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## **Modelling missing values in cross-national surveys: a latent variable approach**

### *Abstract:*

In survey research, the aim is often to measure some underlying trait(s) of the respondents through their responses to a set of questions. In the paper, we focus on cross-national surveys, where the main research objective is to compare the distribution of the latent variables across countries. We focus on the modelling of item non-response in such surveys, and studying its effects on cross-national comparisons. We consider models which are extensions of standard multigroup latent variable models, extended in such a way as to model the missing data mechanism together with the latent constructs and their measurement. The model for the missing data mechanism will serve two purposes: first to characterize the item non-response as ignorable or non-ignorable and consequently to study the patterns of missingness and characteristics of non-respondents across countries, but also to study the effect that a misspecified model for the missing data mechanism might have on the substantively interesting parts of the model, including the cross-national comparisons.

Joint work with Myrsini Katsikatsou and Jouni Kuha