



Survey methods in migration research: design, implementation, and analysis

This new PhD-level course provides broad training on survey research methods, with an emphasis on applications in migration research. It spans all stages of survey research, from research design to communication of results, reflecting the view that each step is potentially decisive for overall quality and impact.

The course is designed to suit participants with diverse levels of previous knowledge and different needs in their own research. Under each topic, participants will be sensitized to the considerations, dilemmas, and options that will enable them to pursue relevant topics in greater depth on their own. The course draws upon the two lecturers' research experience over the past two decades.

Teaching will take place in person at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in Norway. The course is followed by a course on ethnographic fieldwork 12–14 September to enable a foundation for mixed-methods research. Interested participants must apply separately to each course.

Course details

Dates:
7–9 September 2022

Venue:
PRIO, Hausmanns gate 3,
Oslo, Norway

Organizer:
Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research
School on Peace and Conflict
(jorjen@prio.org)

Credits:
5 ECTS (with approved essay)

Contact:
Jørgen Carling
(jorgen@prio.org)

Application deadline:
10 June 2022



Lecturers

Jørgen Carling is Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and co-director of the PRIO Migration Centre. His research covers global migration, immobility and transnationalism, seeking to explain how migration arises, and how it affects societies, families and individuals. He holds a PhD in Human Geography and combines ethnographic and statistical methods, often in mixed-methods research designs. He currently leads MIGNEX, a large 10-country project on migration and development, as well as the ERC-funded project Future Migration as Present Fact (FUMI).'

Jessica Hagen-Zanker is a Senior Research Fellow at ODI, an independent, global development think tank based in London. Her research focuses on migration and development, migration decision-making, the links between migration and social protection, the humanitarian-development nexus as well as the analysis of social protection programmes and policies. She leads the survey component of the MIGNEX project. Jessica holds a PhD in Public Policy from Maastricht University and is affiliated with PRIO as a PRIO Global Fellow.

Course description

This course spans all the stages of survey research, with an emphasis on studies of migration, displacement, ethnicity and transnationalism. It is designed to be relevant to PhD candidates who carry out their own surveys as well as to those that work with pre-existing survey data. In addition, the course provides a foundation for planning survey-based migration research after the PhD. The sessions address research design, approaches to sampling, development of survey instruments, technical solutions, management of data collection, quality assurance, data cleaning, analysis, and communication of results. The course also includes a session on combining survey data with ethnographic data in mixed-methods projects. The lecturers draw upon experience from survey research at different scales, from one-person projects to large-scale international research. Under each topic in the course, a key objective is to sensitize participants to the considerations, dilemmas, and options that will enable them to pursue relevant topics in-depth on their own. The course will use examples of data collection with SurveyCTO and analysis with Stata, but familiarity with specific software is not a prerequisite. Participants may benefit from also pursuing courses on the specific statistical analyses they plan to use, either before or after completing this course.

Sessions

1. Introduction

Brief presentation of lecturers, participants and their research. Introduction to the course. Presentation of our approach to ethics as a cross-cutting dimension of research.

2. Research design

What kinds of research questions are best suited for survey research? How should research objectives inform the definition of populations, samples, and units of analysis? What are the options for designing surveys to analyse migration processes? How should your available resources (time and money) shape design choices? How can you plan for a respondent centred survey? What are the key ethical dimensions of survey research design?

3. Combining survey research with ethnography

What should survey researchers know about ethnography and other qualitative methods? How can survey research and ethnography be combined in mixed-methods research designs? At which

stages of the survey research process are connections with ethnography most valuable? What are possibilities for using ethnographic data or methods to strengthen survey research without a comprehensive mixed-methods design?

4. Approaches to sampling

What is important about sampling? What are key choices in defining populations and deciding on sampling levels, sampling frames, sampling methods and sample size? How should sampling procedures incorporate informed consent and other ethics-related concerns? What might be sound approaches to flexibility and adaptation when sampling theory meets real-world complications?

5. Development of survey instruments

How can the process of developing a high-quality survey instrument be organized? What are the most important aspects of the survey instrument design for ensuring data quality? What is an optimum instrument? How can different types of survey items be used? What are the options for obtaining high-quality data on migration histories, migration aspirations, migrant networks and other migration-related topics? How should survey instruments reflect ethical concerns? How can you design a survey instrument that works across contexts and languages? What are common pitfalls in survey instruments?

6. Technical solutions

How do self-administered and interview-based data collection compare? What are the pros and cons of the most common data collection modes (PAPI, CATI and CAPI)? Which considerations are important in selecting a technical solution, such as a software platform? What are the implications of data protection issues and GDPR for survey data collection?

7. Management of data collection

How does the institutional setup of survey data collection matter? How can you define and allocate the roles and responsibilities of survey data collection? What is a realistic timeline for developing and implementing a survey? How can the translation process for multi-language surveys be organised and quality-assured? How should ethical concerns be reflected in the management of data collection?

8. Quality assurance

What is 'quality' in survey research? How are weaknesses in quality at different stages of survey research reflected in the final data and publications? What are the key choices in planning a survey pilot? What is important in enumerator training? How can quality assurance be applied at different levels? Which specific techniques for quality assurance are available?

9. Data management

How can a data management plan (DMP) be a useful tool and not just a formality? What are the greatest threats to survey data? Where do data protection and research ethics overlap and when is there a tension between the two? Who should have access to the data, at what stage and in which form? How can you ensure anonymity if data is made public?

10. Data cleaning and preparation

How can you ensure replicability in data cleaning and data preparation (and why is it so important)? What does data cleaning entail at different stages? Which kinds of automated and manual checks can be applied? How should full-text specifications of 'other' responses be treated? How should weights be calculated and applied? How should survey items be transformed to variables for analysis?

11. Analysis

How do you decide on an analytical strategy? What are the challenges related to endogeneity and bias, and how can they be addressed? How should the limitations of survey data inform analyses? How can analyses engage with the spatial and temporal dimensions of migration? How should the details of the survey instrument inform analyses and writing?

12. Communication of results

How can analyses of survey data be used in communication with different audiences? What are the challenges and opportunities for using survey analyses in different publishing formats, including journal articles? What are common weaknesses in publications based on survey data? How can survey results be presented visually? How should results on politically charged issues be presented responsibly?

Schedule

Wednesday 7 September

08:30–09:30	1. Introduction
09:30–11:45	2. Research design
11:45–12:45	<i>Lunch</i>
12:45–13:45	3. Combining survey and ethnographic data
13:45–16:00	4. Approaches to sampling
16:00–16:30	5. Development of survey instruments
19:00	<i>Dinner</i>

Thursday 8 September

08:30–12:15	5. Development of survey instruments (<i>continued</i>)
12:15–13:15	<i>Lunch</i>
13:15–14:15	6. Technical solutions
14:15–15:15	7. Management of data collection
15:30–16:30	8. Quality assurance

Friday 9 March

08:30–10:30	9. Data management
10:30–12:15	10. Data cleaning and preparations
12:15–13:15	<i>Lunch</i>
13:15–14:45	11. Analysis
15:30–16:30	12. Communications of results
16:30–17:00	13. Wrap-up

Evaluation

In order to obtain credits for the course, participants must submit a paper of 3000–8000 words related to survey research methodology. (Deadline to be confirmed.) Depending on the nature and current stage of the participant's own research, the paper can be an account of survey methodology already employed, a plan for a survey to be executed, a general discussion of any aspect of survey methodology, or a substantive paper with analysis of survey data.

Admission

Applications must be submitted via the online form. See www.peaceconflictresearch.org/courses.

The field “How does the content of this course relate to the work you have done or will do as part of your doctoral research?” must contain answers to the following questions:

1. What is the topic of your PhD research?
2. Have you conducted a survey as part of your PhD research?
3. Are you planning to conduct a survey as part of your PhD research?
4. Are you using secondary survey data for your PhD research?

The course is free of charge, but students will have to cover their own travel and accommodation costs. Readings may include books that participants are required to borrow or purchase.

The course is open to applications from any researcher wishing to advance their survey research skills, but PhD students will normally be prioritized.