
Interviewer Attitudes and Nonresponse in The European Social Survey

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Nonresponse Internationally



- Countries differ in response
 - E.g., De Heer & De Leeuw; Stoop 2005; Billiet et al. 2007
- Potential causes
 - Differences in population
 - Differences in survey climate, culture
 - Differences in fieldwork strategies
 - Differences in interviewers

Potential for Improvement



- Researcher can influence
 - Fieldwork strategies
 - E.g., De Heer, 1999
 - ESS strict rules
 - Interviewers
 - Training, motivation
- Role of interviewer in nonresponse
 - Contact
 - Convince
 - Interviewers differ!

Why do interviewers differ?



- Different attitudes
 - Different behaviour
 - Experience, training
 - Workload, interviewer burden
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- Lehtonen, 1996; Morton-Williams, 1993; Campanelli et al, 1997; De Leeuw et al, 1997; Groves & Couper; Hox & De Leeuw, 2002

Interviewer Study



- Interviewer questionnaire
 - Attitudes and self reported doorstep behaviour
 - Report on questionnaire, scales, and psychometric quality is available
- First round ESS
 - Standardized data collection procedures
 - Standardized questionnaires, topic
 - Standardized and detailed nonresponse registration

Available Data



- ❑ Seven Countries, 569 Interviewers
 - ❑ Respondents: contact 13402, cooperation 11781
- ❑ Interviewer data
 - ❑ Background: age, sex, experience, education
 - ❑ Work: workload, % single or farm houses, % contacted by phone, interviewer's contact rate and response rate
 - ❑ Attitudes: Persuasion, Voluntariness, Tailoring, Image
 - ❑ Doorstep behaviour (self report): Introduction, Selling the survey, Social validation arguments, Tailoring, Dealing with reluctance

Available Data 2



- ❑ Seven Countries, 569 interviewers
 - ❑ Respondents: contact 13402, cooperation 11781
- ❑ Call record data on contact and cooperation
 - ❑ *Contact* in person made or not
 - ❑ If contact, *cooperation* or not

} Dependent Var
- ❑ Strategy: Phone contact before first in person contact, contact attempts outside office hours
- ❑ Observation: Intercom, single housing unit (including farms), state of buildings in the area, state of sampled address compared to others in area

Analysis Method



- Separate analysis for contact and response

 - Multilevel logistic regression

 - Countries, interviewers, respondents

- Research Questions

I: Are there systematic differences between countries and between interviewers?

II: Can these differences be explained by observable characteristics of sample units and by contact strategies?

III. Can these be explained by differences in interviewer characteristics?

Results: Contact



Multilevel Logistic Regression on Contact

Predictor	Coefficient (s.e.)	Coefficient (s.e.)	Coefficient (s.e.)
Intercept	2.52 (.27)	2.92 (.18)	3.08 (.07)
Single house/farm		0.55 (.08)	0.51 (.08)
First contact by phone		-2.77 (.11)	-2.73 (.10)
Area (nice)		0.25 (.06)	0.25 (.06)
Not office hours		-0.54 (.05)	-0.55 (.05)
Gender (male)			-0.26 (.10)
Workload			-0.00 (.001)
SocVal			3.08 (.07)
Itr Image			-0.18 (.06)
Cooprate			2.52 (.26)
Variances	Variance (p)	Variance (p)	Variance (p)
Interviewers	0.76 (<.001)	0.48 (<.001)	0.32 (<.001)
Countries	0.49 (<.001)	0.21 (<.001)	0.01 (.05)

Results: Cooperation



Multilevel Logistic Regression on Cooperation

Predictor	Coefficient (s.e.)	Coefficient (s.e.)	Coefficient (s.e.)
Intercept	1.04 (.26)	1.07 (.25)	1.11 (.21)
Intercom		-0.39 (.06)	-0.34 (.06)
Area (nice)		0.20 (.04)	0.19 (.04)
Compare (better)		0.19 (.05)	0.20 (.05)
Not office hours		-0.14 (.05)	-0.14 (.05)
Tailoring			0.10 (.05)
Itr. Age			0.01 (.003)
Workload			-0.001 (.002)
% Single/Farm			.01 (.001)
% telephoned			.01 (.002)
Variances	Variance (p)	Variance (p)	Variance (p)
Interviewers	0.43 (<.001)	0.42 (<.001)	0.39 (<.001)
Countries	0.49 (<.001)	0.41 (<.001)	0.28 (<.001)

Conclusions: Differences



- ❑ Contact Initial Intra Class Correlation:
 - ❑ Interviewers ICC 0.17
 - ❑ Countries ICC 0.11
- ❑ Cooperation Initial Intra Class Correlation:
 - ❑ Interviewers ICC 0.10
 - ❑ Countries ICC 0.12

I: There are systematic differences between countries and interviewers for both successful contact and cooperation

Conclusions re Contact



□ Contact Intra Class Correlation:

□ Interviewers ICC 0.17 → 0.12 → 0.09

□ Countries ICC 0.11 → 0.11 → 0.002

II: These differences can be partly explained by state of housing and area, and contact strategies such as initial phoning and contacting outside office hours

III: Further by interviewer characteristics, such as gender, outlook on respondents and survey (positive and person oriented)

Note: interviewer workload is non-significant

Conclusions re Cooperation



☐ Cooperation Intra Class Correlation:

☐ Interviewers ICC 0.10 → 0.10 → 0.09

☐ Countries ICC 0.12 → 0.10 → 0.07

II: The differences between countries can be partly explained by state of house and area, security (intercom) and contacting respondents outside office hours

III: Difference between countries can be further explained by interviewer characteristics age and use tailoring, and interviewer level variables rural area and higher % of phone contacts

Note: interviewer workload is non-significant

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