

Working Group Position Paper

on mixed-mode data collection in household surveys

Minutes of the 7th meeting

July 26th, 2021

Participants: Fiona O’Callaghan (Ireland), Clelia Romano (Italy), Claudia de Vitiis (Italy), Nadja Lamei (Austria), Thomas Burg (Austria), Patrick Sillard (France), Ferenc Mújdricza (Hungary), Zoltán Vereczkei (Hungary), Petra Fekete-Nagy (Hungary), Gwennaëlle Brilhault (France)

Excused: Fiona O’Riordan (Ireland), Andreja Smukavec (Slovenia), Martina Stare (Slovenia)

Minutes of the 6th meeting are validated.

This mid-summer meeting was an opportunity to review the progress of the drafting of the synthesis document, in particular on two points:

1. Analysis of the survey
2. Contributions to the Position paper

Concerning point 1 (Analysis of the survey), contributions were sent by **T. Burg** on SILC W1, **G. Brilhault** on ICT, **C. de Vitiis** and **C. Romano** on HBS, **F. Mújdricza**, **Z. Vereczkei** and **P. Fekete-Nagy** on question 1.4 of the LFSw1.

G. Brilhault explains that ICT may be seen as rather specific with respect to multimode because of its theme which makes the internet and phone collection more natural for collection. The main message is that most of countries had multimode protocols before the pandemic and then after, only the proportion changed. For those who did not have CAWI or CATI, they introduced it after the pandemic and intend to keep them. These countries used to collect ICT with CAPI. Cost-effectiveness, better quality, comfort for interviewers (time saving) and, for this topic, the fact that the Internet is the natural means of collection for this precise survey are the reasons mentioned for keeping the multi-mode collection mode.

C. de Vitiis presents the results on HBS. It is in general a CAPI-oriented survey. Some countries (not all) have introduced CATI during the Covid. And the majority who changed the mode do not intend to keep the changes. There is a question about terminology as there might be some confusion between the term "mixed mode surveys" (which you can collect with different modes of collection) and surveys where some parts have to be collected outside the main collection mode, with a specific survey tool (such as with a headset for very sensitive questions). We need to be aware of this possible confusion in the analysis of the questionnaire and further analysis is needed to see whether it is the case or not. In HBS there is a diary that is collected apart so misunderstandings of this kind are plausible. And responses per mode look a bit odd: there are missing values (about 10). Some

interesting remarks are given for keeping the changes. **G. Brillhault** mentions the case of France which did not undertake the survey after the crisis. Maybe other countries are in the same situation explaining the low response rate.

T. Burg presents the SILC Wave 1 analysis. He analyzed in a descriptive way the responses (mean, max, min). It appears that there is an increase of the number of the modes used after March 2020. Apparently, the increase of response rate might be associated to the increasing use of CATI. The pandemic is the main driver of the introduction of new modes (mainly CATI). Selection of mode is possible for the respondent for about 30% of countries, with an increase after March 2020. Only 5 countries will keep the changes and the majority will not. So there have been significant changes with the Covid.

P. Sillard summarized by saying that countries had generally experimented with new collection methods during the Covid crisis. This idea, which was given as a basis to start our reflection now, is now validated. The question about the intention to keep the changes, for which the answer is generally not very positive, also shows that the changes were more undergone than desired. Even if the experience is new, it needs to be reworked because countries are not totally comfortable with what they have done. The point about the response rate is also interesting because it appears that in many cases the response rate increased during the crisis, even though this was not obvious and one might have thought that the opposite would happen.

T. Burg says that it would be good to see if there is a correlation between the possibility of selecting the mode and the response behavior.

N. Lamei asks if we are going to publish the results by country, or if we are only going to publish aggregated levels?

P. Sillard considers that there are two questions: 1) are there other dimensions of analysis than the survey blocks by survey blocks, as we have organised the work, and perhaps cross-analysis of the surveys at country level? 2) are we going to publish the data at the micro level, which assumes that the countries agree with this publication? **G. Brillhault** suggested starting with the macro analysis which should be the priority. **F. Mújdricza** thinks that we need to analyse the data at the level of each country in order to detect possible misinterpretations. As the number of countries is small, statistics are of limited interest here. **T. Burg** thinks that the issue raised here is the detection of outliers. And **T. Burg** thinks that putting in annex all the results would require that all the countries accept to do so.

P. Sillard thinks that a flat analysis of the survey blocks is meaningful. Of course we have to be careful about outliers. For the questions at the end of the survey (groups 7-8), it might be useful to have at the same time a view of the answers given by the country in the rest of the questionnaire. So it would be great if we would have time to make a kind of cross-analysis. But this should be given a lower priority than the cross-countries macro-analysis of blocks of questions.

Z. Vereczkei gives an overview of the analysis of the block of questions concerning the next steps the countries are awaiting and suggesting. First, it appears that a workshop could be useful and we could identify topics for this workshop and highlight a given country in relation to the responses he gave to the questionnaire. It could be a way to associate ESS member states to the following steps.

Second, the ESTP training program should evolve in order to integrate some aspects concerning surveys and multimode data collection. Third, many countries are interested to participate to a specific task force. Maybe an expert group could be interesting as well. Anyway, a forum where the countries can share information would be undoubtedly useful.

So far, the coherence of countries' internal responses has not been analysed, but it might be useful to look into this dimension. For part 8, 9 countries provided suggestions for future plans. We need time to make progress with the analysis but we need to continue with this so that we have a complete set of materials available for discussion at the end of August. **P. Sillard** thinks that we will probably limit the analysis of the questionnaire to a kind of flat analysis. **T. Burg** suggested to agree on a set of indicators in order to end up "spontaneously" with a homogeneous analysis, at least for parts 1 to 6.

T. Burg and **P. Sillard** are going to prepare, with reactions of **C. de Vitiis**, on the case of SILCW1, a template for the analysis of the survey blocks. This template will be prepared for July 30.

Nevertheless, as **F. Mújdricza** mentioned, even if there is a template for the analysis, the responsible of a given survey block should be aware of the fact that some responses may show some inconsistencies that are detectable with the analysis of the full responses that a country gives for a survey block. And this qualitative analysis should be undertaken country by country in order to detect possible misunderstandings of the questions. At the end, if the answer given to a specific question seems to be in some way inconsistent, then the considered country should be removed for the computation of the figures requested in the template for this question.

In conclusion:

- For the analysis of the survey blocks, a template should be followed. This template will be produced on the SILCW1 case by **T. Burg**, **P. Sillard** and **C. de Vitiis**, for July 30. All those in charge of a survey block (1-6) should produce the figures and should comment them, according to the template. They should also have a look at the consistency of the responses of the block at the country level in order to identify, for each question, the appropriate set of countries that are to be taken into account, in particular to produce the figures.
- Blocks 7 and 8 should also be analyzed with a production of figures (distribution) when it is sensible, and suitable comments and qualitative analysis.
- **Z. Vereczkei** presented his proposal from the motivation part of the position paper. It appears to be of suitable length and consistent to what was said before. As the contributions were received shortly before the meeting, it was not possible to discuss them further during this meeting. We will do that at the next meeting. In between, written comments are welcome on **Z. Vereczkei**'s proposal and on **M. Stare**'s proposal on paragraph 4.