Philosophy

• A sensible approach to nonresponse
  • Response rates alone are not meaningful.
  • Bias is a function of the correlation between study variables and response propensity.
  • Mechanisms of nonresponse are essential to understanding nonresponse bias.
  • Each estimate has its own nonresponse bias.
Disposition Classification

- Authors’ revised scheme consistent with AAPOR guidelines and appropriate inferentially
- Nonresponse from the CPS also counts (response rate is less than 50%).
- Does it matter? YES
Accessibility and Amenability

• Disposition codes must be accurate (1) to evaluate relationships between the variables and the types of nonresponse and (2) to guide weight adjustments.
  • ‘Busyness’ and ‘social isolation’ hypotheses result in lower contact and cooperation rates.
  • In other situations, accessibility and amenability have different effects (e.g., adult education participation).
Amenability or Cooperation

• Small differences in refusal rates across variables imply that these subgroups have similar levels of amenability.
  • The implication is that nonresponse bias due to amenability may not be important.
  • Since there is so much data available for this evaluation from the CPS, this is a very positive outcome.
Accessibility

• Large differences in contact rates by variable, with very low contact rates for no spouse, renters, not related adult, under 30, Hispanic, and black.
  • These are all related to mobility (the low rates are for type 1/2 noncontact).

• Key issue—Are important time use variables related to mobility? If so, this nonresponse bias may be a problem.
Additional Analyses

• The response rate distribution analysis and the logistic analysis are primarily an examination of “main effects.”

• Different relationships might be uncovered by categorical search algorithms that look for interactions.
  • Would the “mobility” hypothesis be supported?
  • Is this exploratory approach consistent with the ones that are hypothesis driven?
Telephone Status

• In both the response rate and the logistic analysis, telephone status is highly related to both contact and refusal (odds of noncontact = 1.8; refusal = 1.7)
  • Suspect that CPS nontelephone is mixture of those without phones (social isolation) and those that do not wish to be contacted for subsequent interviews (amenability).
  • Telephone status also casually linked since ATUS was done by telephone.
  • Is it correlated to time use outcome variables?
The Longitudinal Effect

• The loss of the initial base (the CPS nonrespondents) may be an important source of nonresponse bias.
  • This analysis reveals that, given CPS response, the loss of about 50% in this survey is not likely to result in large nonresponse biases.
  • The high response rate for the CPS does not mean estimates are immune to nonresponse bias.
Weighting Adjustments

• The authors suggest additional control variables that make a great deal of sense:
  • Exclusion of variables like tenure and urbanicity are troubling since they are correlated with response rates.
  • In surveys with extensive auxiliary data, especially those with lower response rates, efforts should be made to examine and use these data.

• Would further weighting adjustments make a difference?
  • Perhaps not much difference for overall estimates, but more likely for domains and comparisons
Direct Use of Response Propensities

• The authors use logistic model estimated response propensities directly without controlling for variance.
  • This is probably best considered for nonresponse bias analysis. It may not be appropriate for general use due to the possibility of unstable estimates.

• If the nonresponse analysis found important differences, then other approaches such as raking could make use of the data in a manner more appropriate for public use files.
Nonresponse in the American Time Use Survey

• This paper should be read by everyone considering using or critiquing the survey.
  • Findings should strengthen use of the data.
  • Designers should re-consider some of their approaches, especially their handling of disposition codes and their weighting adjustments.