COTTON FILE: CUMULATIVE LIST OF VARIABLES IN THE SURVEYS OF THE SDR DATABASE v 2.0

Contact: asc.ohio-state.edu/dataharmonization/contact/

Authors: Przemek Powałko developed the concept for the Cotton File and wrote the code. Przemek Powałko, Ilona Wysmułek and Irina Tomescu-Dubrow wrote the introduction to the Cotton File.

Project information: The project *Survey Data Recycling (SDR): New Analytic Framework, Integrated Database, and Tools for Cross-national Social, Behavioral and Economic Research,* conducted by The Ohio State University (OSU), USA and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN), is funded by the US National Science Foundation (PTE Federal award 1738502).

The document COTTON FILE: CUMULATIVE LIST OF VARIABLES IN THE SURVEYS OF THE SDR DATABASE v 2.0 (hereafter, COTTON FILE) is a comprehensive data dictionary, in Microsoft Excel format. Its main purpose is to facilitate the overview of 88118 variables (i.e. variable names, values, and labels) available in the original (source) data files that we retrieved automatically for harmonization purposes in the SDR Project. The criteria for data selection in the SDR Project are available at asc.ohio-state.edu/dataharmonization/data/international-survey-projects-in-sdr.

Information in the COTTON FILE comes from 215 source data files that comprise ca. 3500 national surveys administered between 1966 and 2017 in 142 countries or territories, as part of 23 international survey projects (for the list of international survey projects and the websites we retrieved them from, see Table 1). The source files were downloaded in January/February 2018. Generally, we took data files aggregated at the wave level (e.g. ESS_1). For practical reasons, there are also instances when we downloaded single-country datasets (e.g. CNEP_3_MX), and cumulative multi-wave files (e.g. WVS_1_6). For automated information retrieval we used the open source PSPP software which works with SPSS files. When only STATA files were available, we converted them to SPSS first.

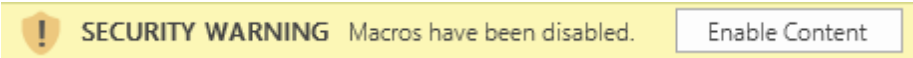
The structure of the COTTON FILE is as follows: In the first column we provide the acronym of the international survey project together with its wave (round), e.g. ESS_1, and, when applicable, country (e.g. CNEP_3_MX). The following columns provide the variable names, the variable labels, and the variable values with labels, respectively.

The order of variable names in the COTTON FILE, as well as the variable values and the wording of labels, strictly mirror the respective information in the source data files. Most of the original information we retrieved is provided in English. However, original labels in some Americas Barometer (AMB) and Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP) datasets were in Spanish. In such situations, along with the Spanish wording we provide also an automated English translation from Google Translate.

To browse the COTTON FILE one may use (a) Excel's built-in filtering functionality or (b) a custom search box written in Visual Basic for Applications. The second option was created specifically for the COTTON FILE to overcome the limitation of Excel's built-in filtering, which does not properly handle lists exceeding 10,000 unique values, and returns a filtered list that is incomplete in an unpredictable way.

Tips for using the COTTON FILE:

- Press F2 to read the full content of a cell (then press ESC to close the mode).
- The custom search box allows for searching through variable labels using up to two keywords. In order to use it, macros in Excel need to be enabled.



- To use Excel's built in filtering functionality and not run into problems due to the large number of rows in the COTTON FILE, one could use an initial filter to narrow down the number of options for the final selection of interest. For example, to see the complete list of variable names in ISSP, filter on ISSP first, then look through the list of available variables.
- Excel allows for maximum 32,767 characters in a cell. It means that variable labels that contain more characters are cut off (for example country specific education categories in the variable X025CS of the EVS 1-4 datafile).

Table 1. Survey projects in the SDR database: abbreviations, data provider websites and project's homepages

acronym	project's full name	data provider webpage	project's homepage
ABS	Asian Barometer Survey	data obtained on request	http://www.asianbarometer.org
AFB	Afrobarometer	http://afrobarometer.org	
AMB	AmericasBarometer	http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop	
ARB	Arab Barometer	http://www.arabbarometer.org	
ASES	Asia Europe Survey	http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/22324	
CB	Caucasus Barometer	http://www.crrccenters.org	
CDCEE	Consolidation of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe	https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=4054	
CNEP	Comparative National Elections Project	http://u.osu.edu/cnep	
EB	Eurobarometer	http://zacat.gesis.org/webview	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm
EQLS	European Quality of Life Survey	https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/Catalogue/?sn=7348	http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-quality-of-life-surveys
ESS	European Social Survey	http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org	
EVS	European Values Study	http://zacat.gesis.org/webview/	http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/

ISJP	International Social Justice Project	https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=3522	https://www.sowi.hu-berlin.de/de/lehrbereiche/empisoz/forschung/archiv/isjp
ISSP	International Social Survey Programme	https://www.gesis.org/issp/home/	http://www.issp.org
LB	Latinobarómetro	http://www.latinobarometro.org	
LITS	Life in Transition Survey	http://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/economic-research-and-data/data/lits.html	
NBB	New Baltic Barometer	https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/Catalogue/?sn=6510	http://www.balticvoices.org/nbb/surveys.php
NEB	New Europe Barometer	https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk	http://office.eurasiabarometer.org/new-page-9/new-democracies-barometer
PA1	Political Action I (An Eight Nation Study)	https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=0765	http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/07777
PA2	Political Action II	https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=1188	
PPE7N	Political Participation and Equality in Seven Nations	http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/07768	
VPCPCE	Values and Political Change in Postcommunist Europe	https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/Catalogue/?sn=4129	
WVS	World Values Survey	http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org	