

# ***Survey Harmonisation in Scotland***

***an overview of the theoretical and the practical***

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Scottish Social Survey Network**

## **The Background.....**

- **Many Government surveys**
- **Independent/isolated development**
- **One purpose**

## **Which meant.....**

- **Poor comparability of survey outputs**
- **Confusion for users**
- **Potential embarrassment for Scottish Government**
- **Timings off**
- **Duplicated costs**

The Theory.....

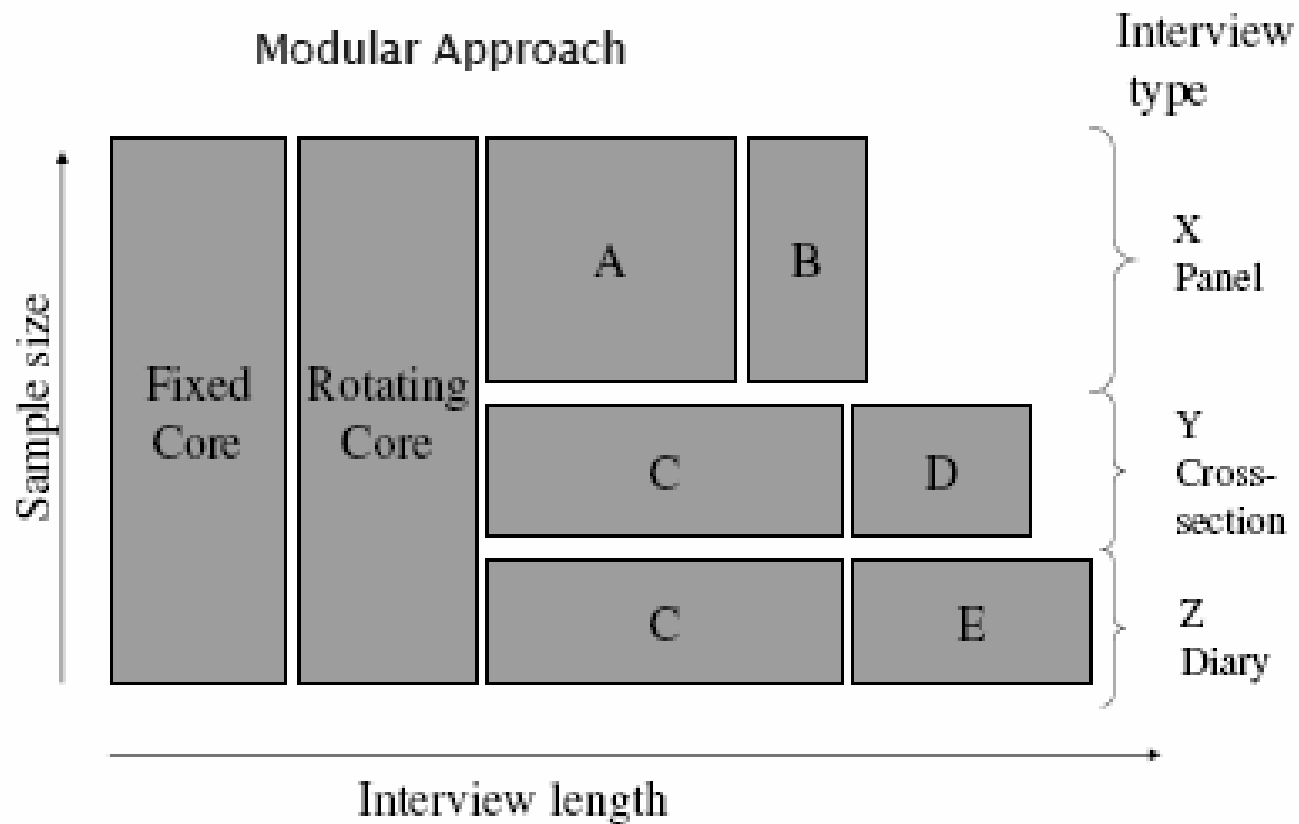
Survey Integration

OR

Survey Harmonisation

## **Survey Integration.....**

- **Merge 4-5 key surveys into 1 integrated survey**
- **Ask core set of economic and social questions of whole sample**
- **Ask non-core questions across subsets of the sample**
- **Ask specialist topic questions in modules across subsets of the population**
- **Re-brand component surveys**
- **e.g. ONS Integrated Household Survey**

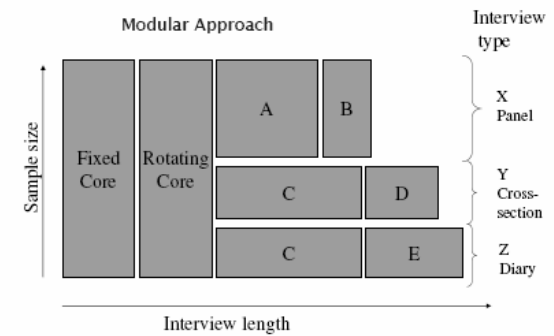
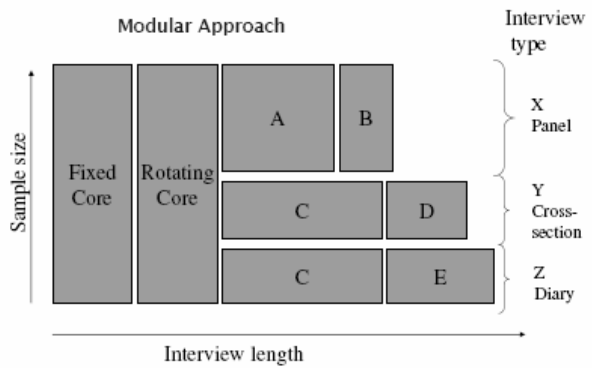
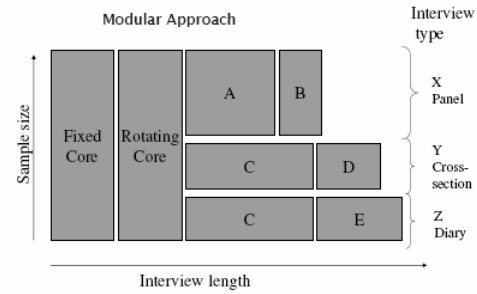
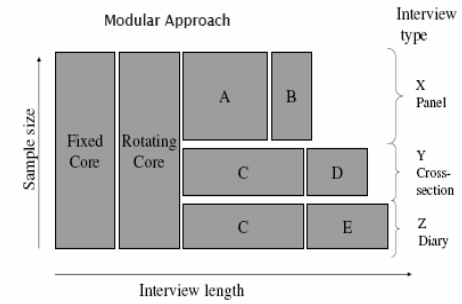
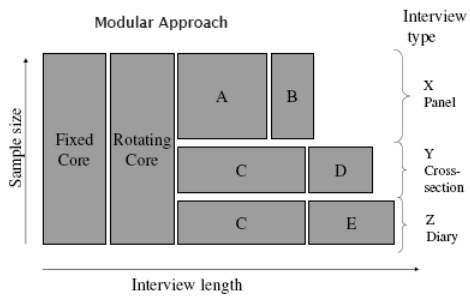


## **Drawbacks.....**

- **Costly**
- **Complicated**
- **Case management system**
- **Component Surveys may lose their identity**
- **Slow to disseminate (like the Census)**
- **No way back?**
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## **Survey harmonisation.....**

- Identify key surveys with harmonisation potential**
- Embed standardised questions and outputs into each survey**
- Each survey should adopt a core and modular structure**
- Each survey should demonstrate unclustered sampling**
- Policy driven dissemination from larger (pooled) samples**





## **Benefits.....**

- **More flexible than Integrated Survey model**
- **Surveys retain their unique identities and purpose**
- **Avoid duplication of effort and costs**
- **Topic experts e.g. Health Survey Statistician definitive authority on health related questions.**
- **Singing from same song sheet**
- **Communication within Scottish Government improved**
- **Harmonisation potential continues to be identified**

**Survey harmonisation appears to be the more effective model for Scotland's large scale surveys although survey integration has not been ruled out.**

**A decision has yet to be made but in the meantime survey harmonisation continues.**

**The story so far.....**

**Main focus has been on Scotland's 5 large scale Surveys:**

- **Scottish Household Survey**
- **Scottish House Condition Survey**
- **Scottish Crime and Justice Survey**
- **Scottish Health Survey**
- **Labour Force Survey**

**Other surveys involved GUS, FRS, SSAS and SEABs.**

**The Census 2011 is important in the harmonisation process.**

## **What is practical?**

- **Socio-economic core**
- **Survey design**
  
- **Respondent permission/consent incl. follow-ups**
- **Survey letters and leaflets**
- **Procurement**
- **Complaint handling**
- **Data Access Panel**

## **Socio-economic core**

- **Established a 20 question core by examining common survey questions and important questions**
- **Set up Scottish Harmonisation Working Group to review each question and its outputs to build a harmonised question bank**
- **SHWG members are the managers of Scotland's large scale surveys, managers of other Scottish surveys plus colleagues from GROS (Census) and policy areas.**

<b>People and Places</b>				
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age/DOB</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Household Relationships</b>	<b>Residence one year ago</b>
<b>I d e n t i t y</b>				
<b>Cultural/Ethnic Group</b>			<b>Religion</b>	
<b>H e a l t h</b>				
<b>Limiting long term illness/disability</b>			<b>Self perception of general health</b>	
<b>H o u s i n g</b>				
<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Accommodation Type</b>		<b>Accommodation Size (no. bedrooms, overcrowding)</b>	
<b>E m p l o y m e n t</b>				
<b>Economic status (ILO)</b>	<b>Full/part time</b>	<b>Banded Household Income</b>		<b>Attendance on government training scheme</b>
<b>E d u c a t i o n</b>				
<b>Education status</b>			<b>Highest qualification held</b>	
<b>T r a n s p o r t</b>				
<b>Access to car</b>			<b>Mode of transport to work/education/school</b>	

## **Survey design**

- **Adoption of a core and modular structure**
- **Unclustered sampling**
- **Set up the Methodology Forum Sub-group (MFSG) to examine survey methodology issues like weighting, sampling, time series, sample additivity methodology, omnibus etc.**

## **Respondent permission/consent incl. follow-ups**

- **Examine existing survey permissions and guarantees**
- **Consider ethical, legal and research issues**
- **Build a harmonised survey permission and follow-up template**



## Survey letters and leaflets

- Font
- Layout
- Design and logos
- Consistent and clear message
- Consistent contact details
- FAQs

# Procurement

- **Advertising considerations**
- **Contractor Consortiums**
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- **Pricing**
- **Contractual pitfalls**

## **Complaint handling**

- **Good procedural approach to resolving**
- **Feedback**
- **Central Complaint recording**

## **Data Access Panel**

- **Varied requests**
- **Panel allows standardised approach to such requests.**
- **Building expertise.**
- **Protection of respondents data is paramount**

## What next?

- **Website : Question bank**
- **Website : Surveys' Customer Service section**
- **Promote core and methodologies to smaller Government surveys**
- **Promote core and methodologies to local authorities**
- **Adopt a naming convention for variables**
- **Administrative Sources**
- **Longitudinal surveys**
- **Work on non-core questions**
  
- **Survey Integration or Harmonisation?**

**Communication is the KEY**

**Internal**

**Scottish Population Surveys Co-ordinating Committee  
Survey Managers' Network  
SHWG & MFSG**

**External**

**ONS groups (IHS-SG & NSHG)  
Scottish Social Surveys Network**

Any questions?