Prof. Dr. Thomas Hinz (thomas.hinz@uni-konstanz.de)
University of Konstanz, Department of History and Sociology
Prof. Dr. Katrin Auspurg (auspurg@soz.uni-frankfurt.de)
Goethe-University Frankfurt, Department of Social Sciences

Survey Experiments

(Seminar to be held at TSNU Kyiv in September, 2014)

Motivation: Survey experiments have come to be a standard tool for investigating people's attitudes, values, opinions and decisions. In particular, there is an increasing use of methods that integrate multi-factorial experimental set-ups into surveys, like conjoint analyses, choice-experiments, and factorial surveys (which are sometimes also called vignette analyses). All these methods ask respondents to rate fictive situations or objects. By systematically varying attributes of the situations or objects, it is possible to determine their influence on the stated choices, decisions or attitudes. In addition, the method helps to find out the amount of social consensus. Do all respondents share similar values or are there differences across social groups like younger or older cohorts, people belonging to political elites or not? Researchers' controlled experimental variation of stimuli allows a reliable evaluation of the impact of the attributes. What is the more, the methods allows an explicit testing of decision processes and theories, as for instance choice experiments are explicitly designed to test Random Utility Theories (RUTs). As the experiments are embedded in a survey design, it is a relatively simple means of reaching a heterogeneous sample population. The methods' potential to reduce social desirability bias provides another motivation for using these experiments in research on norms of political action, democratic values, or the likelihood of compliance with social norms. Therewith, the method helps to inform the public and professionals on the political and social situation in countries, which is key to stabilize democratic development.

Course content and learning objectives: The course gives a theoretical and practical overview on experimental survey methods (conjoint analysis, choice experiments, and in particular factorial surveys). Participants will learn and discuss the features, typical applications, advantages, and shortcomings of different methods, with a special focus on the measurement of social norms and values. Key element of the course will be the development of an own small survey experiment (factorial survey): Students will get practical insights into all single steps that are needed to design survey experiments, starting with the specification of the assumed decision rule, going on with the specification of attributes, selection of an experimental design, draft of questionnaire up to analysis of data from a small pilot-study. Participants might select a research question related to their own thesis for these practical exercises. Based on this experience, at the end of the course all participants should be able to start own work with experimental survey methods and to assess the strength and limitations of different experimental designs.

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Instructors: Dr. Katrin Auspurg, Prof. Dr. Thomas Hinz (University of Konstanz).

Course prerequisites: Basic knowledge of data management and data analysis with statistical software (e.g. Stata), and questionnaire design is required.

Literature:

To be read in preparation before the course:

Mutz, Diana C. (2011): Vignette Treatments. In: Mutz, Diana C.: Population-Based Survey Experiments. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press: Chapter Four (pp. 54-67).

Rossi, P.H./Anderson, A.B. (1982): The Factorial Survey Approach: An Introduction. In: Rossi, P.H./Nock, S.L. (Eds.): Measuring Social Judgments. The Factorial Survey Approach. Beverly Hills: 15-67.

Wallander, Lisa (2009) 25 Years of Factorial Surveys in Sociology: A Review. Social Science Research (38):505-520.

Further recommended readings (* can be provided):

Acock, Alan C. (2012): A Gentle Introduction to Stata. College Station, Texas: Stata Press.

*Amaya-Amaya, Mabel, Gerard Krug and Mandy Ryan (2008): Discrete Choice Experiments in a Nutshell. Pp. 13-46 in: Ryan, Mandy, Karen Gerard, and Mabel Amaya-Amaya (Eds.): Using Discrete Choice Experiments to Value Health and Health Care. → Chapters 1 to 3.4 ("Introduction - Experimental Context and Questionnaire Development"; pp. 13-23).

*Atzmüller, C./Steiner, P. (2010): Experimental Vignette Studies in Survey Research. Methodology 6:128-138.

*Dülmer, H. (2007): Experimental Plans in Factorial Surveys: Random or Quota Design?Sociological Methods & Research 35: 382-409.

*Eifler, Stefanie (2007): Evaluating the Validity of Self-Reported Deviant Behavior Using Vignette Analyses. Quality & Quantity 41: 303-318.

*Faia, M.A. (1980): The Vagaries of the Vignette World: A Comment on Alves and Rossi. American Journal of Sociology 85: 951-954.

*Hox, J.J./Kreft, I.G.G./Hermkens, P.L.J. (1991): The Analysis of Factorial Surveys.Sociological Methods & Research 19: 493-510.

*Jasso, G. (2006): Factorial-Survey Methods for Studying Beliefs and Judgments. Sociological Methods and Research 34: 334-423.

Kohler, U./Kreuter, F. (2012): Data Analysis Using Stata, Third Edition. Austin, TX: Stata Press.

*Kuhfeld, W.F. (2010): Marketing Research Methods in SAS. Experimental Design, Choice, Conjoint and Graphical Techniques. Cary: SAS Institute.

*Kuhfeld, W.F./Randall, T. D./Garratt, M. (1994): Efficient Experimental Design with Marketing Research Applications. Journal of Marketing Research 31: 545-557.

*Sauer, Carsten/Auspurg, Katrin/Hinz, Thomas/Liebig, Stefan/Schupp, Jürgen (2014): Method Effects in Factorial Surveys: An Analysis of Respondents' Comments, Interviewer's Assessments, and Response Behavior. SOEPpapers on Multidisciplinary Research 629. Berlin: Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW).

*Sauer, C./Auspurg, K./Hinz, Th./Liebig, S. (2011): The Application of Factorial Surveys in General Population Samples: The Effects of Respondent Age and Education on Response Times and Response Consistency. Survey Research Methods 5: 89-102.

Course schedule:

1) Monday, September 15th	*Morning Session (10.00 – 12.30)* Introduction to the idea and approach of Factorial Surveys; use of the method to study norms, values and political action. Selection of dimensions and levels, generation of vignettes: Part I *Afternoon Session (PC Lab) (14.00 – 17.00)* Refreshment and deepening of Stata knowledge, introduction for users of other programs.
2) Tuesday, September 16th	*Morning Session (9.00 – 12.00)* Vignette sampling techniques: random and fractional designs. *Afternoon Session (PC Lab) (14.00 – 17.00)* Selection of dimensions and levels, generation of vignettes: Part II
3) Wednesday, September 17th	*Morning Session* Response scales and survey modes; methodological research *Afternoon Session (PC Lab)* Generation of questionnaires (PAPI and CASI) and data preparation.
4) Thursday, September 18th	*Morning Session* Analysis of factorial Surveys data: Descriptive Statistics, mean comparisons, Cluster-robust OLS-Regressions Presentations by course members on research projects *Afternoon Session (PC Lab)* Multi-level analysis, willingness-to-pay analysis, methodological research.
5) Friday, September 19th	*Morning Session* Methodological research on factorial surveys: learning effects, fatigue effects, order effects. Related methods: conjoint analysis, choice experiments. Taking stock and final discussion.