Book Review

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Timothy P. Johnson, Beth-Ellen Pennell, Ineke A. L. Stoop, and Brita Dorer, eds. *Advances in comparative survey methods: Multinational, multiregional and multicultural contexts*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2019. ISBN 978-1-118-88498-0, 1104pps.

This book grew out of a 2016 multinational, multiregional, and multicultural contexts (3MC) conference held in Chicago. The book follows in the steps of [Harkness et al. \(2003\)](#) as well as [Harkness et al. \(2010\)](#). It is divided into 12 sections and 48 chapters. In addition to an introduction, the sections include sampling approaches; cross-cultural questionnaire design and testing; languages, translation, and adaptation; mixed mode and mixed methods; response styles; data collection challenges and approaches; quality control and monitoring; nonresponse; multi-group analysis; harmonization, data documentation, and dissemination; and looking forward.

The book addresses an audience of survey researchers who collect and compare data across nations, regions, and cultures. The book describes what 3MC researchers are currently doing and guides others who are doing similar work. For 11 of the 12 sections, the focus is on designing and implementing various stages of 3MC surveys. The final data harmonization section is on recycling data from existing studies.

The introductory section presents the promise of 3MC research as the ability to treat surveys as a unit of analysis based on the growing number of national-level surveys. Importantly, the section expands the total survey error paradigm to include comparison error for each model component. The section also promotes mixed methods research as a validity framework.

The sampling approaches section includes chapters on GIS technology (for studies where census data is not current) and within-household respondent selection (with an eye toward future methods). The section discusses cluster and household selection (e.g., via satellite photos) for readers interested in innovatively using GIS technology though the discussion could serve monocultural researchers as well. The section also suggests that cross-national surveys could serve to implement research on selection techniques for face-to-face surveys.

The cross-cultural questionnaire design and testing section discusses questionnaire design for comparative researchers in 3MC survey contexts. The section particularly discusses population-specific sensitive questions, anchoring vignettes to avoid culturally-based differential item functioning, differences in communication styles, bilingual cognitive testing, and the comparability of behavior coding.

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The section on languages, translation, and adaptation initially discusses how to optimize interview language choice across preparatory (researcher and field manager) and field (interviewer and respondent) stages relative to group and individual level multilingualism. The section suggests that administration language influences respondents' answers, especially for bilingual respondents. One chapter addresses readers who "collect, organize, and make good use of" documentation (Behr et al. 2019, 341) and provides information on the input and output of translation documentation. The section ends by comparing translation measurement properties through a coding scheme based on the Survey Quality Predictor software.

The mixed modes and mixed methods section distinguishes across- and within-country mixed mode designs for reducing coverage and non-response error or to reduce cost. The section continues by discussing mixed mode adjustment methods including logistic regression, propensity score matching, calibration to predetermined values, and a multiple imputation method. The section also discusses technological opportunities for expanding mixed methods by distinguishing designed from organic data.

The section on response styles starts by questioning the cross-cultural comparability of subjective probability response patterns. It then discusses attitudinal rating response styles across cultures, particularly acquiescent and extreme response styles. One recommendation is testing for measurement invariance. The section ends by discussing translation of balanced or unbalanced response scales with reference to five surveys in four countries and by cautioning against naïvely comparing data from different countries and languages.

The section on challenges and approaches to data collection emphasizes dimensions of social and cultural context, political context, economic conditions and infrastructure, physical environment, and research traditions and experience. The chapter on sub-Saharan Africa discusses challenges with not knowing what proportion of a population is nomadic, language multiplicity, insecurity, and limited resources. It suggests that the increase in communication hardware and software could mitigate data deprivation. The chapter on the Middle East and Arab Gulf focuses primarily on Qatar and recommends anchoring vignettes to address the limitation of directly-posed questions. The chapter on Latin America and the Caribbean discusses five comparative survey projects and cites challenges of increasing violence and lack of current census information. The chapter on India and China suggests options for moving beyond the dominant face-to-face mode.

The data collection section suggests study branding, collecting contact information, between-wave contact, and customized approaches to respondents. The chapter on multinational event history calendar interviewing promotes a standardized approach, providing feedback to interviewers as soon as possible, adjusting the order of domains and adapting interviewer training according to cultural differences, providing an additional device on which respondents can see the calendar, and using paradata as a means to make behavior coding more efficient. The chapter on the collection of biological samples in a survey discusses but does not address differing cultural acceptability of obtaining blood samples. A theoretical chapter discusses quality relative to principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. The section ends by discussing the General Data Protection Regulation's promise to harmonize legislation and practice.

The quality control and monitoring section pays particular attention to survey quality as pertaining to all survey life cycle phases. Two of the section's five case studies are set in India, one in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and two in Europe. The section emphasizes that firms as well as interviewers have fabricated data and recommends sharing information concerning fabrication as a way of deterring firms from the act.

The chapters in the nonresponse section provide a discussion of the sources of nonresponse bias and how this may differ across cultures. The section lays out several strategies for minimizing nonresponse across countries such as attending to characteristics of sampling frames and gathering paradata. A nonresponse model for within-household cooperation in the California Health Interview Survey desirably provides a cultural ecosystems framework but is unfortunately based on phone numbers as a proxy of community. The section ends by explaining how nonresponse arises when non-national language speakers lack the option of answering in their native language.

For analysts or data users, the multi-group confirmatory factor analysis section addresses exact and partial measurement invariance as well as approximate measurement invariance with Bayesian priors in Mplus.

The section on harmonization, data documentation, and dissemination introduces a database of "22 large international survey projects encompassing 1721 individual surveys from 142 countries" with nearly 2.3 million individuals (Granda 2019, 933). The section defines survey data recycling as "a framework for integrating information from extant survey and nonsurvey sources to create multicountry multiyear data sets" (Slomczynski and Tomescu-Dubrow 2019, 937), drawing on total survey error, total survey quality, and total quality management. One chapter identifies types of data processing errors including illegitimate variables values, misleading variable values, contradictory variable values, variable values discrepancy, and lack of variable value labels. The section proposes classifying item metadata as new variables relevant for assessing "intersurvey reliability and validity of variables created via *ex post* harmonization of survey data" (Kołczyńska and Slomczynski 2019, 1027). Ultimately, the section discusses the quality of existing design and post-stratification weights, as well as the advantages of recalculating weights.

The final section on looking forward presents a concern that covering too many populations or countries fails to allow properly handling processes. The section summarizes prevailing problems of different research camps or traditions; the cost of 3MC surveys; need for strong central leadership; need to strengthen user roles for policy impact; and issues related to data quality such as overly specialized methodologists.

The book's balance of qualitative and quantitative chapters accentuate mitigating total survey error to enhance quality. Notably, "the overarching goal of 3MC surveys is to minimize comparison error" (Scott et al. 2019, 719). Most chapters describe what 3MC researchers are currently doing and offer practical suggestions for designing surveys to mitigate error components. Furthermore, several chapters offer cautions for interpreting existing data sets. Readers who conduct 3MC surveys, use 3MC survey data, or who want to expand their awareness of quality assurance and control in such contexts will benefit from reading the book.

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