

## Non-respondent surveys: Swiss experiments

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The potential non-response bias (Groves 2006) is a frequent preoccupation even more in a context of declining response rates. A lot of work has been done in order to accumulate information on non-respondents, coming as well from response patterns, contact sequences, additional information, etc. The European Social Survey has been particularly active in the field.

Among different tools, the idea of surveying non-respondents appears to be particularly useful and a first comparative tentative has been realised in the context of the third edition of the ESS (Stoop et al. 2010). Such an approach has been replicated in Switzerland after the 2008 EVS as well as the 2010 ESS, in each case with some success because roughly half of the non-respondents have therefore responded to such a short survey.

One of the common problem in non-response analysis is that the methodology used in order to convince potential respondent to participate will also contribute to define who will finally be respondent or non-respondent: if a lot of effort is put in refusal conversion for example, the characteristics of the non-respondents will probably be different. In consequence a special attention is to be dedicated to all the designs aspects of the surveys and we will expect that results of non-respondent surveys will vary according to this. If this line of reasoning is correct, we will have variations from one non-respondent survey to the other, limiting the possibility of generalisation based on this kind of tool. This is one of the challenge to compare three different non-respondent surveys.

## References

Groves, Robert M. 2006. "Nonresponse Rates and Nonresponse Bias in Household Surveys." *Public Opin Q* 70(5):646-675. Retrieved September 18, 2009.

Stoop, Ineke, Jaak Billiet, Achim Koch, and Rory Fitzgerald. 2010. *Improving Survey Response: Lessons Learned from the European Social Survey*. Wiley-Blackwell (an imprint of John Wiley & Sons Ltd).