Research Team

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Main Objective

- Practical advice on how to improve portability of questions across modes
  - Which mode combinations are likely to produce comparable responses?
  - Which types of questions are more susceptible to mode effects?
Three phases

• A literature review & framework of mixed modes
  ▶ develop a theoretical framework
  ▶ identify gaps in evidence base and formulate hypotheses to address gaps

• Quantitative data analysis
  ▶ test hypotheses using existing datasets and new experimental data

• Cognitive interviewing
  ▶ explore how respondents process questions in different modes
Literature Review
The literature review

- Initially over 700 papers identified
- Screening and summarising papers
- Criteria for inclusion:
  - comparison of 2 or more modes
  - modes of survey data collection
  - measurement error
  - English language only
Classify existing evidence:

- The question
  - type (e.g. attitude, behaviour, other factual)
  - format (e.g. closed/open, scale, # categories)
  - task difficulty
  - sensitivity
- The mode comparison
  - interviewer presence (face-to-face, phone, none)
  - delivery of question (visual, aural)
  - response list (visual, aural)
  - recording of responses (oral, written)
- The results (hypotheses, stat methods, conclusion)
Synthesis of literature

- Causes of differential measurement error
  - e.g. interviewer presence, cognitive task
- Nature of differential measurement error
  - e.g. social desirability bias, survey satisficing
- Magnitude of differential measurement error
Initial observations from lit review:

- Many experiments are not theory-driven
  - Focus is on descriptive comparisons of response distributions across modes
  - Lack of generalisable inferences about causal mechanisms
- Many papers provide insufficient information about the questions and modes being tested
  - question type & format, sensitivity of question, task difficulty
  - interviewer presence, delivery of question and response options, recording of responses
Hypotheses
Hypotheses

• Causes
  ▸ e.g. interviewer presence, cognitive stimulus

• Question characteristics
  ▸ e.g. sensitivity, intrinsic difficulty

• Effects
  ▸ e.g. survey satisficing, social desirability effect
What now?

• Specify the question types and question formats to address these hypotheses
• Examine existing datasets for suitability to test some of these hypotheses
• Remaining hypotheses will be tested using new experimental data
The Data
The Quantitative Data

• Existing datasets, e.g.
  ▶ 1999 Welsh Assembly Election Study
  ▶ 2005 Social Capital Survey
  ▶ European Social Survey mode experiments
  ▶ 2006 Health Survey for England London boost

• New experimental data
  ▶ follow-up surveys to BHPS & NatCen Omnibus
  ▶ focus on f2f, tel and web comparisons
NatCen Omnibus

- 20 BHPS questions
- Other modules

20 BHPS questions

F2F interview after 6 months

- 20 BHPS questions
- Another 40 questions

Tel interview after 6 months

- 20 BHPS questions
- Another 40 questions

Web q’naire after 6 months

- 20 BHPS questions
- Another 40 questions

Cognitive interviews after 6 months

BHPS W19
(12 months after W18)

- 20 BHPS questions
- Other BHPS questions

BHPS W18

- 20 BHPS questions
- Other BHPS questions

Tel interview after 6 months

- 20 BHPS questions
- Another 40 questions

Web q’naire after 6 months

- 20 BHPS questions
- Another 40 questions
Key Features of Design

• Cost-efficient design to collect very rich experimental data

• Compare ‘seasoned’ panel members with ‘fresh’ survey sample members

• Repeated measures
  ▶ enables estimation of mode effects in measures of change

• Random allocation to modes
Limitations

• Restricted to respondents with web access
  ‣ primarily relying on randomisation within the sample as our basis for inference
  ‣ relatively broad basis for extrapolation to general population compared to other mixed mode studies

• BHPS f2f follow-up is 12 months later rather than 6 months
  ‣ overcome by comparing data from Omnibus and its f2f follow-up after 6 months with data from BHPS and its f2f follow-up after 12 months
Progress to date

- Literature review is ongoing
- Theoretical framework
- Hypotheses formulated
- Module of 20 BHPS questions on Omnibus Survey
- Currently developing another 40 questions to be included in the experiment
- Selection of samples for experiment
Causes of Mode Effects on Measurement (Roberts, Jäckle & Lynn; 2006)

- **Interviewer presence:** Anonymity vs. rapport
  - **Privacy/legitimacy**
  - **Willingness to disclose?**
    - Social desirability bias
  - **Sufficient Effort?**
    - **Task difficulty**
    - **R motivation**
    - **R ability**

- **Stimulus:** Cognitive task
- **Interviewer presence:** Pace, non-verbal communication, multitasking

- Comprehension
  - Retrieval
  - Judgement
  - Response
  - Shortcutting
NatCen Omnibus Survey

- Two rounds of face-to-face data collection
  - Jul/Aug 2008 and Sep/Oct 2008
- Follow-up surveys after 6 months
  - Omnibus respondents who agreed to follow-up and web access
  - Random allocation = 400 f2f, 400 tel, 400 web
- Cognitive interviews after 6 months
  - Purposively selected sample of 36 respondents from follow-up surveys
British Household Panel Study

- **BHPS Wave 18 (all f2f)**
  - Sep 2008 – Dec 2008

- **Follow-up surveys after 6 months**
  - BHPS respondents who agreed to follow-up and have web access
    - Random allocation = 400 tel, 400 web
    - No separate f2f data collection at this stage

- **BHPS Wave 19 (all f2f)**
  - Sep 2009 – Dec 2009