

Statement of the Problem

What a Difference Missingness Makes

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Meeting Motivation, Objectives

- › OPRE does a lot of surveys, other agencies do a lot of surveys, many of them are evaluation studies
- › Surveys have been going through an identity crisis of sorts
- › A vicious cycle
 - America growing more diverse, but also more polarized
 - Increasing demand for information, plethora of disinformation
 - Increasing distrust of government, elites
 - Increasing reluctance to participate in surveys

Outline

- › Meeting motivation, objectives
- › Setting the stage, focusing on your roles
- › The case for response rates, relevance to OPRE
- › History of surveys, history of me
- › Where are we now?

Setting the Stage, Focusing on Your Roles

- › Objectives for this kick-off session
 - Intro to missingness, representation, response rate (RR) basics, survey error and quality
 - Thinking about the relationship between response rates and bias
 - Preparing for more detailed sessions to come
- › Objectives for the rest of today
 - Helping you tap research methodologists' expertise on missingness, how to deal with it, concerns about the future
 - Giving you tools to communicate with survey team members, contractors, clients about RR issues

History of Surveys, History of Me

- › In the beginning
- › The Golden Age
- › The middle age (my story)
- › Story of modes
- › The gold standard
- › Costs and declining participation

Response Rates -- Relevance to You

- › (THE) easy to understand quality metric
- › Representativeness (but not coverage of the sample frame)
- › Equity (one of the ways bias comes in)
- › Importance in evaluation research

Where Are We Now?

- › High cost, so cost pressure and competition causes contractors to bid as low as possible, but creates tension with quality
- › Multimode survey designs are commonplace
 - Can increase response rates, reduce cost, but add complexity
 - Design tradeoffs: some modes better for some purposes than others, it makes a difference what order the modes are used, fit for use
- › Nonprobability samples are becoming more common – typically much cheaper than probability, may get the same results with weighting
- › Design options, making the best choices