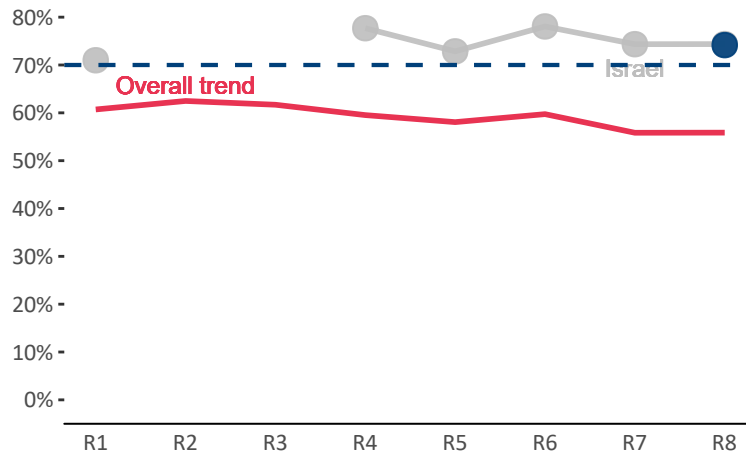
Because a 70% response rate has been challenging in many countries, national teams are expected to target a response rate higher than in the previous round. In Israel, a response rate of 75% was targeted in Round 8 (see Section 2.3, p. 12). This target was not achieved (with a difference of 1 percentage point). Figure 6.5 shows the evolution of reported response rates. In general, response rates remained fairly stable around 74%. Compared to the previous Round 7, the response rate has not improved (but also not deteriorated).



**Figure 6.4** Response rate, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. The 70% target is marked. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

<sup>18</sup>Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. The same response rate was reported in the documentation for Israel.



**Figure 6.5** Response rate, Israel, Rounds 1-8

**Note:** The response rate as calculated on the basis of the ESS algorithm for final response codes is marked. The 70% target is marked. Based on ESS1-ESS8 Data documentation reports and ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

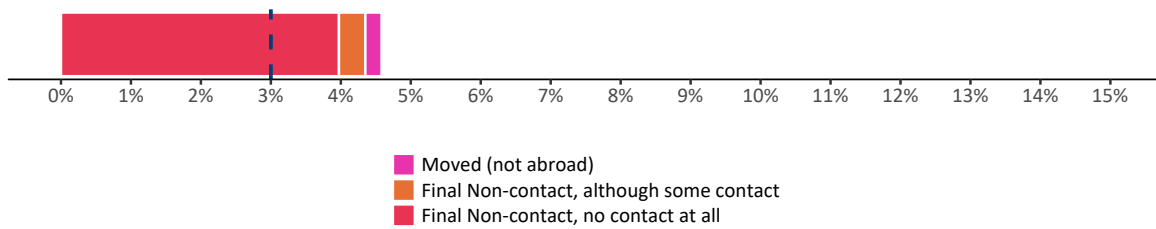
Nonresponse due to No contact, Refusal and other reasons, and some relevant factors related to both field-work efforts and context are discussed in some more detail in the following subsections. A detailed breakdown of the (final) response outcomes for Israel is presented in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1** Detailed breakdown of final response outcomes, Israel, Round 8

	n	%
<b>Complete and valid interview</b>		
10 Valid interview	2557	73.06%
<b>No contact</b>		
20 Non-contact	150	4.29%
52 Respondent moved to unknown destination	7	0.20%
53 Respondent has moved, still in country	1	0.03%
<b>Refusal</b>		
30 Refusal because of opt-out list	0	0.00%
32 Refusal by respondent	244	6.97%
33 Refusal by proxy	109	3.11%
34 Household refusal, before selection	287	8.20%
<b>Not able and other nonresponse</b>		
11 Partial interview: break off	0	0.00%
12 Invalid interview	0	0.00%
31 Broken appointment	7	0.20%
41 Respondent not available, away	6	0.17%
42 Respondent mentally/physical unable/ill/sick (short term)	12	0.34%
44 Language barrier	33	0.94%
45 Contact but no interview, other	0	0.00%
46 Respondent mentally/physical unable/ill/sick (long term)	22	0.63%
54 Address not traceable	13	0.37%
<b>Ineligible</b>		
43 Respondent deceased	0	0.00%
51 Respondent moved out of country	8	0.23%
61 Derelict or demolished house	5	0.14%
62 Not yet built, not ready for occupation	0	0.00%
63 Not occupied	24	0.69%
64 Address not residential: business	6	0.17%
65 Address not residential: institution	1	0.03%
67 Other ineligible	8	0.23%
<b>Undefined</b>		
0 Contact forms missing	0	0.00%
99 Undefined	0	0.00%
<b>Total sample units</b>	3500	100.00%

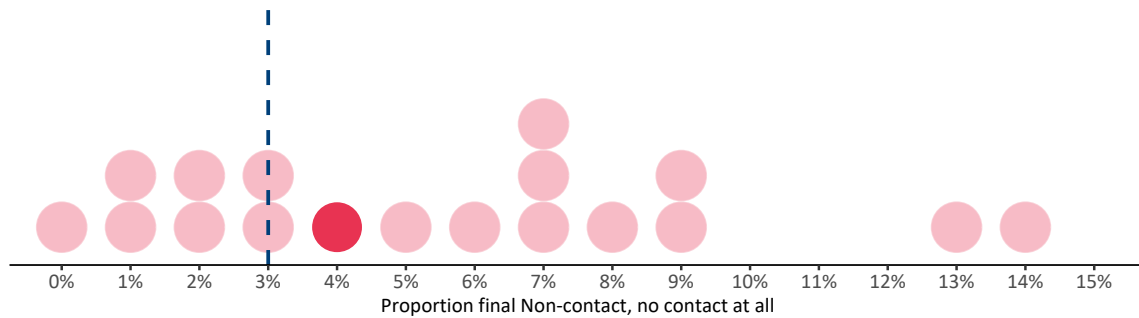
**Note:**

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.



**Figure 6.6** Noncontact rate, Israel, Round 8

**Note:** The 3% target is marked. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. Ineligibles are included (N = 3500).



**Figure 6.7** Noncontact rate, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The 3% target is marked. The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. Ineligibles are included.

## 6.4 ESTABLISHING CONTACT

The ESS specifications require that contact is established with at least 97% of all sample units.<sup>19</sup> Figure 6.6 shows the (gross) noncontact rate for Israel in Round 8. The proportion of sample units with no contact at all is about 4% and the proportion of sample units categorised as ‘No contact’ by the NTS classification is 4.5%. The noncontact rate (narrowly defined) exceeds the specified limit of 3%. The number of contact attempts may need to be increased and the timing of contact attempts may need to be adjusted to sample units’ available at-home patterns. The 3% target is not reached in 14 of the other first release countries either (Figure 6.6).

### 6.4.1 Contactability

Depending on people’s usual accessible at-home patterns, people may be harder to reach in some countries. Figure 6.8 shows two indicators of contactability: the average number of contact attempts needed to establish the first contact, and the proportion of sample units successfully reached at the first attempt.

<sup>19</sup>The ESS algorithm for final response codes categorizes sample units based on the last contact attempt, unless a refusal has previously occurred (or an interview has taken place). As a result, some sample units may be categorised as ‘No contact’ even if some contact with the target respondent or a member of his or her household was made (e.g. target respondent was mentally or physically not able at the time). The NTS classification categorizes ‘Non-contact’ (code 20), ‘Moved to unknown destination’ (code 52) and ‘Moved, still in country’ (code 53) as ‘No contact’.

In Israel, the average contacted sample unit required 1.31 attempts ( $SD = 0.67$ ,  $N = 3298$ ). In 74% of the first attempts, someone was successfully reached.

#### 6.4.2 Contact strategy

With the aim of low noncontact rates and high response rates, the ESS specifications impose a fairly strict contact strategy. By the standard contact procedure, (the first) contact should be face-to-face.<sup>20</sup> At least four personal visits are required, on different times of the day and different days of the week, with at least one in the evening and one at the weekend, and spread over at least two weeks, before a sample unit can be abandoned as 'non-productive'.<sup>21</sup> Compliance with the prescribed contact procedure is assessed by considering sample units categorised by the ESS algorithm for final response codes as 'Non-contact' (code 20).

Figure 6.9 shows the distribution of the number of personal visits made to 'non-contacts' in Israel in Round 8. On average, 1.72 visits ( $SD = 1.10$ ,  $N = 150$ ) were made, with only 7% of non-contacts having been personally visited at least four times. Note also that 3% of non-contacts were personally visited at least 5 times (the national target). Relative to the other first release countries (Figure 6.10), compliance is very poor. Figure 6.10 also shows the relative position of Israel with respect to the other three contact specifications. Only 43% of the non-contacts were visited at least once in the evening, only 12% were personally visited at least once at the weekend, and only 4% were visited over at least a period of two weeks. Overall, compliance with the contact specifications in Israel is rather poor.

#### 6.4.3 Timing of personal visits

Figure 6.11 shows the distribution of (unsolicited) personal visits by times of the day and days of the week, with darker shades indicating that more attempts were made in the respective day-time slot, for Israel. Almost all visits were made between 9:00 and 22:00. Visits were most frequently made on Sundays and Mondays, and less frequently on Fridays and Saturdays.

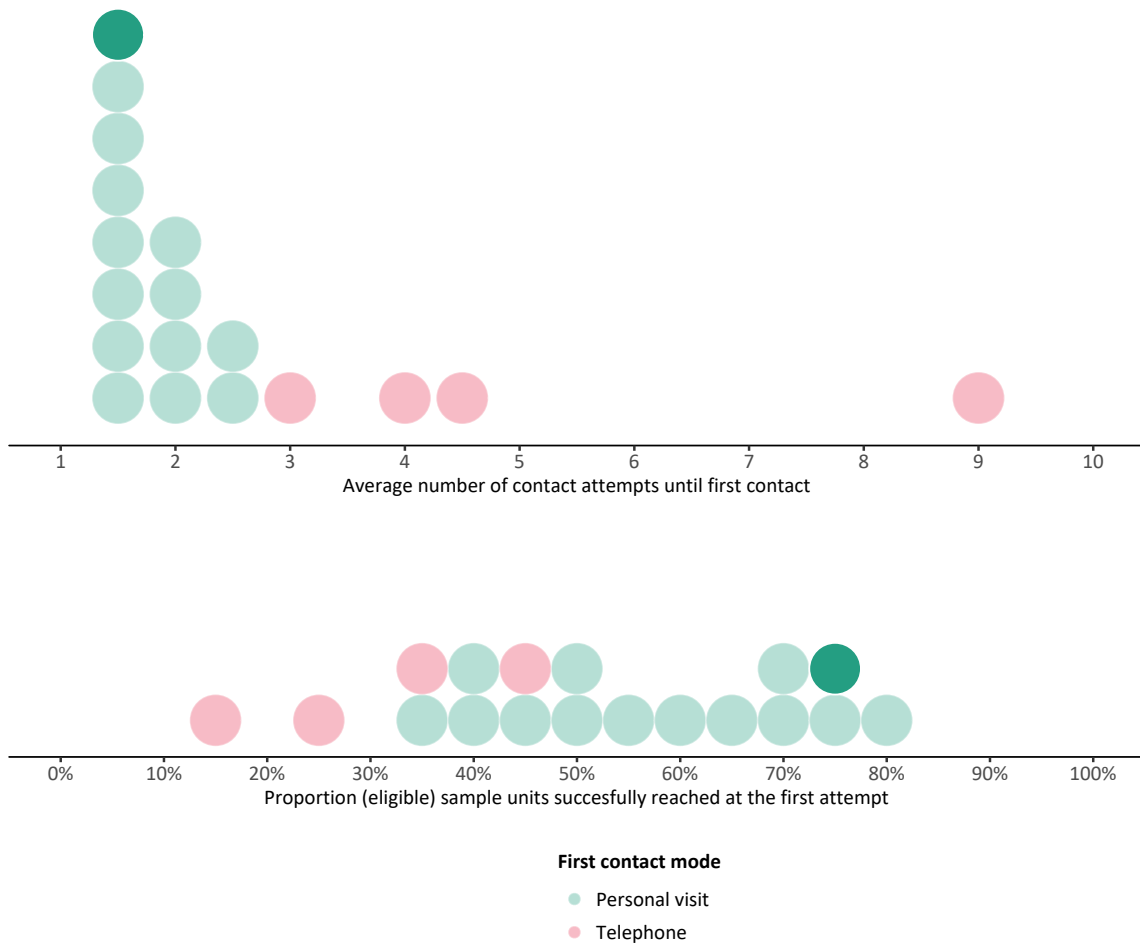
Overall, 13% of the visits were made on weekday mornings (before 12:00), 42% on weekday afternoons (before 17:00), 32% on weekday evenings (after 17:00), 7% on Fridays and 6% on Saturdays<sup>22</sup>. Visits on weekday evenings were more common but visits on Fridays and Saturdays were less common than would be expected if visits were uniformly spread over the week.

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<sup>20</sup>An exception is made for some countries with sample frames of named individuals with telephone numbers (Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden).

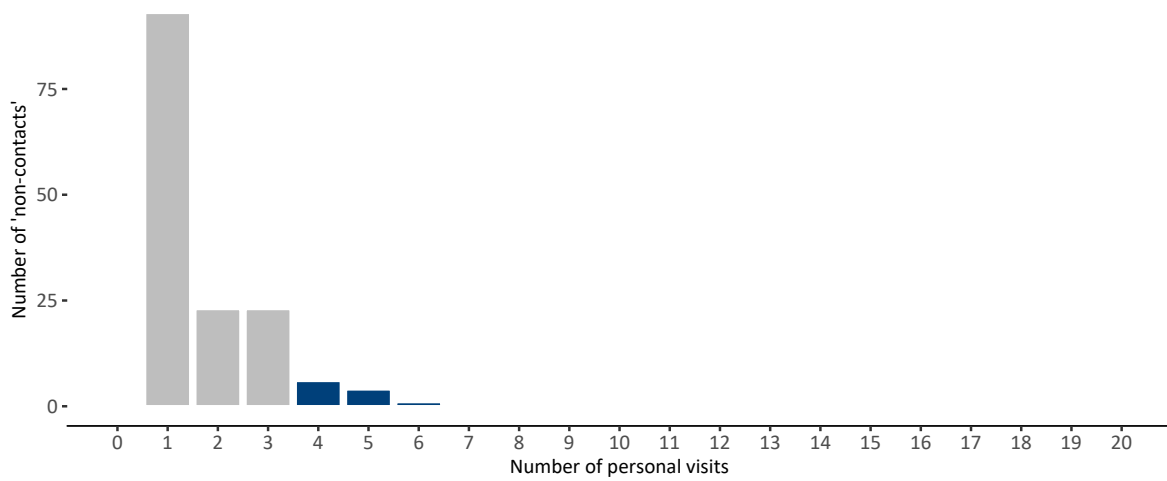
<sup>21</sup>Note that many countries target an even stricter contact procedure. In Israel, 5 personal visits were targeted

<sup>22</sup>Contact attempts on Friday and Saturday are categorised as 'weekend' for Israel.



**Figure 6.8** Contactability, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. Automated telephone calls before the first contact, as enumerated under NUMTEL, are taken into account (not applicable for Israel). Estimates may be biased because of systematic underreporting of (unsuccessful) contact attempts.

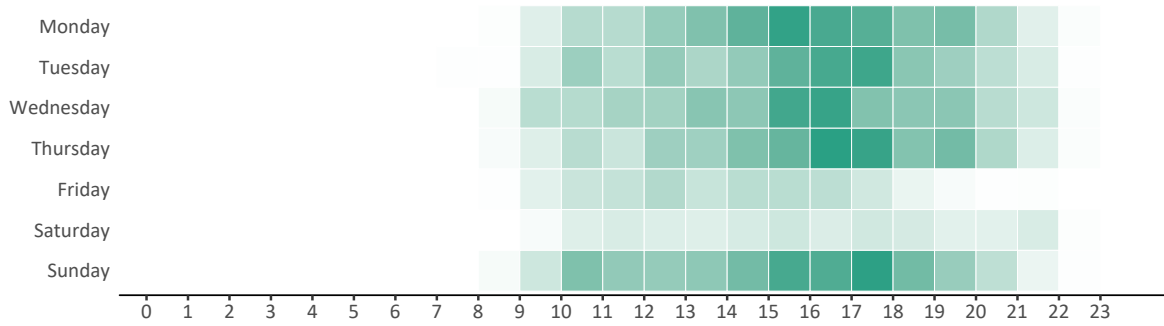


**Figure 6.9** Personal visits made to non-contacts, Israel, Round 8  
**Note:** Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.  $N = 150$



**Figure 6.10** Compliance with contact specifications, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. Contact attempts after 17:00 are categorised as ‘evening’; contact attempts on Saturday or Sunday are categorised as ‘weekend’ (except for Israel, where the weekend falls on Friday and Saturday).



**Figure 6.11** Timing of (unsolicited) personal visits, Israel, Round 8

**Note:** Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. Visits following an appointment (for which the timing likely would have been determined by the target household) are excluded.  $N = 5390$  unsolicited personal visits were made.

## 6.5 OBTAINING COOPERATION

The cooperation rate, conditional on contact, for Israel in Round 8 is 78%.<sup>23</sup> Relative to the other first release countries, the number of cooperating target respondents among those successfully reached is high. Overall, cooperation rates range between 35% and 78%. About half of the first release countries also managed to reach a cooperation rate of 59% or higher (Figure 6.12).

As in most of the first release countries, refusal is the main source of nonresponse in Israel (18% of sample units), with Household refusal, before selection (8%), Refusal by respondent (7%) and Refusal by proxy (3%) all contributing substantially. The broad category of 'Not able and other nonresponse' is less important (3% of sample units).

### 6.5.1 Recruitment mode

An important reason for the ESS specifications to insist on making personal visits, and in particular on ensuring that at least the first contact with the target household, following an advance letter, is face-to-face, is that cooperation rates are typically higher in this recruitment mode (Blohm, Hox, & Koch, 2006).

About 100% of the first contacts in Israel were face-to-face. Fewer than 1% were by telephone and none were in another mode (Figure 6.13). Relative to the other first release countries, rather few were contacted in a mode other than face-to-face. Only 2 countries managed to make all first contacts by personal visit, but about half of the countries also managed to make at least 95% of the first contacts in this mode (Figure 6.14).

### 6.5.2 Reasons for refusal

People who (initially) refuse to participate may do so for different reasons. Figure 6.15 shows the frequency with which certain reasons for refusing were given (and recorded by the interviewers) in Israel. The five most common reasons for refusal were: Not interested, Bad timing, otherwise engaged, Interferes with my privacy, Waste of time and Never do surveys, given by, respectively, 44%, 35%, 16%, 14% and 12% of sample units who refused at some point. Refusal aversion and conversion training may need to focus on these types of refusals.

### 6.5.3 Response enhancement: advance letters and incentives to target respondents

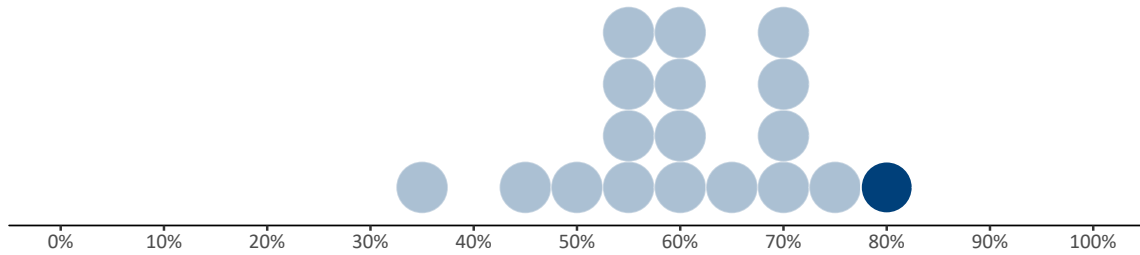
Advance letters, informing target respondents or their households about the purpose and importance of the survey and the upcoming visit or call by an interviewer, have become standard practice. All of the first release countries, including Israel, sent such a letter.

Target respondents can also be offered incentives, unconditionally and/or conditionally on cooperation. In Israel, no such incentive was (standardly) offered.

In all but 2 of the other first release countries some incentives were (standardly) offered, but the particularities vary markedly. Table 6.2 shows an overview of the respondent incentives that were used. Some general remarks based on the reported incentives and rationales:

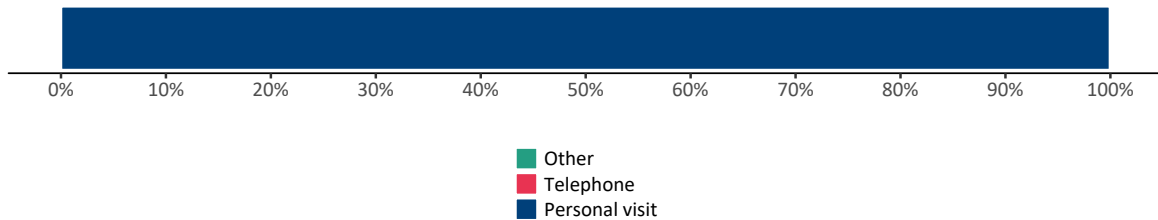
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<sup>23</sup>The conditional cooperation rate is defined as the number of complete and valid interviews proportional to the sum of complete and valid interviews and nonresponse not categorised as 'No contact' (i.e. 'Refusal' and 'Not able and other nonresponse').



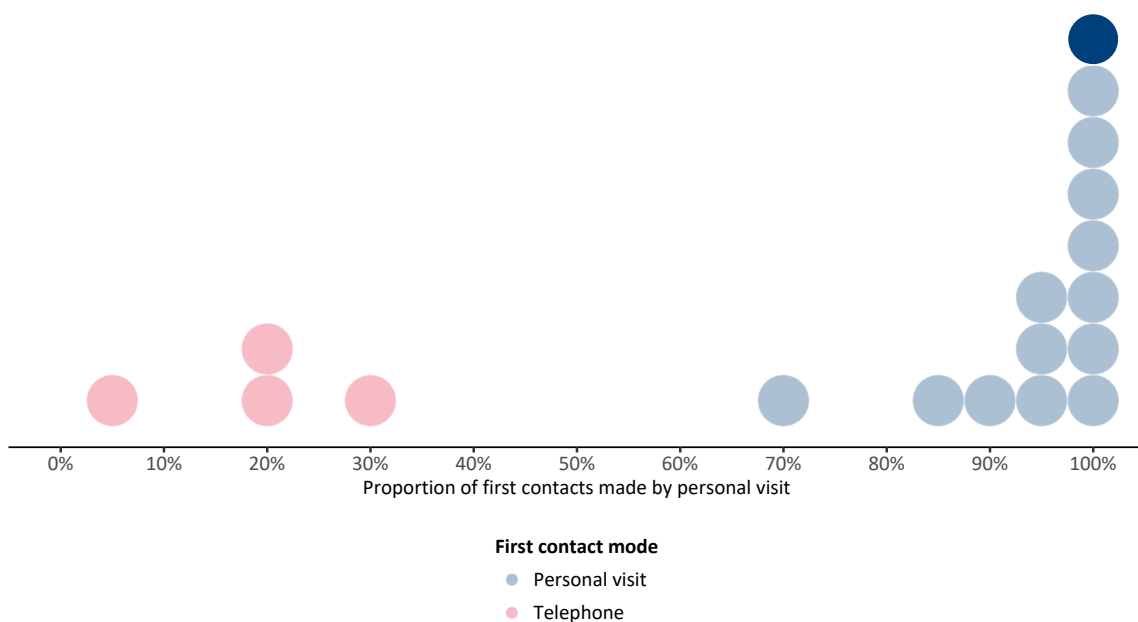
**Figure 6.12** Conditional cooperation rate, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The conditional cooperation rate is defined as the number of complete and valid interviews proportional to the sum of complete and valid interviews and nonresponse not categorised as ‘No contact’ (i.e. ‘Refusal’ and ‘Not able and other nonresponse’). The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.



**Figure 6.13** Recruitment mode, Israel, Round 8

**Note:** Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.  $N = 3277$



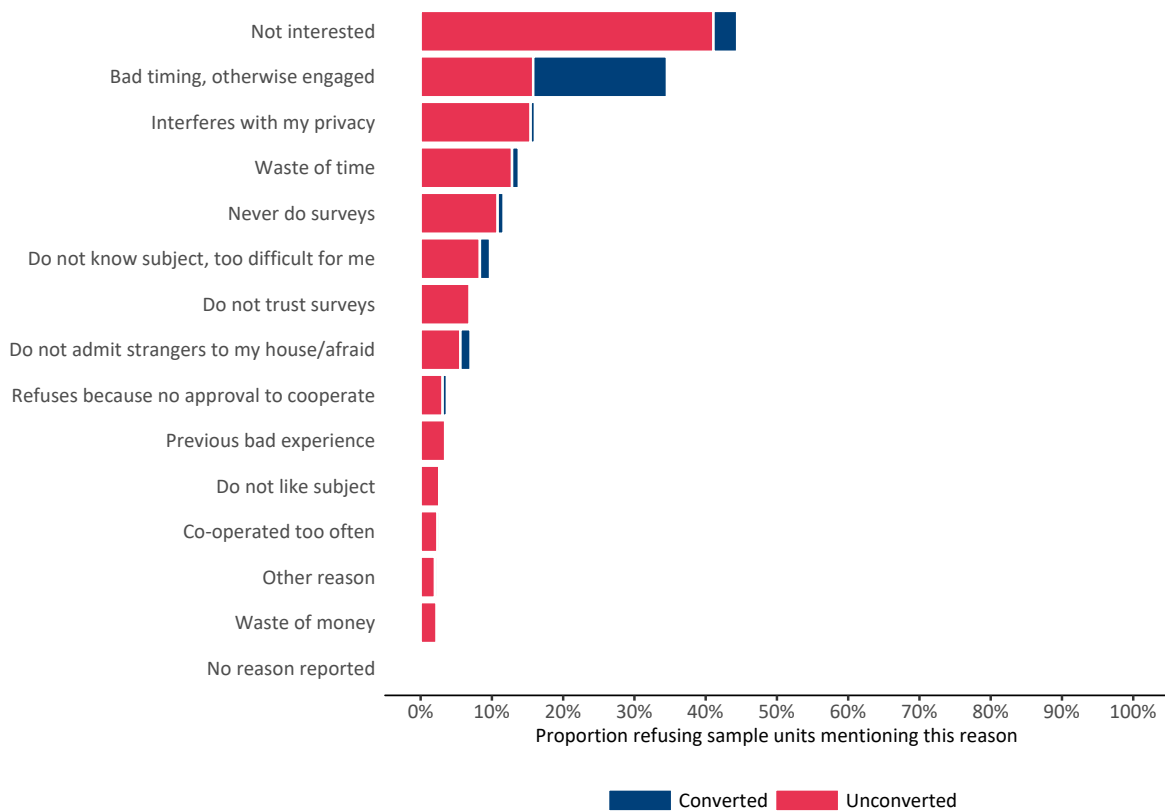
**Figure 6.14** First contact by personal visit, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

- Although research suggests that unconditional incentives tend to be more effective, conditional incentives, and in particular those that are of a monetary or quasi-monetary nature such as vouchers and lottery tickets, appear more commonly used.
- Several countries specifically target subgroups which are less cooperative, by restricting incentives to particular areas (e.g. the Russian Federation), allowing the interviewers to offer an (additional) incentive at the doorstep (e.g. Poland) and/or increasing incentives with re-issues (e.g. the Netherlands).
- Unconditional incentives are usually sent with the advance letter. Small items or booklets may serve as a stimulus for people to open the letter (e.g. Finland).
- The perceived value of lottery tickets and other non-monetary incentives can be higher than the actual monetary value. Such incentives can be considered if budgets do not allow monetary incentives of a sufficiently high amount (e.g. Sweden).
- In several countries, experiments have been implemented in Round 8 (e.g. France) or previous rounds (e.g. Switzerland, Poland) to determine a cost-effective incentive structure.

Other response-enhancing measures such as dedicated websites, follow-up letters, and free (helpdesk) telephone numbers etc. are also frequently used but less consistently documented.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup>The ESS Guidelines for Enhancing Response Rates and Minimising Nonresponse Bias offer some recommendations (Stoop, Koch, Loosveldt, & Kappelhof, 2018).



**Figure 6.15** Reasons for refusal, Israel, Round 8  
**Note:** Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0. *N* = 842

**Table 6.2** Respondent incentives, first release countries, Round 8

Country	Unconditional	Conditional
Austria	-	voucher
Belgium <sup>1</sup>	-	-
Czech Republic	-	cash incentive
Estonia	-	lottery ticket (newspaper subscription) and a shopping bag
Finland	packet of chewing gum and a booklet with Statistics Finland findings	lottery ticket (iphone and two vouchers)
France <sup>2</sup>	-	voucher and a lottery ticket
Germany <sup>3</sup>	-	cash incentive
Iceland	-	lottery ticket
Ireland	-	cash incentive
Israel	-	-
Netherlands <sup>4</sup>	-	cash incentive
Norway	lottery ticket	-
Poland <sup>5</sup>	wall calendar	-
Russian Federation <sup>6</sup>	-	-
Slovenia	-	voucher and a shopping bag
Sweden	lottery ticket (or cinema ticket)	-
Switzerland	cash incentive	telescopic umbrella
United Kingdom	voucher	-

**Note:**

Based on ESS8 Data documentation report.

<sup>1</sup> Dutch-speaking interviewers could offer a booklet with ESS findings at the doorstep as they saw fit. A subset of re-issued target respondents were offered a conditional cash incentive by way of experiment.

<sup>2</sup> The amount of the voucher incentive increased with re-issues. A subset of target households were offered an unconditional rather than a conditional incentive, by way of experiment.

<sup>3</sup> Interviewers could increase the cash incentive by a certain amount at the doorstep as they saw fit, and the amount of the cash incentive increased with re-issues.

<sup>4</sup> The amount of the cash incentive increased with re-issues.

<sup>5</sup> Interviewers could additionally offer a booklet with ESS findings, a penlight keyring, a high-visibility vest or a magnetic notepad at the doorstep as they saw fit.

<sup>6</sup> A conditional non-monetary incentive (chocolate or quality tea) was offered in low-response rate areas.

## 6.6 RE-ISSUES

Initial nonrespondent sample units are often re-issued to other (often more experienced) interviewers to boost the response rate. 15 of the first release countries reassigned at least some initial nonrespondents. Although in some countries the focus of the re-issue phase is on converting refusals, re-issuing non-contacts, to be pursued again some time later in the fieldwork or by a more involved interviewer, can also be effective.

Although nonrespondent sample units were planned to be re-issued in Israel, none were reassigned to new

interviewers.<sup>25</sup>

## 6.7 FIELDWORK MONITORING AND REPORTING

National teams have to monitor the fieldwork progress, response by population subgroups and interviewer performance, and keep their country contact up to date. Updates have to be sent at least fortnightly (weekly if fieldwork is expected to take only up to 10 weeks).

The country contact received updates only on an ad hoc basis, rather than weekly (or fortnightly). 14 first release countries managed to send updates at least fortnightly (10 countries managed to send weekly updates).

The degree to which the fieldwork is (or can be) closely and actively monitored varies between countries. Information flows may be constrained at different levels: the interviewers reporting to (regional) supervisors, regional supervisors reporting to project managers, survey agencies reporting to National Coordinating teams.

In Israel, a complete but aggregated breakdown of response outcomes was available to the national team on a monthly basis, but a detailed breakdown was not available on any regular basis. Breakdowns by region, by interviewer and for sociodemographic subgroups were not available on a regular basis either.<sup>26</sup> Most of the first release countries did have information available to monitor response at a more detailed level.

## 6.8 QUALITY CONTROL BACK-CHECKS

The ESS specifications require that a number of both respondents and nonrespondents are recontacted for the purpose of quality control back-checks. At least 10% of respondents, 5% of refusals and 5% of other nonrespondents, including ineligible, should be back-checked (respondents by personal visit or telephone, nonrespondents preferably as well), across all interviewer assignments.<sup>27</sup>

In Israel, back-checks with respondents were conducted by telephone and back-checks with nonrespondents by personal visit and telephone. 728 back-checks were conducted with respondents (28% of final respondents). 60 back-checks were conducted with nonrespondents (6% of final nonrespondents), of which 28 with refusals (4% of final refusals) and 32 with other nonrespondents (11% of final other nonrespondents).

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<sup>25</sup>In some countries, telephone calls are made by interviewers without strict assignment of particular sets of sample units. A sample unit is therefore considered re-issued to a new interviewer only if at least one attempt by personal visit had previously been made. Small numbers of reassigned sample units may be attributed to interviewers dropping out of the interviewer workforce rather than a deliberate re-issue strategy.

<sup>26</sup>Based on ESS8 Fieldwork questionnaire. The frequency with which information was *actually* available to national teams may not exactly correspond to what was agreed upon and expected (and documented in the fieldwork questionnaire) prior to the start of the fieldwork.

<sup>27</sup>Note that in principle, quality control back-checks with nonrespondents should be separated from re-issues. In practice, however, the two often overlap, as initial nonrespondents contacted for the purpose of back-checking may agree to be interviewed after all. In that case, the proportion of back-checks with nonrespondents is overestimated.

## 7 INTERVIEW PROCESS

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### 7.1 INTERVIEW SETTING

As detailed in the ESS interviewer manual, interviewers have to see to it that interviews take place in an appropriate setting, a quiet environment with as few distractions as possible, and preferably without anyone else present. The presence of another household member, a neighbour or friend can be distracting and can influence the answers given by the respondent, possibly encouraging more socially acceptable responses. Interviewers have to indicate in the Interviewer Questionnaire they complete at the end of each interview whether anyone was present who interfered with the interview.<sup>28</sup>

Third party interference was reported for 16% of respondents in Israel ( $N = 2557$ ). Relative to the other first release countries, interference occurs rather frequently. About half of the first release countries managed to keep this percentage below 7% (Figure 7.1). Compared to the previous Round 7, there has been a statistically significant decrease, from 27% ( $\chi^2(1) = 91.74, p = <0.01$ ). We nonetheless do not observe an overall decreasing trend in interference over subsequent rounds since Round 1 (Figure 7.2).

Interviewers also have to make sure that respondents have all showcards and use the relevant ones to answer questions that require their use. Whether the respondent used all, only some or none of the showcards is also to be signalled via the Interviewer Questionnaire.<sup>29</sup>

The interviewers reported that 65% of respondents in Israel ( $N = 2557$ ) used all applicable showcards, 22% used only some and 13% refused or were unable to use the showcards at all.

Relative to the other first release countries, show cards were used only to a small extent. About half of the first release countries reportedly had more than 93% of respondents using all applicable showcards (Figure 7.3).

### 7.2 INTERVIEW DURATION

Interviews in Israel took on average 56 minutes ( $SD = 25, N = 2518$ ). This is relatively short compared to the other first release countries. For about half of the countries the average interview duration is in the 58-70 minutes range. Note that interviews in the United Kingdom took on average 59 minutes ( $SD = 21, N = 1540$ ), somewhat longer than the anticipated interview duration in British English of 55 minutes (European Social Survey, 2015).

Language is one of the factors that may affect interview duration. However, previous research (Loosveldt & Beullens, 2013) has suggested that some cross-national differences cannot simply be reduced to language differences. For reference, consider Figure 7.4, which shows the average interview duration by language for Israel and the other first release countries with which any languages are shared (the Czech Republic, Estonia and the Russian Federation).

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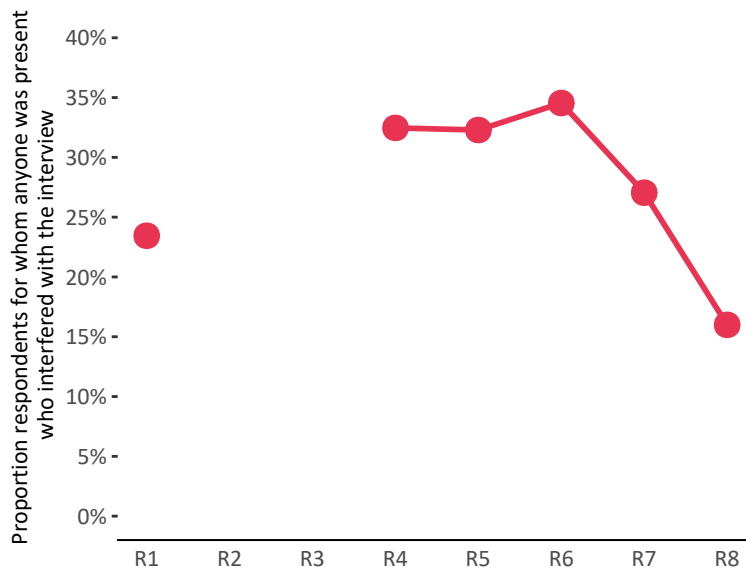
<sup>28</sup>Whether a third party is merely present or actually *interferes* with the interview may be differently evaluated by interviewers. At any rate, interviewers should not be discouraged from candidly reporting interferences.

<sup>29</sup>This item was added to the Interviewer questionnaire in Round 8.



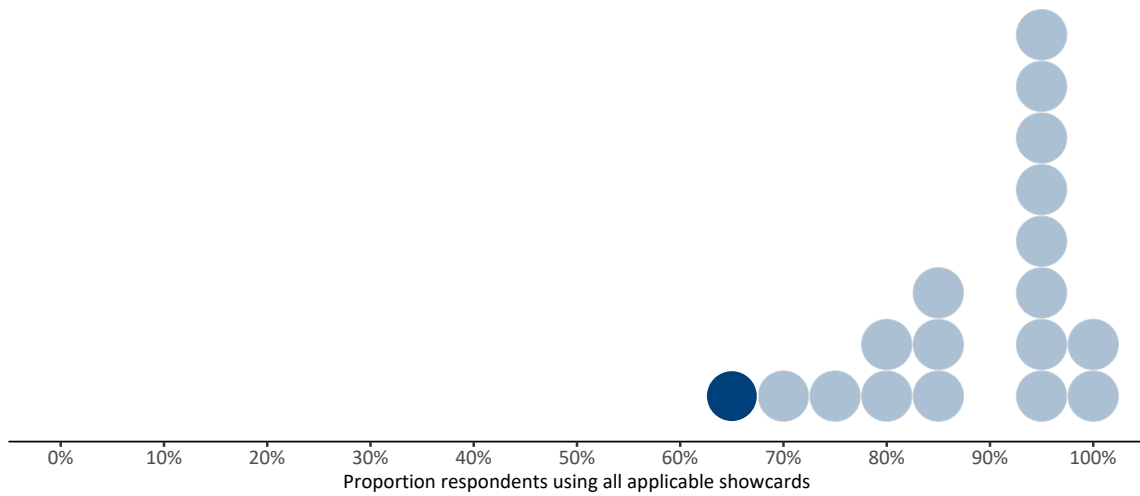
**Figure 7.1** Third party interference, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 data from Interviewer’s questionnaire, edition 1.0.



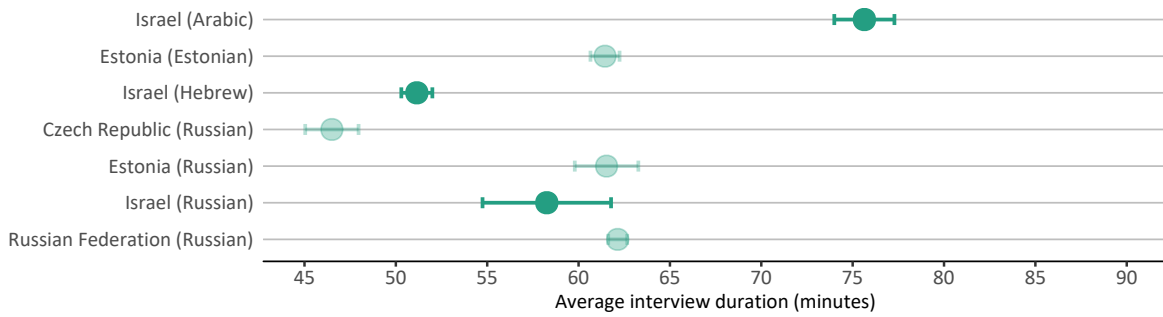
**Figure 7.2** Third party interference, Israel, Rounds 1-8

**Note:** Based on ESS data from Interviewer’s questionnaire, ESS1 edition 5.1; ESS2 edition 3.2; ESS3 edition 2.0; ESS4 edition 2.0; ESS5 edition 3.0; ESS6 edition 2.1; ESS7 edition 2.1; ESS8 edition 1.0



**Figure 7.3** Show card use, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 data from Interviewer’s questionnaire, edition 1.0.



**Figure 7.4** Interview duration by language, Israel, the Czech Republic, Estonia and the Russian Federation, Round 8.

**Note:** The highlighted dots represent Israel. The error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

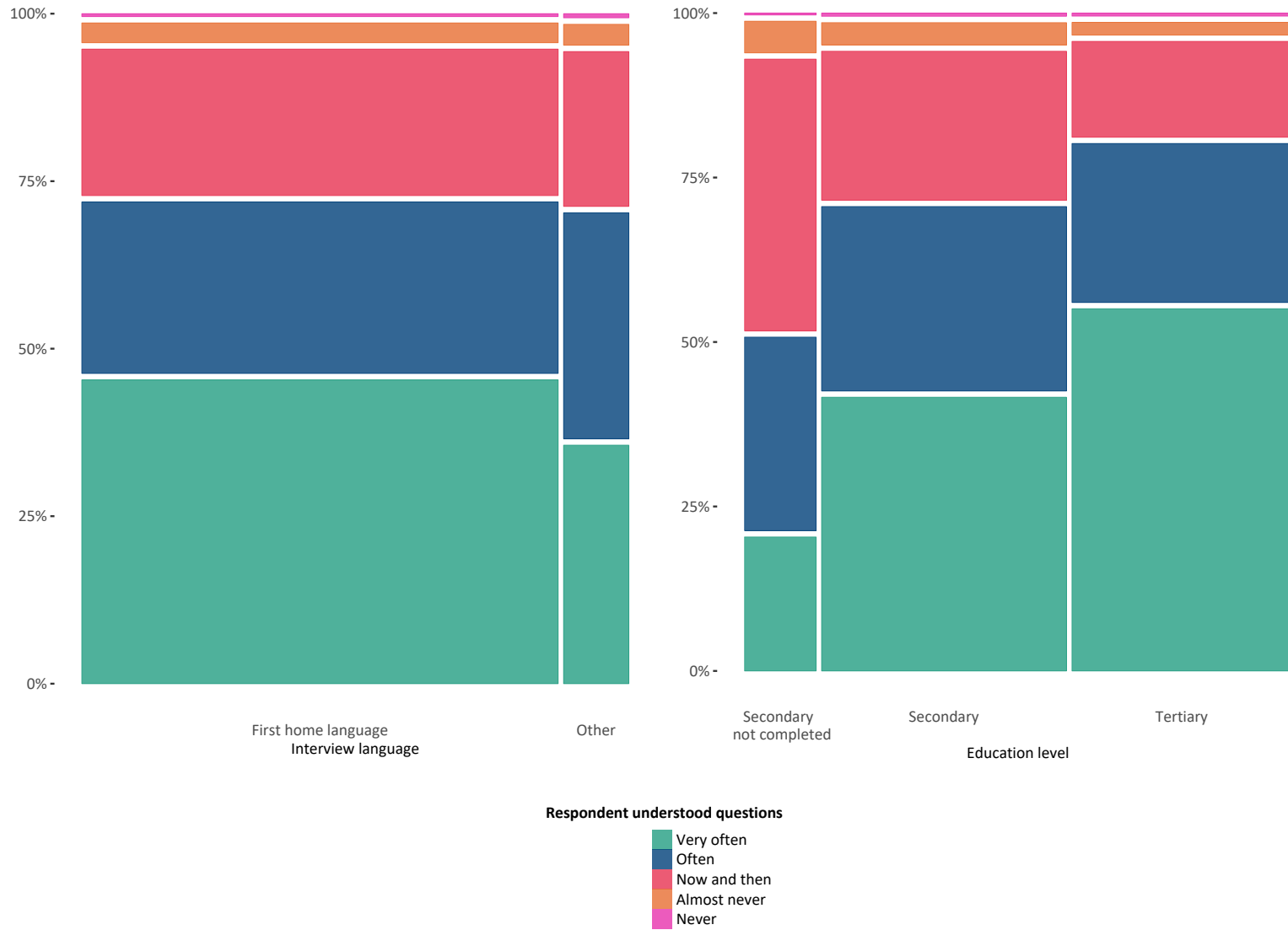
### 7.3 RESPONDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

In addition to reporting third party interference and show card use, interviewers are asked to assess each respondent's ability and motivation to answer the survey questions. The Interviewer Questionnaire at the end of each interview includes four questions on respondents' role performance (asking for clarification, being reluctant, trying to answer questions to the best of their ability, understanding the questions, each measured on a five-point scale from 'Never' to 'Very often').

That respondents interviewed in a language different from their home language may struggle to understand the surveys questions and provide adequate answers has been a cause for concern. Respondents with a lower level of education might likewise experience difficulties. Figure 7.5 visualizes the distribution of the reported level of understanding the questions for Israel by (1) correspondence between interview language and home language, and (2) education level. The following observations are made.

- About 12% of respondents were interviewed in a language other than their (first) home language. Among respondents interviewed in their (first) home language, 47% understood the questions very often, 27% understood the questions often and 26% understood the questions only now and then or even less. Among respondents interviewed in a language other than their (first) home language, only 37% understood the questions very often, 35% understood the questions often and 28% understood the questions only now and then or less. The average level of understanding (as measured on the five-point scale) differs significantly between the two groups ( $t(400) = -2.28, p = 0.023$ ).
- Language appears to be primarily a barrier in respondents' understanding of survey questions rather than to cooperation (see Table 6.1, p. 27).
- About 13% of respondents did not complete secondary education. Among respondents who completed secondary or tertiary education 50% understood the questions very often, 27% understood the questions often and 23% understood the questions only now and then or even less. Among respondents who did not complete secondary education, only 21% understood the questions very often, 31% understood the questions often and 48% understood the questions only now and then or less. The average level of understanding differs significantly between these two groups as well ( $t(455) = -10.93, p < 0.01$ ).

When respondents struggle to understand the surveys questions, interviewers may be tempted to 'help out' by paraphrasing or explaining ambiguous or unfamiliar concepts. Even if meant well, this is not allowed by the ESS rules for standardised interviewing. Each interviewer would 'help out' somewhat differently, adding to interviewer-related variability in responses (see Section 7.6, p. 47). Instead, interviewers have to emphasize that respondents should answer in terms of whatever they understand by the phrase, and have to accept 'Don't know' if a respondent cannot answer the question as posed (see Section 7.4, p. 45). The importance of maintaining standardisation throughout the interview, even if some questions may be less well understood, should be underlined in the interviewer briefing



**Figure 7.5** Respondent understanding of questions by interview language and education level, Israel, Round 8  
**Note:** Based on ESS8 data from Interviewer’s questionnaire, edition 1.0.

#### 7.4 DON'T KNOW AND REFUSAL 'ITEM NONRESPONSE'

Even though 'Refusal' and 'Don't know' are valid responses, to be accepted by the interviewer and recorded using the respective hidden response options (codes 7x and 8x, respectively), data users usually treat them as item nonresponse, and would prefer their number to be low. Previous studies of item nonresponse in the ESS have found this to be the case (Beullens & Loosveldt, 2016; Beullens, Matsuo, Loosveldt, & Vandennplas, 2014; Koch & Blohm, 2009).

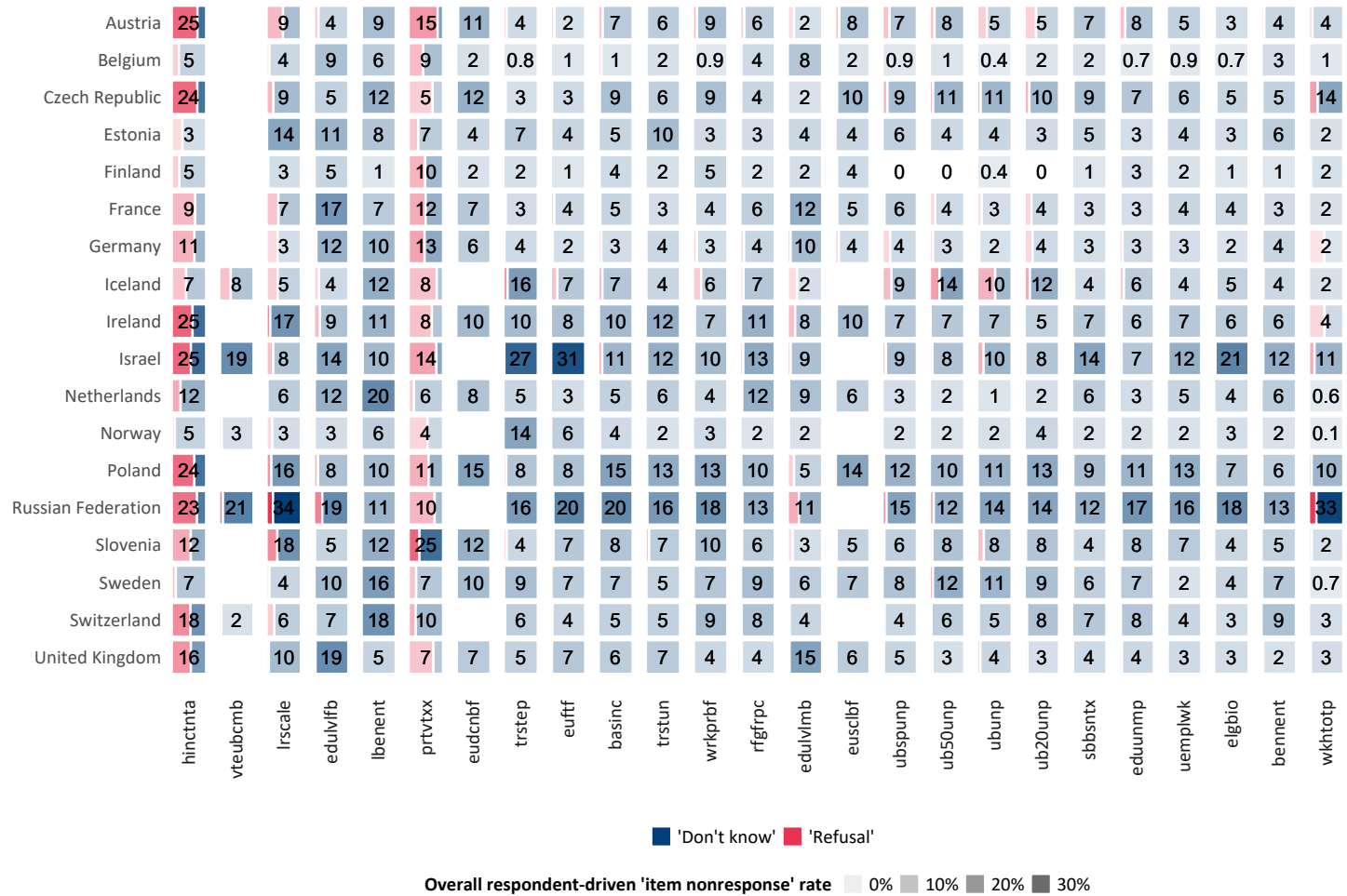
Overall, 1.72% of the (applicable) values in the Round 8 (first release) main data are 'Don't know' and 0.34% are 'Refusal'. For Israel, these numbers are 4.06% and 1.02%, respectively. Relative to the other first release countries, 'Don't know' and 'Refusal' responses occur rather frequently.

Cross-national variability in the number of 'Refusal' values may be due to differences in cultural norms about sharing private information. Respondents in low 'Refusal' rate countries may be less reluctant to answer, and/or interviewers may be less hesitant to ask, sensitive questions. Variability in the number of 'Don't know' values may likewise be due to differences in people's ability to formulate a response to questions on potentially ambiguous or unfamiliar topics.

Of course, the occurrence of 'Don't know' and 'Refusal' values not only varies across countries, but also (and even more so) across items. In most countries, rather few items generate most of the respondent-driven 'item nonresponse'. By way of illustration, Figure 7.6 visualizes respondent-driven 'item nonresponse' ('Refusal' and 'Don't know' values) across countries for the 25 items with the highest rates over all valid interviews in the Round 8 (first release) main data. The colour intensity indicates the overall level of respondent-driven 'item nonresponse'. The colour distribution indicates the relative contribution of 'Don't know' and 'Refusal' values to the overall rate. For example, the respondent-driven 'item nonresponse' rate for 'Household's total net income, all sources' (HINCTNTA) in Israel was 25.11% and primarily resulted from 'Refusal'.

Some of the observed patterns can reasonably be attributed to differences across items and countries in respondents' reluctance and ability to provide a response. For example, the EU-related items appear particularly difficult for respondents in non-EU member states. The concepts 'left' and 'right' may also be more ambiguous in Russia than in other countries. Household income may not be regarded as very sensitive information in the Nordic countries.

Some differences are rather obscure, and may result from survey agencies' standard policies regarding item nonresponse (e.g. evaluation of interviewer performance), the saliency of both response options in the survey instrument (e.g. included in the list of response options or implemented in menus), and interviewer deviations from standardised interviewing (e.g. over-probing, allowing respondents to record their response themselves, or even skipping questions or recording plausible responses). Both countries with very low and countries with very high respondent-driven 'item nonresponse' may need to consider discussing the issue with the survey agency and the interviewers involved. Does the survey agency generally encourage interviewers to accept 'Refusal' and 'Don't know' responses immediately, or to probe? How do interviewers generally deal with respondents who express reluctance and/or inability to provide a substantive response?



**Figure 7.6** Don't know and Refusal (top 25 items), first release countries, Round 8  
**Note:** Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

## 7.5 NO ANSWER ITEM NONRESPONSE

'No answer' (code 9x) is not a valid response. This missing value code is used when a value that should be available is truly missing, not because a respondent was reluctant ('Refusal') or unable ('Don't know') to provide an answer (see Section 7.4, p. 45), but because responses were not (correctly, completely) recorded during the interview or because responses were removed during processing. This item nonresponse may result from errors at different stages in the survey lifecycle: errors in the routing structures in the survey instrument implementation and (inadequate) pretesting, errors in the application of the routing structures, and (erroneously or deliberately) skipped questions during the interviews, incorrect mapping of ('Don't know', 'Refusal' or other) internally used codes to the ESS data protocol codes. Local value suppression as a technique to ensure anonymity also heavily contributes to item nonresponse in some countries. Contrary to respondent-driven 'item nonresponse' ('Don't know' and 'Refusal'), 'No answer' item nonresponse (before anonymisation) can and should be avoided, by proper testing of the survey instrument, practice by the interviewers using the instrument, and careful processing and data checks. Note also that it is important that 'No answer' values are not improperly coded as 'Don't know' or 'Refusal' or vice versa, because the latter may be substantially meaningful whereas 'No answer' values are mainly indicative of errors.

Overall, 0.15% of the values in the Round 8 (first release) main data are missing ('No answer'). For Israel, 0.04% of values are missing. Although overall item nonresponse is not very high, the loss of information for some items is substantial, and may be avoidable. As a possible starting point to deliberate on the causes of item nonresponse and how it may be (further) reduced in future rounds, consider Table 7.1, which lists the top 25 items with the highest ('No answer') item nonresponse.

## 7.6 INTERVIEWER EFFECTS

While interviewers can motivate respondents and support them in performing their role adequately, they can also influence responses and thereby introduce error. In order to limit interviewer-induced error in the measurement of attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns, all ESS interviewers are expected to apply the same basic task rules when administering the questionnaire.

The extent to which interviewers affect responses is typically evaluated on the basis of intraclass correlations, estimated from multilevel models with respondents clustered within interviewers. Intraclass (*intra-interviewer*) correlations (ICCs) capture the proportion of item variability which is due to the interviewers' individual systematic differences. High intra-interviewer correlations indicate that responses from respondents interviewed by the same interviewer are more similar than otherwise would be expected, and are suggestive of differences between interviewers in the way they interact with respondents during the interview. Intra-interviewer correlations reported in the literature usually range between zero and 0.05. In previous ESS rounds, however, much larger interviewer effects have been observed in several countries (Beullens & Loosveldt, 2016; Beullens et al., 2014).

Figure 7.7 shows the distribution of intra-interviewer correlations estimated for Israel in Round 8.<sup>30</sup> The intra-

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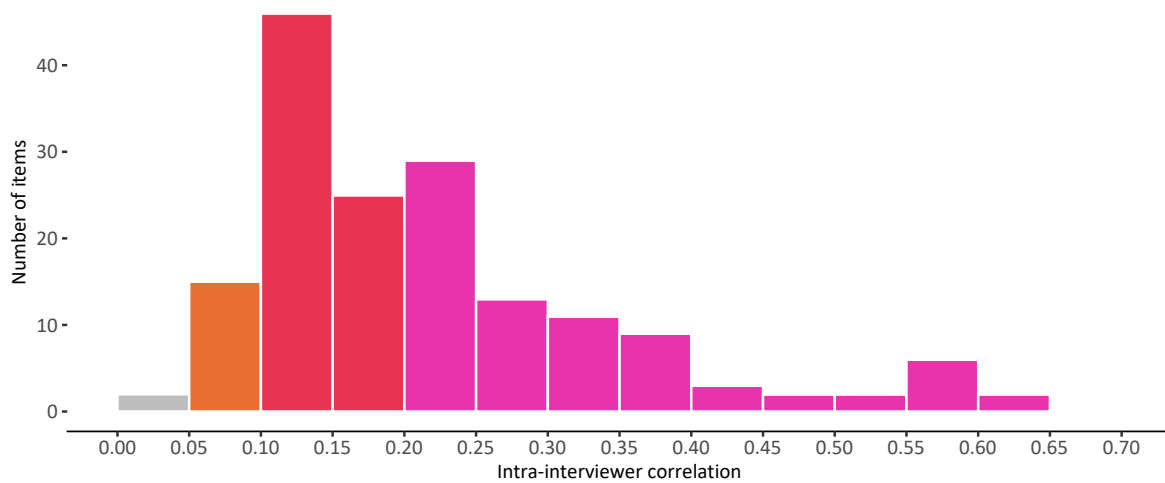
<sup>30</sup>Intra-interviewer correlations were estimated from linear models with an interviewer-level random effect for all numeric items and ordinal items measured on at least a 4-point scale in the Round 8 main questionnaire ( $N = 165$ ). To control for similarities between respondents arising from area effects rather than interviewer effects, the geographical region (REGION) and self-reported degree of urbanization (DOMICIL) of respondents' domicile are included in the models. Note that, for Israel, no separate geographical regions are distinguished and only self-reported degree of urbanization (DOMICIL) can be included to control for area effects. Estimates for items administered by fewer than 30 interviewers or from fewer than 5 respondents for each interviewer are suppressed. Note that,

**Table 7.1** (No answer) item nonresponse (top 25 items), Israel, Round 8

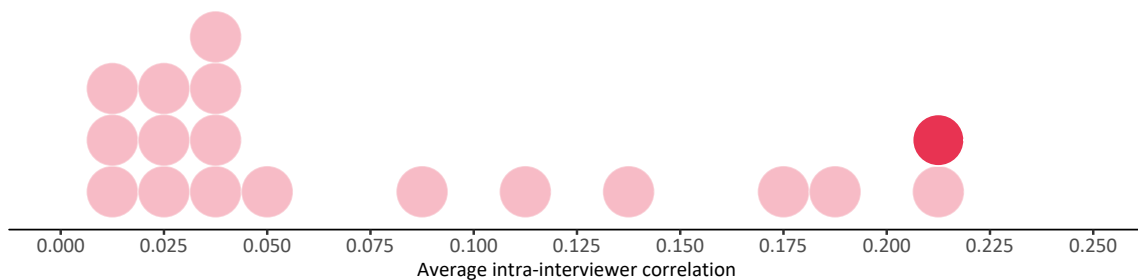
Item	Question	'No answer'
mnactp	F45c Partner's main activity last 7 days	7.45%
rlgdnm	C12 Religion or denomination belonging to at present	3.09%
crpdwkp	F46 Partner, control paid work last 7 days	1.84%
dscr	C19 Discrimination of respondent's group	1.43%
emprelp	F50 Partner's employment relation	1.28%
isco08p	F47-F49 Occupation partner, ISCO08	1.28%
wkhtotp	F51 Hours normally worked a week in main job overtime included, partner	1.28%
dngp	F45a Partner doing last 7 days	0.66%
edulvlpb	F44 Partner's highest level of education	0.66%
rshpsts	F6 Relationship with husband/wife/partner currently living with	0.66%
emplno	F22 Number of employees respondent has/had	0.62%
marsts	F11 Legal marital status	0.30%
njbospv	F26 Number of people responsible for in job	0.29%
pdjobyr	F20 Year last in paid job	0.24%
pdjobev	F19 Ever had a paid job	0.18%
crpdwk	F18 Control paid work last 7 days	0.18%
testgi5	I5 Qualification for immigration: good educational qualifications	0.12%
testgi6	I6 Qualification for immigration: christian background	0.12%
testgi7	I7 Qualification for immigration: work skills needed in country	0.12%
wrkctra	F23 Employment contract unlimited or limited duration	0.10%
wkhct	F29 Total contracted hours per week in main job overtime excluded	0.09%
emplrel	F21 Employment relation	0.09%
estsz	F24 Establishment size	0.09%
iorgact	F28 Allowed to influence policy decisions about activities of organisation	0.09%
isco08	F33-F34a Occupation, ISCO08	0.09%

**Note:**

Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.



**Figure 7.7** Interviewer effects, Israel, Round 8  
**Note:** Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.



**Figure 7.8** Interviewer effects, first release countries, Round 8  
**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

interviewer correlations range between 0.0216 and 0.6118, with an average of 0.2187 ( $SD = 0.1289$ ,  $N = 165$ ). Most of the estimated intra-interviewer correlations ( $N = 163$ ) exceed 0.05. Many ( $N = 148$ ) even exceed 0.10.

Relative to the other first release countries, interviewer effects are very large. About half of the first release countries managed to keep the average interviewer correlation below 0.04 (Figure 7.8).

Figure 7.9 provides an alternative visualization of interviewer effects in Israel, with the estimated Round 8 intra-interviewer correlations plotted as items are positioned over the questionnaire. Module differences are statistically significant ( $F(7) = 5.72$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The observed differences in intra-interviewer correlations across modules suggests that some topics and/or types of questions are more at risk of interviewers deviating from the basic interviewing task rules.

Table 7.2 presents the top 25 items with the highest intra-interviewer correlation estimates for Israel. The recurring of these items may require additional attention during the interviewer briefings.

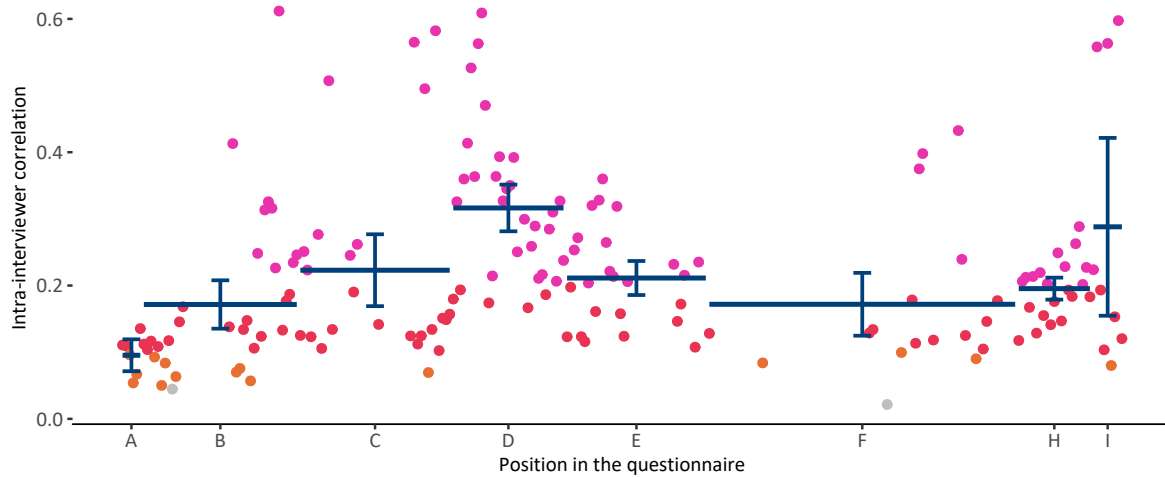
for Israel, none of the estimates are based on fewer than 100 interviewers (the recommended number of groups at the second level for estimating random effects); 23 are based on fewer than 10 respondents for each interviewer (as likewise recommended).

**Table 7.2** Interviewer effects (top 25 items), Israel, Round 8

Item	Question	ICC
imsmetr	B38 Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority	0.6118
elgwind	D9 How much electricity in [country] should be generated from wind power	0.6089
testgi9	I9 Qualification for immigration: christian background	0.5975
testgc40	C40 Qualification for immigration: christian background	0.5822
testgc34	C34 Qualification for immigration: christian background	0.5650
testgi6	I6 Qualification for immigration: christian background	0.5632
elgsun	D8 How much electricity in [country] should be generated from solar power	0.5629
testgi3	I3 Qualification for immigration: christian background	0.5581
elghydr	D6 How much electricity in [country] should be generated from hydroelectric power	0.5265
atchctr	C9 How emotionally attached to [country]	0.5073
testgc37	C37 Qualification for immigration: christian background	0.4953
elgbio	D10 How much electricity in [country] should be generated from biomass energy	0.4702
hinctnta	F41 Household's total net income, all sources	0.4325
elngas	D5 How much electricity in [country] should be generated from natural gas	0.4136
lrscale	B26 Placement on left right scale	0.4130
wkhtot	F30 Total hours normally worked per week in main job overtime included	0.3980
wrdpfos	D14 How worried, [country] too dependent on fossil fuels	0.3933
wrtradc	D18 How worried, energy supply interrupted by terrorist attacks	0.3921
wkhct	F29 Total contracted hours per week in main job overtime excluded	0.3751
wrdpimp	D13 How worried, [country] too dependent on energy imports	0.3637
elgnuc	D7 How much electricity in [country] should be generated from nuclear power	0.3635
sbeqsoc	E11 Social benefits/services lead to a more equal society	0.3600
elgcoal	D4 How much electricity in [country] should be generated from coal	0.3599
wrtcfl	D17 How worried, energy supply interrupted by technical failures	0.3502
wrinspw	D16 How worried, energy supply interrupted by insufficient power generated	0.3452

**Note:**

Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.



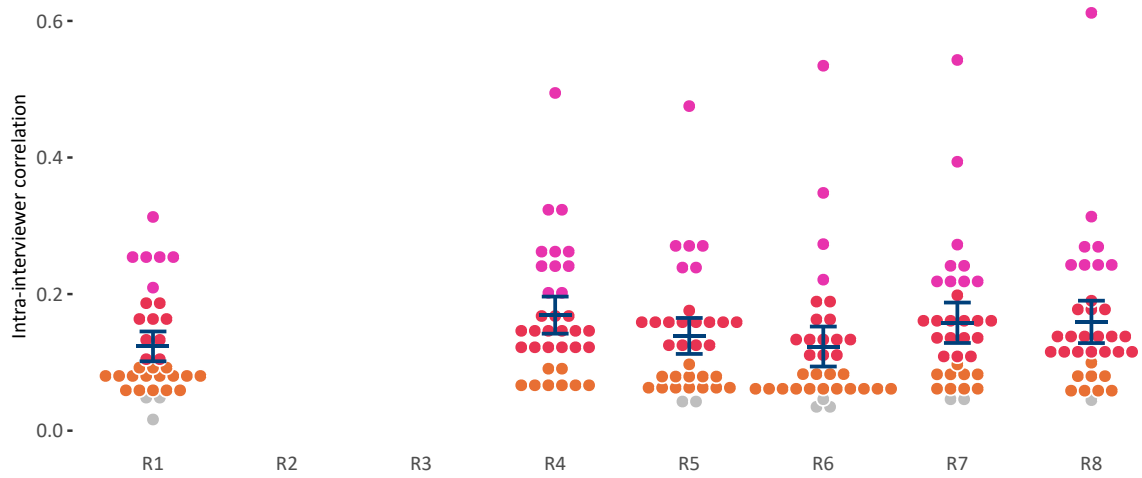
**Figure 7.9** Interviewer effects over the main questionnaire, Israel, Round 8

**Note:** Horizontal bars represent module means, error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

In order to assess whether interviewer effects have changed (preferably, decreased) over subsequent rounds, we consider a set of 34 questionnaire items which were repeated in each round.<sup>31</sup> The distribution of intra-interviewer correlations for these items across the rounds is visualized in Figure 7.10.

There is a statistically significant *increasing* trend in the intra-interviewer correlations across rounds ( $F(1) = 6.42, p = 0.012$ ).

<sup>31</sup>The relevant variables are AESFDRK, EDUYRS, ESTSZ, FREEHMS, GINCDIF, HAPPY, HEALTH, HHMMB, IMBGECO, IMDFETN, IMPCNTR, IMSMETN, IMUECLT, IMWBCNT, POLINTR, PPLFAIR, PPLHLP, PPLTRST, PRAY, RLGATND, RLGDGR, SCLACT, SCLMEET, STFDEM, STFECO, STFEDU, STFHLTH, TRSTEP, TRSTLGL, TRSTPLC, TRSTPLT, TRSTPRL, TRSTUN and YRBRN.



**Figure 7.10** Interviewer effects for 34 repeated items over rounds, Israel, Rounds 1-8

**Note:** Horizontal bars represent round means, error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Based on ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

## 8 PARADATA AND OTHER AUXILIARY DATA COLLECTION

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The ESS does not only provide access to high-standard social survey data, it also promotes the collection of auxiliary data, both on the data collection process and on national and international events during the data collection period. Survey methodological research benefits greatly from the kind of fieldwork and interview related paradata that are made available. Substantive researchers, too, should be able to evaluate the quality of the data on which their findings are based, and are supported in contextualizing their conclusions.

### 8.1 FIELDWORK PARADATA

The contact form is the main instrument by which data on the fieldwork process is collected. Using the contact form, interviewers have to record, for each sample unit assigned to them, the result of the household and within-household selection procedure (if applicable), the date, time, mode and outcome of all their contact attempts (whether successful or not), details about any refusals, and dwelling and neighbourhood observations. Although paper contact forms are still allowed, electronic contact forms are highly recommended.

Most of the first release countries used electronic contact forms. Paper contact forms were used in Israel. Only 3 of the first release countries used both electronic and paper contact forms, and 4 other countries also used exclusively paper contact forms.

In order to evaluate the completeness of the contact forms data, we focus on three key indicators: (1) the proportion of interviews completed at the first recorded contact attempt,<sup>32</sup> (2) the proportion of contact forms with complete information on the date, time, mode and outcome of contact attempts,<sup>33</sup> and (3) the proportion of contact forms with complete interviewer observations on dwelling and neighbourhood.<sup>34</sup> The results are presented in Figure 6.4.

For Israel, 50% of the interviews were completed at the first recorded contact attempt. Relative to the other first release countries, the first-attempt interview rate is very high, suggesting that concerns about unrecorded contact attempts should be raised in Israel. In about half of the first release countries, up to 19% of the interviews were completed at the first recorded attempt.

5 of the 131 interviewers that administered at least ten interview, did not record any unsuccessful attempts prior to any of their completed interviews, supporting the conclusion that not all interviewers properly recorded unsuccessful contact attempts.

All sample units have complete contact attempt information.

Only 4 of the other first release countries also managed to deposit contact forms data without any missing values in the recorded contact attempts, but the number of missing values is negligible for most countries.

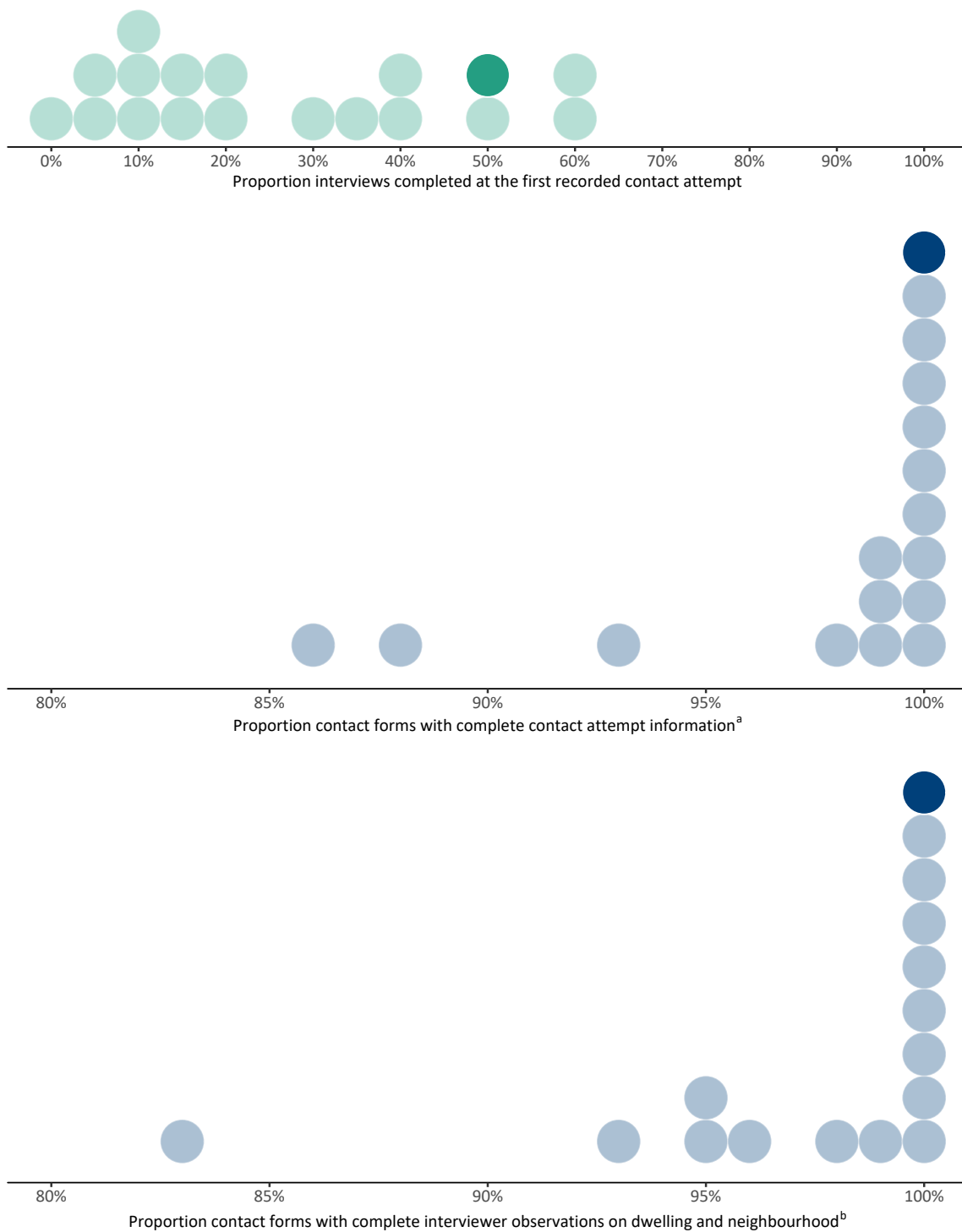
Dwelling and neighbourhood observations were completely recorded for all sample units (for which observations should have been recorded) in Israel. 6 of the first release countries also managed to deposit contact forms data without any missing values in the interviewer observations. For several other countries, the number of missing interviewer observations is very small.

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<sup>32</sup>Some interviewers may fail to record unsuccessful contact attempts, in particular attempts without any contact. Unreasonably high first-attempt interview rates suggest that not all contact attempts were properly recorded.

<sup>33</sup>The relevant variables are TOTCINx, INTNUMx, DATEn, MONVn, DAYn, HOURVn, MINVn, MODEVBn, RESULBn, OUTNICn.

<sup>34</sup>The relevant variables are TYPE, ACCESS, PHYSA, LITTERA, VANDAA.



**Figure 8.1** Completeness of contact forms, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0.

<sup>a</sup> Refusals because of opt-out list are excluded. The scale is cut at 80% (excluding Iceland) for clarity.

<sup>b</sup> Ineligibles, target respondents who have moved, refusals because of opt-out list and untraceable addresses (for which no interviewer observations are required) are excluded. Norway and Sweden, where these observations are not collected because of privacy regulations, are not represented.

## 8.2 MEDIA CLAIMS

In the ESS, national and international events that may have contributed to the observed patterns in the survey data are captured on the basis of claims in the media. Media claims have to be recorded systematically over at least a ten week period (preferably longer), starting one week before the start of the fieldwork period.

The media source document for Israel was properly submitted before the start of media claims recording period. All but 1 of the first release countries managed to do so. No major issues with the source document were raised, either for Israel or for any of the other countries.

Media claims were collected in all but 1 of the first release countries.

In Israel, media claims recording started at the beginning of September 2016 (only 6 days before the start of the fieldwork period), and was completed by the end of November 2016. Claims were recorded for 12 weeks and covered 50% of the fieldwork period. No major issues with the media claims data were raised, either for Israel or for any of the other first release countries that deposited media claims data.

## 9 DATA PROCESSING

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Once the data is collected, the survey data and paradata has to be finalized and, along with the relevant documentation, deposited to the ESS Archive, in principle by the end of February (two months after the end of the targeted fieldwork period). Some items require post-coding before deposit. The national teams are also expected to check and edit the data with respect to uniqueness and consistency of identification numbers, wild codes and data consistency, and possible risks to confidentiality before deposit.

### 9.1 POST-CODING

A small number of items require coding of verbatim recorded answers. Two of these items requiring (complete) post-coding are those on respondents' and their partners' occupation. In Israel, occupation is coded directly into ISCO-08 by dedicated coders after data collection. No verbatim recorded answers were double coded, but an adjudicator checked both difficult cases and a subsample.

If occupation codes are not aggregated or suppressed to limit the risk of indirect identification, missing and aggregated codes suggest that the coders may have been unable to find an adequate code based on the verbatim answers recorded by the interviewers. Note that in Israel, occupation codes were not edited (aggregated or suppressed) for the purpose of avoiding indirect identification. Respondent occupation (ISCO08) is coded to the four-digit level for all respondents for which a code is available. 0.09% of the respondent occupation codes are missing (see Section 7.5, p. 47).

### 9.2 ANONYMISATION

National teams are responsible for ensuring that data files that will be made publicly available are anonymised in accordance with national and EU regulations before deposit. At a minimum, respondent and interviewer identification numbers should be anonymous and the REGION categories should cover sufficiently large populations. Depending on the population characteristics, however, people may still be personally identifiable on the basis of (combinations of) the recorded sociodemographic data. National teams are therefore expected to assess the risk of indirect identification and to apply anonymisation techniques if necessary.

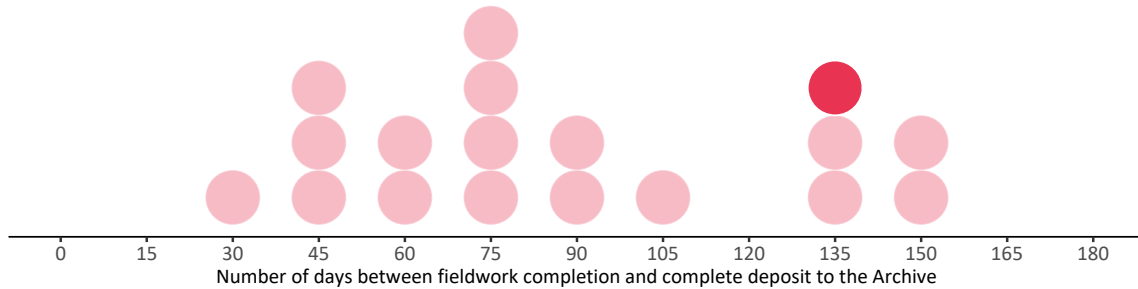
Risk of indirect identification of respondents was assessed in Israel and 13 other first release countries.<sup>35</sup> For Israel, some variables were edited accordingly. Editing for the purpose of reducing the risk of indirect identification was also done in 6 of the other first release countries.

### 9.3 DEPOSIT

As shown in Figure 1.1 (p. 8), deliverables for Israel were deposited over a period of about 2 months. The contact form data file, interviewer questionnaire data file, media claims file, main data file, National Technical Summary, NTS appendices, parents' occupation data file and raw data file were deposited by the end of April 2017. The sample design data file was deposited (and the deposit was considered complete) by the end of June 2017.

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<sup>35</sup>Most countries compared multivariate distributions of at least some key variables to corresponding population statistics.



**Figure 9.1** Preprocessing time, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on information from the ESS Archive

Note that timely depositing is a challenge for many countries. Of the first release countries, only Norway managed to make a complete deposit by the end of February.

When the fieldwork starts late and/or is extended beyond four months, it may be difficult or even impossible to make a complete deposit by the specified deposit deadline. However, there are also marked differences between countries in the time between fieldwork completion and deposit (Figure 9.1). In Israel, a complete deposit was made about 4 and a half months after the end of the fieldwork. This is very long. Most of the first release countries managed to deposit within 3 months.

#### 9.4 PROCESSING BY THE ARCHIVE

One of the first of the Archive’s processing checks is on the consistency of identification numbers of respondents and interviewers across data files. In Israel, some issues with both the respondent and the interviewer identification numbers were identified. 6 first release countries managed to deposit data files without any inconsistencies with respondent or interviewer identification numbers.

As an overall indicator of the intensity of the processing, consider the number of edited values in the main data. 0.39% of values in the main data of Israel were edited over the course of processing. Relative to the other first release countries, this is not very high (Figure 9.2).

Note that processing errors in the ESS have not yet been extensively studied, but *overcleaning* data files before deposit (i.e. covering up inconsistencies which cannot be resolved) is also detrimental to data quality.

#### 9.5 IDENTIFICATION OF ERRORS IN THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT IMPLEMENTATION

In some cases, errors in the implementation of particular items in the questionnaire and/or the showcards are detected during processing. For France, for example, some (minor) CAPI errors in several items were identified, partially explaining the observed (‘No answer’) item nonresponse. For the United Kingdom, the large number of missing interview durations were likewise attributed to a CAPI error. Even though such errors are likely to occur in many countries, they often remain unidentified and unreported. Transparency about (even minor) errors should nonetheless be beneficial to ESS data users.

For Israel, the household grid variables were recorded only for up to 12 persons.



**Figure 9.2** Processing edits, first release countries, Round 8

**Note:** The highlighted dot represents Israel. Based on information from the ESS Archive

No major deviations were reported for Israel.

Major errors in the survey instrument implementation, as well as most minor errors, should be avoidable by proper checking of the survey instrument before and during the national pretest (see Section 4.2, p. 17). In any case, errors detected during fieldwork or processing should be properly disclosed.

## 9.6 IDENTIFICATION OF INVALID AND INCOMPLETE INTERVIEWS

Some interviews may be flagged, during or after the fieldwork, and possibly removed from the main data. Interviews may be flagged as incomplete by the interviewers, the national team or the ESS Archive. Interviews may be flagged as invalid (e.g. identified on the basis of quality control back-checks) by the national team. With the increased attention for undesirable interviewer behaviour and interview falsification, the Round 8 ESS data was subject to additional checks by the ESS Archive. Distinctive patterns in the main and timer data may raise doubts about interview quality, and the interviews concerned may be suppressed on the basis of 'poor interview quality'.

For Israel, no interviews were excluded from the main data, and no interviews in the main data were flagged for item nonresponse.

**Table 9.1** Incomplete, invalid and poor quality interviews, Israel, Round 8

	n
Complete interview, flagged for item nonresponse in main data	0
Incomplete interview, excluded from main data	0
Incomplete interview, flagged for item nonresponse in main data	0
Incomplete interview, not flagged for item nonresponse in main data	0
Invalid interview, excluded from main data	0
Poor quality interview, partially suppressed in main data	0
Poor quality interview, suppressed in main data	0

**Note:**

Based on ESS8 data from Contact forms, edition 2.0 and ESS8 integrated file, edition 1.0.

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