

Improvements in survey quality over time – lessons learnt from Eurofound’s pan- European surveys since 1995.

Daphne Ahrendt & Sophia MacGoris

CSDI – Quality in Cross-cultural surveys

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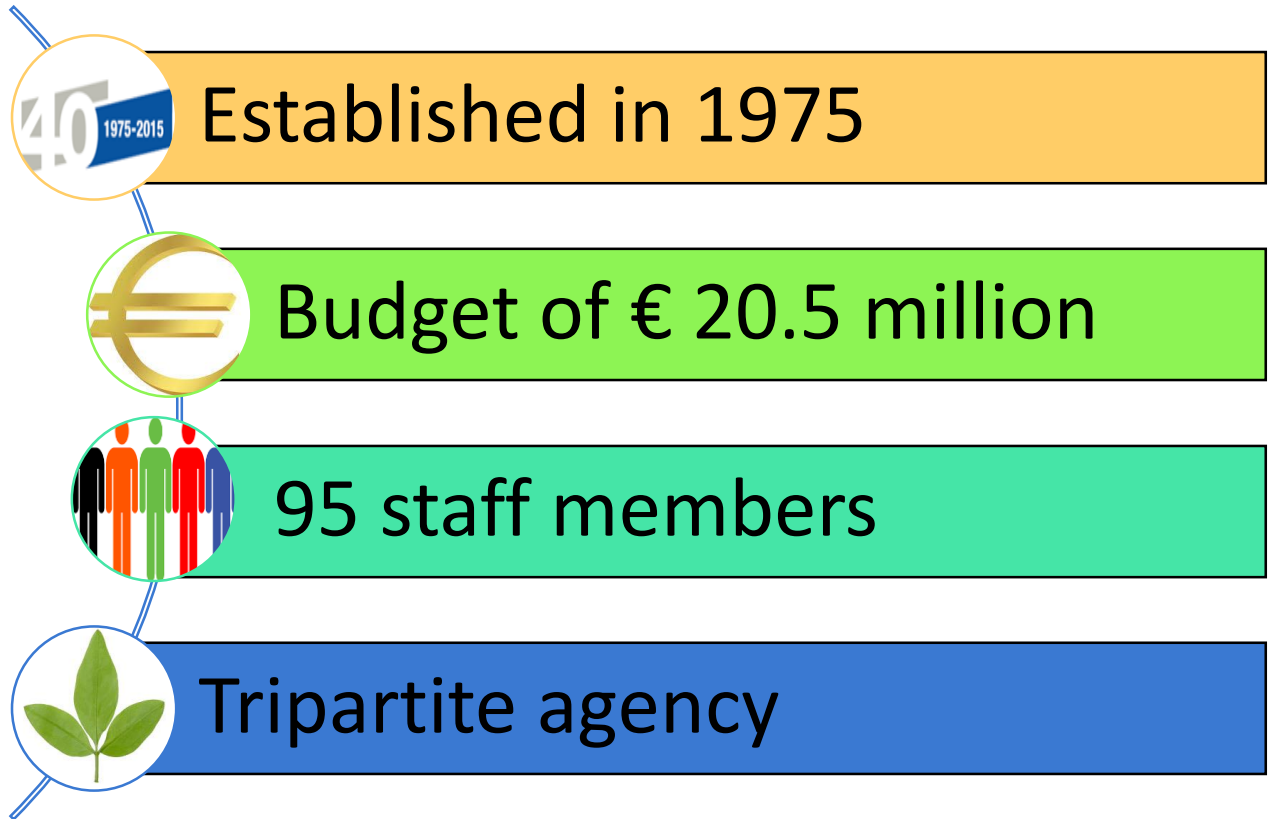
What we will cover...

- Setting the context:
 - Eurofound - a tripartite EU Agency
 - Eurofound surveys
 - Focus on quality
- Quality from a 'Total Survey Error' perspective:
 - Improvements over time
- Quality from a 'Survey Production Quality' perspective:
 - Improvements over time
- Challenges and the future of surveys

Eurofound – the basic facts



European Foundation
for the Improvement of
Living and Working
Conditions



Europe-wide surveys



EWCS

1990/91; 1995/96; 2000;
2005; 2010; 2015; **2020**



EQLS

2003; 2007/8; 2011/12;
2016; **2022**



ECS

2004; 2009; 2013;
2019

Overview of the 3 surveys

EWCS

- Population of workers aged 15+ living in private households
- 35 countries surveyed in 2015: EU28, 5 candidate countries, Norway and Switzerland
- Multi-stage stratified probability sampling
- Use of sampling frames where updated high quality address or population registers are available; else enumeration
- Face-to-face CAPI
- 1000+ interviews per country
- Top-ups in Belgium, Spain and Slovenia

EQLS

- Population of residents aged 18+ living in private households
- 33 countries surveyed in 2016: EU28 and 5 candidate countries
- Multi-stage stratified probability sampling
- Use of sampling frames where updated high quality address or population registers are available; else enumeration
- Face-to-face CAPI
- 1000+ interviews per country
- Top-up in Italy

ECS

- Population of establishment of 10+ employees
- 32 countries surveyed in 2013: EU28 and 4 candidate countries
- CATI; Move to push-to-web in 2019
- 250-1500 establishments per country
- All sectors except NACE Rev 2 categories A, O, P, Q, T & U
- Joint collaboration with Cedefop in 2019

Eurofound surveys...

- are a basis for a series of focused EF reports, but the data are by far not exhausted
- have a wealth of information for academic and policy-oriented research
- Provide a basis for advice on Eurostat task groups for filling in the gaps and shaping indicators (e.g. LFS ad-hoc modules on accidents at work, working time and work organisation, SILC 2016 module on public services)
- Provide potential for future combined analysis ('data matching') between official statistics and Eurofound survey data



... so our focus is on obtaining high quality data by...

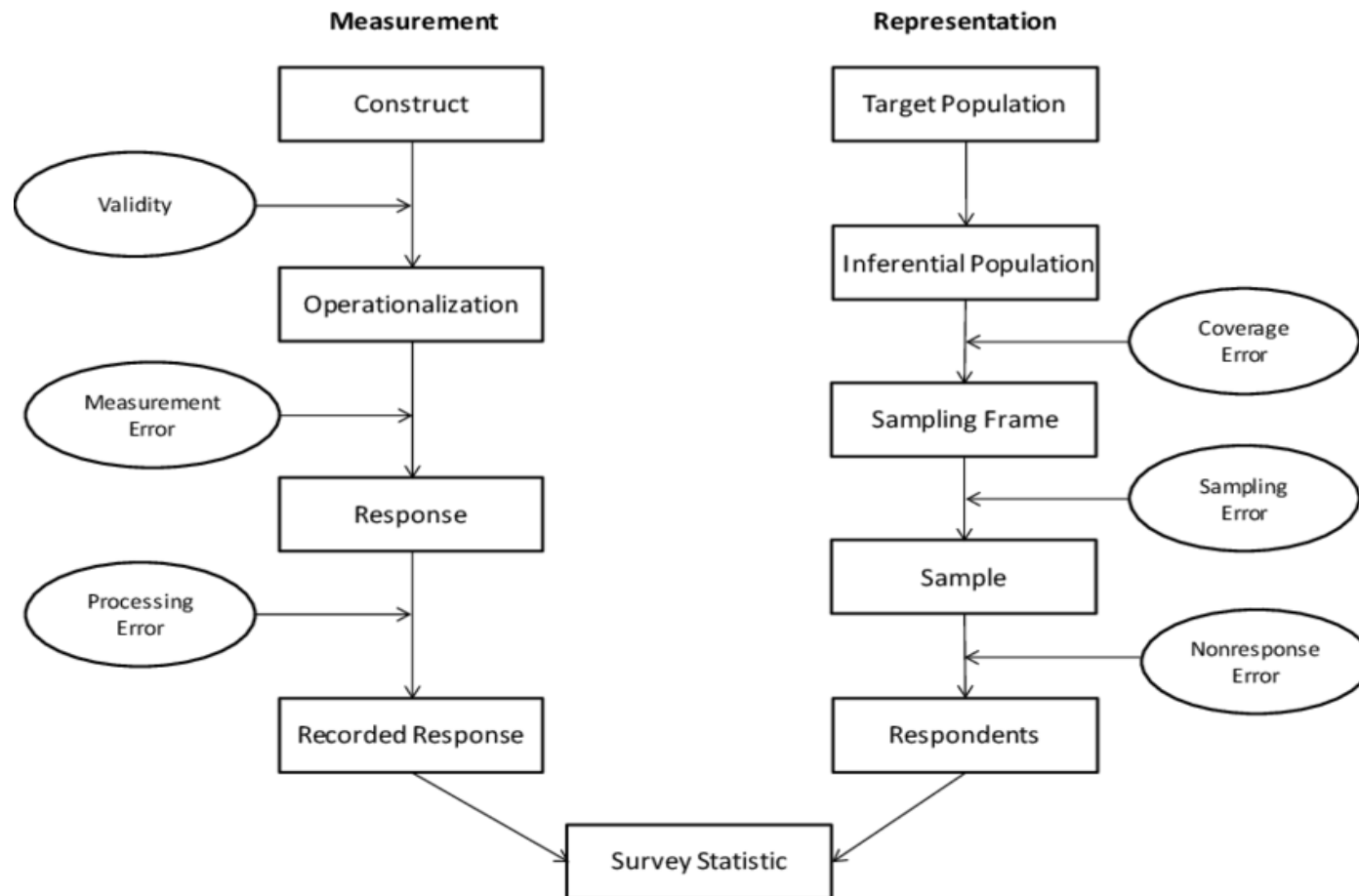
- ...using the Total Survey Error approach: coverage, sampling, non-response and measurement error
- ...alignment with the European Statistical System: relevance & timeliness, accuracy, accessibility, coherence
- ...closely monitoring and comprehensively documenting the survey production process

When we first started we did....

- Selection of addresses by interviewers following random route
- Back translation
- PAPI questionnaires
- ...and other things that are now...



Focus on quality from 'a total survey error' perspective



TSE improvements introduced over time

Measurement error

Translatability

Cognitive testing

TRAPD

Representation error

Use of high quality registers

Enumeration as a separate stage when registers are not available

Selection of starting points in PSU using lists or geo-mapping instead of landmarks

Rules on number and size of PSUs

Standardized method for calculating response-rates

Focus on quality from a 'survey production quality' perspective

Survey production quality

ESS Quality dimensions applied at all stages of the process

		Relevance & Timeliness	Accuracy	Accessibility	Coherence & Comparability	Punctuality
Planning & Design						
Sampling & Weighting	Sampling					
	Weighting					
Questionnaire	Questionnaire					
	Translation					
Pre-Fieldwork	Fieldwork infrastructure					
	CAPI / data entry process					
	Training of fieldwork managers and interviewers					
Fieldwork	Fieldwork					
Post-Fieldwork	Data processing					
	Micro data					
Analyses & Dissemination						

Survey production quality

PRODUCT	PROCESS	ORGANISATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor required to produce clear and comprehensive reports for every stage of the process Minimum requirements set (e.g. 10% of interviews back-checked) in order to achieve high quality data EF makes available all methodological reports and microdata to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every EF survey is developed taking into account quality assessment of previous surveys, lessons learnt, user survey and input from experts Outputs are built in stages and are discussed and agreed (proposed a strategy, agree a final plan, produce a report) Contractor's work is closely and systematically monitored by EF (e.g. fortnightly/weekly teleconferences) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One person allocated to all three surveys to ensure continuity and cross learning One person to oversee that transparent and comprehensive documentation provided by contractor and archived by EF Contractor and EF work within a Quality Assurance Framework List of quality indicators established with targets for contractor and EF

Quality assurance framework

Developed by EF in 2013 and based on the quality concept of the European Statistical System, the Cross-Cultural Survey Guidelines and the Total Survey Error Approach.

3 elements:

- **Quality assurance:** planned procedures and activities to ensure that the survey meets quality requirements
- **Quality control:** planned system of process monitoring, verification and analysis of indicators of quality, and updates to quality assurance procedures, to ensure that quality assurance works
- **Quality indicators:** list of measurable indicators on the basis of which the quality of the survey processes and output will be monitored and assessed

Quality indicators

Quality indicators cover all aspects of the survey from beginning to end. Targets for both contractor and EF.

1. List of quality indicators provided to tenderers outlining
 - targets that **have to be** achieved (red)
 - targets that **are aimed to be** achieved
2. Tenderer confirms/proposes benchmark targets for non-red ones
3. EF and contractor agree benchmarks for non-red targets.
4. Indicators to be integrated into all aspects of the survey
4. Quality indicators file updated regularly by contractor
5. Final quality indicator list produced by contractor at end of project

Quality indicators – some improvements

Quality indicators first introduced in ECS 2013 as part of quality assurance framework and have now been in use for 4 surveys.

Initially, language a bit complicated and list of indicators very long and some possibly unrealistic or superfluous

With experience and feedback from contractors:

- Simplification of language and clear messages in quality framework
- Reduction and simplification of indicators
- Target categories reduced from three to two
- Indicators discussed and reviewed intensively at kick-off meeting
- Introduction of “evidence” column

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Challenges for Eurofound

Trade-offs...

...between survey quality and logistics/costs

...between innovation and continuity

...between surveys and other research



Thank you