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

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Target variables

\[ T = f(S) \]
\[ T = b_0 + b_1 Q + b_2 H + b_3 X + e \]

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

Project

Wave

Survey

S_{100}

S_{110}

S_{112}

S_{113}

S_{121}

S_{122}

S_{211}

S_{212}

S_{213}

S_{214}

S_{221}

S_{222}

S_{223}

S_{231}

S_{23}

S_{234}
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)
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

\[ \text{Trust} = b_0 + b_1 Q + b_2 H + b_3 X + e \]

\( H \) 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 interest.

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