Building Rosters Sensibly: Who's on First (Avenue)?

The Future of Survey Research: Challenges & Opportunities

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What is a Roster?

• Enumeration (Head Count)
  – How many people are living at the sample address? (Krejsa, 2001)
    • e.g., 111 First Avenue
  – Counted according to a set of residence rules, which differ for the Census and each survey
  – Questions are asked for each person who “lives or stays” at the address according to the rules
  – Undercoverage with enumeration may be more problematic with surveys than with the Census (Martin, 1999).
Census Surveys with Household Rosters

- Decennial Census
- Most Demographic Surveys, including:
  - American Community Survey (ACS)
  - Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) Wave 1 (and 2 and 3)
    - The roster from each wave is updated in the next and changes are recorded (Tourangeau, 1993).
  - Current Population Survey (CPS) ASEC
Consistency

• Different rules in different surveys
• Even within the same survey, different instructions to interviewers and respondents sometimes contradict one another.
• Conceptual and operational work can help survey researchers to optimize a core rostering procedure
• Need for research directly comparing the outcomes of the different approaches (e.g., do different rosters result from the same HH?)
Issues

1. Inconsistencies with respect to the date or dates to use to decide who should be listed as a resident

2. Inconsistencies with respect to whether respondents should take into account the purpose of a person being at an address (visit)

3. Some Rules are seen only by interviewers and not by Rs
Inconsistency among reference dates

- **Decennial Census (TQA):**
  - Some instructions say “on **April 1, 2010**, such as:
    - Count the people living in this *house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2010*.
    - For example, indicate ‘Foster children’ if foster children were staying at the address **on or around April 1**st.
    - People who visited **for a long period of time around April 1, 2010**.
    - Now, thinking of all the people you just mentioned, in **April**, were you or was anyone living in college housing?
    - For example, college students and Armed Forces personnel should be listed where they live and sleep most of the time.
Inconsistency among reference dates

• ACS 2011 – Paper Form

• **INCLUDE** everyone who is *living or staying here* for more than 2 months.

• **INCLUDE** yourself if you are *living* here for more than 2 months.

• **INCLUDE** anyone else *staying* here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less.
Inconsistency among reference dates

• ACS 2011 CAPI:
• I am going to be asking some questions about everyone who is **living or staying** at this address. First let's create a list of the people, starting with you.
• Are any of these people away NOW for more than two months, like a college student or someone **living** in the military?
• Is there anyone else **staying** here even for a short time, such as a friend or relative?
• Do any of these people have some other place where they **usually stay**?
Inconsistency among reference dates

- CPS ASEC:
  - What are the names of all persons *living or staying* here?”
    - No time frame of reference given
  - The flashcard that interviewers use begins with “Start with the name of the person, or one of the persons, who *owns or rents* this home.”
  - A later instruction says: “List all persons who are staying in the sample unit *at the time of interview*.”
  - Contains a time frame of reference
Inconsistency among reference dates

SIPP Wave 1:

- Now I'll make a list of all the people who **live or stay here** at this address. [PREROOST]
- Is this the address where [YOUALLFIL_USUAL] **live and sleep** most of the time? [USUAL]
- During a typical week over the last month or so, how many nights did [NAME_NOTHERE] **stay here overnight**, or was there no **usual pattern**? [NITESTAY].
Purpose of the Visit

- **Census TQA:**
  - For example, some instructions say NOT to include babies at the address if their purpose being there is to be on vacation:
  - Do NOT indicate ‘Babies’ *when the purpose they are at the address is* for daycare or vacation.

- Other instructions say to include a person if he/she was looking for a place to stay:
  - people who were *looking for a place to stay*, i.e. crashing on your couch.
Purpose of the Visit

• SIPP Wave 1:
  – Does [NAME_NOTHERE] usually live here but is away traveling for work, or on vacation, or in the hospital? [If yes the person is kept on the roster; otherwise the person is removed from the roster] [AWAYTRV]
  – Sometimes we miss people when it's not totally clear where they live or stay. Just to make sure, [OTHERTHANFIL,] have I missed anyone who is staying here until they find a place to live? [MSNGSTAY]
Instructions Only Seen by Interviewer

- **ACS CAPI**

  **Question:** Are any of these people away NOW for more than two months, like a college student or someone living in the military?

- DO NOT select children in boarding school or summer camp. *Only seen by interviewer*

- Select children in shared custody who are not currently staying at the sample address, regardless of the length of stay. *Only seen by interviewer*

- DO NOT select children in shared custody who are currently *staying* at the sample address, regardless of where they usually stay. *Only seen by interviewer*
Instructions Only Seen by Interviewer

• Select commuter workers who stay at the sample address to be closer to work. *Only seen by interviewer*

• Do NOT select commuter workers who *stay* in some residence closer to work when their family residence is the sample address. *Only seen by interviewer*
Complexity Points to Research Opportunity

• Residence Rules are complex
  – Research with branching, reducing the amount of understanding of the rules that Rs have to do

• Households can be complex
  – Research on Living situations and response tendencies

• More research is needed on self-response rostering and on mobile device rostering (both self-response and interviewer-administered).
The Average Household

• United States, Census 2010
  – The median age was 37.2.
  – The average household size was 2.58 people per household.
  – Among the nation's occupied housing units, 65.1 percent were owned, compared with 34.9 percent that were rented.
Not the Average Household.....

- Complex Households
  - Large Households/ Extended families
  - Tenuous Attachment (Tourangeau, 1993)
  - Roommates
  - Roomers & Boarders (Hainer et. al, 1988; McKay 1992)
  - Boarding School
  - College Students
  - Commuters
  - Babies
  - Shared Custody
  - People temporarily living away
  - Concealment of household members – fear of loss of welfare, deportation, arrest, etc.

- Immigrant Households (Hainer et. al, 1988; McKay 1992)

- Homelessness
Evolution of Enumeration Issues

• “Couch Surfers” - Craigslist
• $200 I'm seeking a couch to sleep on for 4 weeks only
• Need a couch to sleep on 3 nites a week
• Couch Surfer: I Need a couch to sleep on!
Is 111 First Ave. Joe’s usual residence?

- Does Joe contribute money for rent, food, bills, or anything else?
- How frequently does Joe sleep here?
- Does Joe use this address to receive mail or phone messages?
- Does Joe usually eat here?
- Do you consider Joe a member of the household?
- Does Joe have another place/places where he usually stays?
- Does Joe perform chores like cleaning?
- Does Joe have a say in HH rules?
- Does Joe usually live or stay here?
  - Gerber (1990), Tourangeau (1993), Schwede & Ellis (1994) LSS.

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How common are these complex HHs?

• The 1994 CPS Report said that 18.4 million kids were living with a single parent and rough 2/3 of those parents were separated or divorced.
• There are about 100,000 kids in boarding school (75,000 registered with the National Association of Independent schools)
• Probably not a lot of commuter second residences, although we do not really know  
  – the Journey to Work branch tells me they do not collect that data, but it is a great idea for a research project
Residence Rule Complexity and Living Situations: Past Work

• Living Situation Survey (LSS)- 1993
  – Much of what we know about capturing data from those hard-to-reach cases came from the LSS
  – 13 Roster probes examining role in HH
  – 999 households (Schwede & Ellis, 1994)
  – Gerber, Schwede, Sweet, Martin, colleagues.
Residence Rule Complexity and Living Situations: Past Work

• Schwede & Ellis (1994)- Loglinear analysis of categories of HH roles from LSS & some others (Gerber, 1990)

• Best model showed 2 attachments best predict R’s assessment of HH membership
  – Help with chores, such as cleaning or watching children
  – Have a say in making rules
Residence Rule Complexity and Living Situations: Current Work

• Concept of extended roster probes (Gerber, 1990; Tourangeau 1993)
  – Goal is to remove the burden of interpreting residence rules and asking a series of simple questions instead.
    • Was Joe away in the military? For more than 2 months?
    • Was Joe away in boarding school?
    • Was Joe away at another address for work?
Residence Rule Complexity and Living Situations: Current Work

- Complex Ethnic Households in America –book (Schwede, Blumberg, & Chan, 2005)
- 2012 National Census Test
  - Coverage manipulations
- Research currently being done by CSM colleagues (Goerman, Childs, et. al)
  - Alternative roster paths
What Remains to be Done

• A study equivalent to the LSS has not been done recently or using modern technology
  – Are the same categories of attachment predictive of subjective HH membership, or are they changing?

• What is the best way to ensure that interviewers are reading the questions as worded?
What Remains to be Done

• The National Research Council (2006) suggested areas of such research
• “whether census respondents find a pure de facto residence rule easier to follow and interpret than a de jure rule (generally, and with specific reference to large households)”
• “whether the Census Bureau standard of ‘live or sleep most of the time’ is consistent with respondent notions of ‘usual residence’ “ (pg. 271).
• This research has not been thoroughly conducted to date
Future Opportunities for Research

• Which Basic Residence Rules make the most sense and are easiest to understand for Rs?
  – Large-scale empirical investigation of de jure vs. De factor

• Most of the research on these topics was done before the push to move the U.S. Census Bureau’s surveys to the Internet
  – New technologies available online and on mobile devices for rostering purposes
    • Overlays, pop-ups, etc.
Future Opportunities for Research

• Different rules in different surveys
• Even within the same survey, different instructions to interviewers and respondents sometimes contradict one another.
• *Do these different approaches yield different results in terms of accuracy? Response rate? Data quality?*
Future Opportunities for Research

• What is the ideal set of Residence Rules?
  – Make sense to people
  – Accurate count
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Future Opportunities for Research

• What is the best way to ask whether a place is someone’s usual residence to determine if he/she should be counted there?
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Questions?

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- Thank you!
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