Evaluating the Measurement Error of Interviewer Observed Paradata

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When addressing nonresponse, either during fieldwork or through postsurvey adjustments, information on both respondents and nonrespondents is often necessary, in the form of administrative data or paradata. One form of paradata which is often used in face to face studies is interviewer observations. Until recently, the error properties of these paradata have not been assessed. However, the quality of the interviewer observations may significantly impact the conclusions of the nonresponse analysis or decision. As this information is often the best or only information available, it is important to understand the quality of these paradata.

Unlike administrative data, the quality of the interviewer observations is highly dependent on the interviewer. In addition, there may be household and area characteristics which influence the amount of error in an observation can be recorded. Although quality can be thought of in several dimensions, this analysis will focus on accuracy and therefore, measurement error. By evaluating the mechanism of the measurement error, steps can be taken to improve the accuracy.