Understanding Household Surveys

Designing Household Surveys to Measure Poverty
Perugia, Italy
November 2017
Demand for Data is Increasing

• Evidence-based policy making
  • Is the public sector delivering good services? Are they properly targeted?
  • Are country policies, donors’ development strategies reducing poverty?
  • Is aid supporting poverty reduction?

• Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
  • Measuring more than 200 indicators
  • Need for understanding (lack of) progress in indicators
The SDGs provide a unique opportunity, but ...
... need to go beyond indicators!


- Household surveys, particularly integrated surveys, provide a unique source of data to achieve that!

- Integration at different levels
  - Within same instrument
  - Across surveys and censuses (e.g. small area estimation)
  - Across other data sources (e.g. geo-spatial, administrative)
Collecting Household-level Data

• Variety of instruments about and from households/individuals:
  • Administrative data
  • Case studies
  • Qualitative/participatory assessments
  • Censuses
  • Household Surveys
Household Surveys

• Surveys provide a large number of variables on a probability sample of the population

• But ...
  • Can be infrequent, expensive, and inconsistent over time
  • Limitations on disaggregation
    • Spatially
    • Rare events/populations
    • “Leave no one behind”
  • Also, with raising living standards and urbanization, increasing non-response rates
  • In developing countries, (over?) reliance on just a few internationally-sponsored household surveys
Heterogeneity in Household Surveys

• Initial purpose of the survey drives the way survey is designed and implemented
  • Different agenda/question \(\rightarrow\) different instrument

• An increasingly crowded field in a world of increasingly scarcer resources!

• Scope for better coordination and value addition.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUMENT</th>
<th>SPONSOR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Censuses</td>
<td>UNFPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Expenditure /Budget Surveys (IES/HBS)</td>
<td>Central Banks, IMF, NSOs</td>
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<td>Labor Force Surveys (LFS)</td>
<td>ILO</td>
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<td>Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)</td>
<td>USAID</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaires (CWIQ)</td>
<td>UNDP, DfID</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS)</td>
<td>Stat Norway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC)</td>
<td>Eurostat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA)</td>
<td>WFP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated, Multi-Topic Surveys:</td>
<td>World Bank, RAND, NSOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)</td>
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<td>• Integrated Surveys (IS),</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Family Life Surveys (FLS)</td>
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Heterogeneity in Surveys

• Dimensions of a possible typology ...

  1. “Representativeness”
  2. “Directness” of measurement
Dimensions: “Representativeness”
Dimensions: Subjective/Objective

- Direct measurement
- Questionnaire (quantitative)
- Questionnaire (Qualitative)
- Structured interview
- Open meetings
- Conversations
- Subjective assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>Purposive selection</th>
<th>Quota sampling</th>
<th>Small prob. sample</th>
<th>Large prob. sample</th>
<th>Census</th>
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Household Budget Surveys (HBS)

- **Purpose:** collect information on household expenditures to produce or update the weights for consumer price indices as well as to provide inputs for national accounts.

- Countries often add modules on income to their HBS in order to facilitate the measurement of national income as well (Income Expenditure Survey or IES).

- Besides expenditures, topics can include:
  - basic demographic information
  - education levels
  - employment/labor
  - In some countries, several additional modules added

- Supported by Central Bank, IMF, NSOs
Labor Force Survey (LFS)

• **Purpose:** measure and monitor indicators of a country’s labor market and economic situation; often used for planning and evaluating many government programs

• Done monthly in many developed countries; quarterly or annually or less frequently (if at all) in most developing countries

• In some countries, used to measure poverty (income-based monetary measure)

• Topics include those related to labor:
  • employment,
  • unemployment
  • earnings
  • hours of work
  • occupation, industry, and class of worker
  • supplemental questions: income, previous work experience, health, employee benefits, and work schedules
  • other sources of income/poverty measurement

• Supported by ILO, Ministry of Labor
Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)

- **Purpose:** collect data on demography and health (primarily maternal & infant health)
- Started in 1984 (continuation of the World Fertility Survey and the Contraceptive Prevalence Surveys that had been done previously)
- More than 300 DHS surveys have been done in 90+ countries
- Topics usually covered by the surveys include:
  - basic characteristics of the household and the respondents,
  - child health, education
  - family planning, fertility and fertility preferences
  - HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes and behavior
  - infant and child mortality
  - maternal health
  - nutrition
  - welfare measure based on asset ownership
- Supported by USAID, now through ICF International
Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)

- **Purpose:** monitor progress on the 1990 World Summit for Children Goals
- Assessing the situation of children and women around the world
- Six waves so far, MICS VI started in 2016, also to collect info for SDGs
- In some countries, merged with DHS
- Main topics covered
  - child-related MDGs, now SDGs
  - child health and mortality
  - reproductive health and contraceptive use
  - literacy, child protection
  - domestic violence
  - nutrition
  - water and sanitation
  - housing
  - labor
- Supported by UNICEF
Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire (CWIQ)

• **Purpose:** measure and monitor a limited range of human development indicators, including access, utilization and satisfaction with social services. Also, poverty proxies.

• Mainly done in Africa in the 1990s and 2000s

• Conceived to be conducted in conjunction with IHS-type baseline

• Topics/indicators:
  • Roster
  • Education use
  • Health access
  • Sanitation
  • Correlates of poverty

• Supported by World Bank Africa region
Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)

• Started in 1980s
• Purpose: measure poverty plus study household behavior, determinants of outcomes, and linkages among assets/household characteristics/livelihood sources/government interventions/welfare
• Unit of analysis is the household, as both a consuming and producing unit
• One survey collecting data on a range of topics is a more powerful tool for policy formulation than a series of single purpose surveys: the sum is greater than its parts!
  - Farmers are diversified
  - Poverty is multidimensional and impacted by many factors
• Supported by World Bank, IADB, some UN and bilateral agencies, NSOs
• Demand-driven: priority given to meeting the policy needs of individual countries, but with an eye to cross-country comparability based on int’l standards

• Implications
  • No standard set of LSMS questionnaires: content, length and complexity varies by country and, at times, over time within a given country
  • Questionnaire development: lengthy process linking data users, stakeholders and data producers
  • Capacity building, sustainability within national statistical offices

• SDGs providing push towards greater harmonization

• Working on development of standards as the basis for harmonization!
Living Standards Measurement Study (cont’d)

• **Welfare**: monetary and non-monetary measurement
  • Consumption expenditures (multiple purposes) but also income (determinant)

• **Multi-purpose** (beyond measurement/indicators)
  • Analytical tool to study behavior, understand phenomena, and analyze linkages

• **Multi-level**: community, household, individual, plot data
  • Gender-disaggregation

• **Geo-referenced**
  • Create publicly available “Geo-variables” as a solution to disseminate confidential data

• **Computer-assisted; strict quality-control protocols**
  • Using newly developed *Survey Solutions* CAPI platform

• **Public access**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Sample - # of households</th>
<th>Geographic disaggregation</th>
<th>Frequency of data collection</th>
<th>Period of data collection</th>
<th>Number of visits</th>
<th>Interview duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Censuses</td>
<td>All households in country</td>
<td>Any level</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>1 day to 1 month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>½ hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income / Expenditure Surveys (IES)</td>
<td>2,000-20,000</td>
<td>3-10 regions</td>
<td>1-5-10 years</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>1-2 hours per visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Force Surveys (LFS)</td>
<td>5,000-50,000</td>
<td>5-20 regions</td>
<td>Month ~5 yrs</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 minutes per active hh member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)</td>
<td>5,000-20,000</td>
<td>5-20 regions</td>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>3-4 months</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)</td>
<td>2,000-15,000</td>
<td>&lt;5 regions</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>3 months or less</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaires (CWIQ)</td>
<td>5,000-15,000</td>
<td>5-20 regions</td>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated, Multi-Topic Surveys (LSMS/IS/FLS)</td>
<td>3,000-7,000</td>
<td>3-8 regions</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>2-12 months</td>
<td>1 or more</td>
<td>2-4 hours per visit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lessons Learned

• Multitude of reasons to collect household data, multitude of different survey instruments
• Data needs and context must drive the design and implementation of the survey
• An increasingly crowded field in a resource- and capacity-constrained environment, yet ...
  • Often don’t have data we need (quantity and quality)
  • Inadequate coordination, overlapping
  • Poor integration, link to other data sources
• There are some promising new opportunities and developments
• Importance of thinking systemically, across surveys and, more broadly, across data sources
• Value addition of integration, both technical and institutional!
Further Information on Household Surveys

- DHS: [https://dhsprogram.com/](https://dhsprogram.com/)