THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY’S EXPANDED FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT

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3MC
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Structure

• Background: the ESS and its goals
• Quality in the ESS in general
• Quality reports after fieldwork: examples
Background
Background

• **European Social Survey (ESS):**
  - Measures beliefs, attitudes and behaviour
  - Across time: every two years since 2002
  - Across countries:
    - 36 in total
    - ± 20 per round
Background

- Core objectives:
  - Produce data available to all
  - Continuous improvement in rigour & equivalence of comparative quantitative research
  - Develop & gain acceptance for social indicators incl. attitudinal measures as indicators of societal progress

- Multi-mode experiments
- SQP & TRAPD
- SERISS: fieldwork monitoring, CRONOS, …
Quality in the ESS
Quality in the ESS

- Different phases require different roles and approaches
  - Base
  - Process
  - Output
Quality in the ESS

Base

Survey climate

The National Coordinator and Fieldwork organisations as local experts

• CAPI vs. PAPI
• Pre-testing
• Advance letters / leaflets / incentives
• Sampling, e.g. stratification, respondent within HH
• Fieldwork planning & checks
• Translation, e.g. badges/stickers vs. flags/scarfs
• Interviewer training, e.g. shoes in Slovenia
• Anonimization of data
• …

Available resources

Variation is expected
Quality in the ESS

The Core Scientific Team as

- Provider of materials and specifications, e.g. sampling & translation guidelines, briefing materials, fieldwork specifications, contact forms, data protocols,…
  - Methods advisory board
  - Scientific advisory board
  - Questionnaire development team
Quality in the ESS

Base

- Survey climate
- Available resources

Process

- Survey

The Core Scientific Team as

- Provider of materials and specifications
- Monitor:
  - Domain experts, e.g. sampling team, translations team, fieldwork team, data deposit team,…
- Country contacts

Variation is expected

Variation should be kept to a minimum
Quality in the ESS

The Core Scientific Team as

- Provider of materials and specifications
- Monitor

→ “If the process of gathering data is good, there is no need to worry about the quality of the final product” (Lieber & Biemer, 2008)
Quality in the ESS

Base
- Survey climate
- Available resources

Process
- Survey
- Error

Variation is expected
- Variation should be kept to a minimum
- Variation should only reflect true variation

The Core Scientific Team as an assessor of quality:
- Deviations report
- Quality report
  - Overall & country-specific
  - Before start of fieldwork Round N+1
- Sample quality report (LFS)
The framework
What?

Base
- Survey climate
- Available resources

Process
- Survey
- Error

Output
- Data

Assessment

Variation is expected
Variation should be kept to a minimum
Variation should only reflect true variation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Which criteria?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>Pre-tests done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0% interviewer effects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ Absolute = not always sufficiently informative  
→ Descriptive information  
→ Absolute = not always realistic  
→ Across countries as context & inspiration
Examples
Contact attempts → Process → Interview → Output → Item non-response
Example 1: contact attempts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final NC’s</th>
<th>Compliance (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
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<td>177</td>
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<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 1: contact attempts

- Austria (AT)
- Denmark (DK)
- Finland (FI)
- France (FR)

- Germany (DE)
- Israel (IL)
- Netherl. (NL)
- Norway (NO)
Example 1: contact attempts
Example 2: item nonresponse
### Example 3: interviewer training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training length</th>
<th>Dummy</th>
<th>Photo</th>
<th>N total</th>
<th>N experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;8</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 4: interviewer effects
## Example 5: Media claims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sourced identified before fieldwork</th>
<th>Start 1 week before fieldwork</th>
<th>Covers entire fieldwork period</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 6: Nonresponse bias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Country A</th>
<th>Country B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Litter around home</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Diagram A" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Diagram B" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appartment</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Diagram A" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Diagram B" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenges
Challenges

• Need for more data & documentation
  o Tools and roles for optimal exchange of information
  o Gaps:
    • What happens during training & interview?
    • Other group membership: interviewers in sessions, respondents in regions,…
    • Why these differences in process?
• Timing of feedback
• Balance between autonomy & independent control
• Consequences vs. avoiding good/bad
  • SWOT analysis?
Thank you

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