Comparative Survey Design and Implementation 2015

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Quality Control of Variables Harmonized Ex-Post
An Analysis of 22 International Survey Projects

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Target variables

$T = f(S)$

$T = b_0 + b_1 Q + b_2 \mathbf{H} + b_3 X + e$

S – source variable

T – target variable

Q - quality controls

H - harmonization controls

X - other substantive variables

e - random error

Harmonization Controls

features of the question or questionnaire that are likely to affect the target (harmonized) variable

e.g.

wording of questions

type of response scale
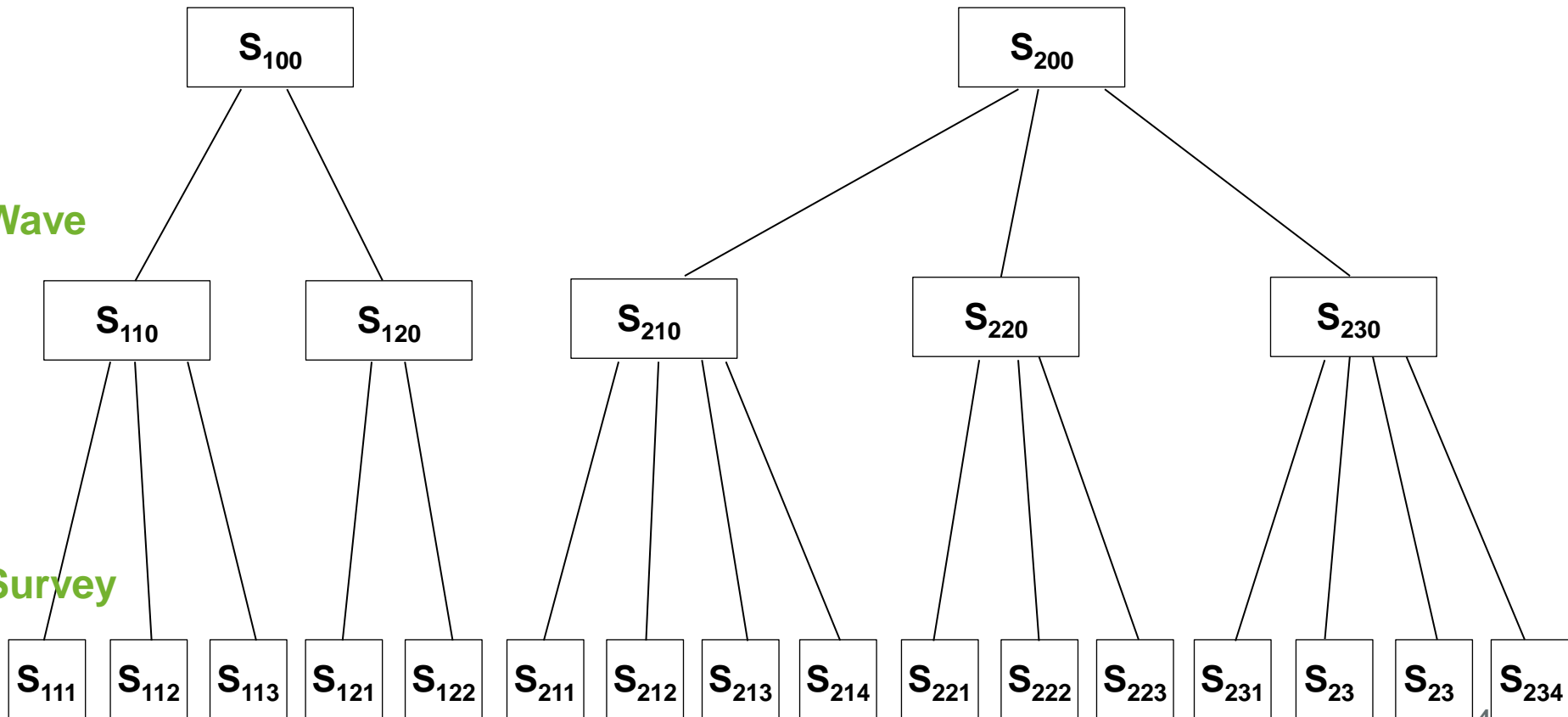
position of question in questionnaire

National survey, Wave, Project

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Example: Trust in parliament

17 projects

62 waves

1211 surveys

1,541,644 individuals (unweighted)

Example: Trust in parliament

Wording, meaning of „trust"

Response options/scale (scale length, direction)

Context of the question (position in questionnaire)

Wording

I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it. (EB 77.3)

In order to get ahead, people need to have confidence and to feel that they can trust themselves and others. To what degree do you think that you trust the following totally, to a certain point, little, or not at all? (CDCEE 2)

Please look at this card and tell me, for each item listed, how much confidence you have in them, is it a great deal, quite a lot, not very much or none at all? (EVS 4)

Wording

English - trust (ESS) vs. confidence (EVS); synonyms, subtle differences

Albania - the same (besim)

Belgium (dut) - the same (vertrouwen)

Belgium (fr) – the same (confiance)

Bulgaria – the same (доверие)

Croatia – the same (povjerenje)

Czech Republic – the same, noun and verb (důvěra / důvěřovat)

Denmark – the same (tillid)

Estonia – the same (usaldate)

Poland – the same (zaufanie)

Scale length

2 (EB)

4 (AFB, ARB, ASB, ASES, CDCEE, EVS, LB, NBB, WVS)

5 (CB, ISSP, LITS, VPCPCE)

7 (AMB)

10 (EQLS)

11 (ESS)

Position in questionnaire

- Based on master/core questionnaire for each wave

Range: 6 (ARB 1) – 320 (EVS 1)

Mean: 87.5

Quartiles: 23; 62; 136

Example: Trust in parliament

Wording, meaning of „trust" **– stable within project**

Response options/scale (scale length, direction) **– stable within project**

Context of the question (position in questionnaire) **– stable within wave**

Preliminary analysis

Trust $= b_0 + b_1 Q + b_2 H + b_3 X + e$

H includes:

- type of original scale (significant)

- position in questionnaire (not significant)

Next steps

Construct additional controls for trust in parliament and other variables of substantive itnerest.

Analyze the data with existing and additional controls (model choice).

Acknowledgements

dataharmonization.org

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