

Using Interviewer Observations as Predictors of Contactability in Face to Face Surveys –
A Cross-Country Comparison

Sonja Ziniel

The success of contacting a household depends among other factors on the compatibility of the call schedule and the at-home patterns of the persons living in the sample unit. In face-to-face interviews, interviewer observations, such as the existence of access impediments, could be used to suggest alternative call scheduling for groups of sample units with different physical access impediments. This paper addresses thus the following questions:

1. Do various observable attributes of sample areas and housing structures predict the amount of effort required to obtain contact with a sample household?
2. For groups requiring more attempts to achieve first contact, are there different calling schedules that reduce the overall number of calls needed for a first contact?
3. Are the calling schedules reducing the overall number of calls to first contact similar across different countries; or are successful calling schedules for different groups rather country-specific?

The database to address these questions will consist of the National Survey of Family Growth data (NSFG), Cycle 6 (2003) as well as of the data of the European Social Survey (ESS), Round 1 (2003) that includes 23 European countries. Both surveys ask interviewers as part of the field administration to record observations about the existence of physical impediments and provide together with their call records a suitable database to address these questions.