

Respondent- and Interview-level predictors of Item Nonresponse in the ESS 9

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Introduction

Missing Data are Bad

- decreases effective sample size
- nonresponse bias
- indicator of overall data quality (satisficing)¹

A Typology of Missingness²

- missing completely at random
- missing at random
- not missing at random
- missing by design

¹Krosnick 1991.

²De Leeuw, Hox, and Huisman 2003.

Item Nonresponse

Item nonresponse: non-substantive answer or refusal by the respondent

Question-Answer-Process³: understanding → recalling information → eventually judging → eventually editing → eventually forming → communicating

Two types of item nonresponse

- Don't know
 - not *able* to answer: mental effort is too high
 - strategy of satisficing
 - likely to be MAR
- Refusal
 - not *wanting* to answer: privacy and sensitivity
 - likely to be NMAR
- But: mechanisms not perfectly separate⁴

³De Leeuw, Hox, and Huisman 2003.

⁴Shoemaker, Eichholz, and Skewes 2002.

Predictors of Item Nonresponse I

Country

- considerable country differences
- no good explanations to date⁵
- some composition effects⁶

Survey

- compositional differences between modes⁷
- design possibilities and likelihood of unintended skipping

⁵Meitinger and Johnson 2020.

⁶Koch and Blohm 2009.

⁷Messer, Edwards, and Dillman 2012.

Predictors of Item Nonresponse II

Interviewer

- considerable interviewer effects
- barely any explanations⁸
- poor interviewer behaviour?: skipping questions or shortening questionnaire

Respondent

- ability: age, health, education
- women have higher nonresponse
- ethnic minorities, poor language skills, low literacy
→ reflection of broader patterns of inequality⁹
- motivation: political interest, feeling of powerlessness

⁸Pickery and Loosveldt 1998.

⁹Meitinger and Johnson 2020.

Predictors of Item Nonresponse III

Interview

- sometimes gender matching¹⁰
- similar age vs older interviewer
- other people present during the interview¹¹
- perceived cooperation of respondent¹²

Questionnaire

- explicitly offering DK
- complexity

Question

- sensitivity: e.g. income and sexual behaviour

¹⁰Vercruyssen, Wuyts, and Loosveldt 2017.

¹¹Kupek 1998.

¹²Tu and Liao 2007.

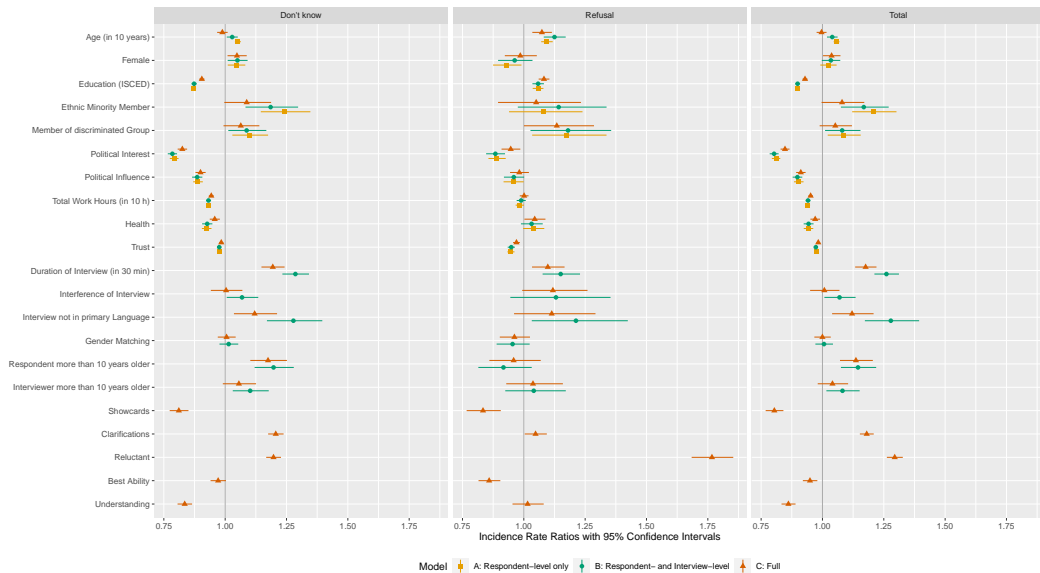
Aim

- item nonresponse is still not well understood
- most established predictors are respondent characteristics → not changeable
- the aim is of course to ensure and improve data quality in the future
- directing attention to controllable predictors
- fundamental problem: data availability
- → explore reasonable available predictors especially on the interview level

Data and Methods

- ESS Round 9, all countries
- number of refusals and DK → overdispersed count data
- complete questionnaire excluding questions affected by routing to ensure comparability
- nested structure: interviews by interviewers within countries
- → negative binomial regression with interviewer fixed effects, standard errors clustered by interviewer

Preliminary Results



Issues

- missing data of included variables are directly linked to value of DV → imputation?
- model comparisons?
- descriptives? (word limit...)

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