

Discussant Remarks

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This is an interesting set of papers. I have comments only for the paper by Jock Black. For the other two papers, I will suggest discussion questions that I hope audience members will respond to. Thus, the audience can provide the discussion for these papers.

Jock Black had a good discussion on alternative ways for weighting when there are divestitures, splits, mergers or acquisitions. His discussion of how to produce unbiased estimates was very clear and thorough.

I have some questions on the earlier portions of the paper, where the discussion in the written draft paper was less detailed. When there is a change in kind of business between the time of sampling and how it is now reported, the tabulations generally reflect the original rather than the current kind of business. This seems completely reasonable if the change is from retail to non-retail. However, if the change is from one type of retail to another type of retail, I wasn't convinced that this is generally best. I welcome more elaboration on why the original classification is used.

When a business changes size, the written paper and oral presentation discuss four possible weights: Unbiased weight, $1/w_{\text{orig}}$; desired weight of 1.0; compromise weight of $1/3$; and an objective alternative to $1/3$ (in the oral presentation but not in the written paper). I wasn't clear as to why 1.0 is desired, nor why $1/w_{\text{orig}}$ is so bad. I would be interested in more detail as to why $1/3$ tends to be used. Also, I was favorably inclined to the alternative weight mentioned in the oral presentation. This weight is objectively determined, as compared to the somewhat arbitrary choice of $1/3$.

The algorithm presented in the paper by Donna Glassbrenner applies to situations in which nesting occurs. I believe this is common, but would like to ask audience members if they have current or past situations in which the algorithm might possibly be applied. I was pleased to see this paper rigorously prove optimality for a procedure that might otherwise continue to be applied without any assurance that it actually is optimal.

The two new record linkage methods presented in the paper by Dean Judson seem very promising. This paper continues a tradition of good record linkage research at the Census Bureau. I would like to know when Dean thinks these methods might be ready for application. My question for the audience is whether they have any past or current situations where these new methods might be applied. Are there any questions or issues that audience members can think of that pertain to your use of the methods?