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Response Rates for Secondary Respondents

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In the National Survey of Families and Households a face-to-face interview was conducted with a randomly selected adult member of each sample household. In addition, if this primary respondent was currently married or cohabiting (with an opposite sex lover/partner) the spouse or partner was asked to complete a questionnaire covering a variety of aspects of family life. The questionnaire took about 30 minutes to complete. The spouse or partner is referred to as the "secondary respondent." (See Sweet, Bumpass, and Call (1988) for a detailed description of survey procedures and content.)

The major purposes of the secondary respondent questionnaire were:

1. to obtain current and retrospective characteristics of the spouse or partner directly from him or her, rather than by means of proxy reports from the primary respondent;
2. to obtain information on the relationship between the partners and parenting information from each partner; and
3. to obtain measures of various attitudes and opinions from the spouse or partner.

At the beginning of the interview the interviewer told the primary respondent that there was a questionnaire for the spouse or partner to fill out. If the spouse or partner was at home and willing, he or she was asked to complete the questionnaire in another room while the primary respondent was being interviewed. If that was not possible, the interviewer left the questionnaire for the spouse or partner to fill out later. She also left an envelope in which the questionnaire could be sealed after it was completed. The interviewer returned to the household

to retrieve the completed questionnaire. The secondary respondent questionnaire was never to be given until the interview with the primary respondent was begun.

The overall response rate for secondary respondents was 82.5 percent. The rate was higher for married than for cohabiting respondents --83.1 percent versus 76.4 percent.

This report describes differences in the response rates of secondary respondents in relation to characteristics of the primary respondent. There were a total of 7462 married (spouse present) and cohabiting respondents. Married respondents who reported that they were currently living apart from their spouses (for reasons other than marital discord, e.g., having jobs in different areas) are not included in the analysis, although in some cases their spouse completed a secondary respondent questionnaire.

We begin the analysis with a set of variables which will be called the "basic model." It includes a set of standard social and demographic characteristics as well as a measure of the "quality" of the relationship. Except for income, which will be discussed below, all measures used in this report are derived from information provided by the primary respondent.

Variables in the basic model are:

- Age
- Race/ethnicity
- Sex
- Cohabitor versus married
- Whether or not the primary respondent has had children
- Total couple income
- Education
- Global quality of the relationship

The analysis is run unweighted.

The Problem of Using Income as a Predictor

It seems reasonable to expect that response rates might vary by income, even when other characteristics such as education are controlled. The most appropriate income measure for our purposes is either couple or family income (a measure of the economic position of the unit under consideration); or the individual income of the secondary respondent. In most of our analyses we will pool all respondents regardless of sex. Couple income seems more appropriate since it is a characteristic directly relevant to the secondary respondent and since it should not vary much by sex of the respondent. The problem is that for some couples it is not possible to get a measure of couple income (or family income) that is independent of whether or not there was a completed secondary respondent questionnaire. What this section does is examine this potential problem, and reach the conclusion that it is not really much of a problem after all.

Primary respondents who were householders (including both the husband and wife in the case of married couple households) were asked to report the income by source of all household members. Respondents who were not householders were asked only for their own income. Virtually all married couples maintain their own household and thus currently married respondents were almost all asked to report the income of all household members including their spouse. Except where there was a refusal or don't know response, we have a measure of secondary respondent's income (or couple income) that is independent of whether or not the secondary respondent completed the questionnaire. However, cohabiting respondents were treated differently. Householder is defined as the person or persons in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented. In the case of joint ownership or rental, each person is considered the householder. For 16.8 percent of cohabiting respondents the partner of the primary respondent

was designated as the sole householder. In an additional 2.6 percent neither partner was the householder. (Only 1.0 percent of married respondents did not maintain their own households.) If the primary respondent is a householder, he/she would be asked to report the incomes of all household members. If not, only the primary respondent's income is asked, and we have information on income of the spouse/partner only for cases where the secondary respondent questionnaire was completed.

There is a further complication. All secondary respondents were asked to report their own earnings, even when the primary respondent also reported them. Because we believed that the quality of self-reports of income is higher than that of proxy reports, the secondary respondent's report of his/her earnings was used whenever available in constructing the couple income variable which is on the data file. Thus in only in those cases where the spouse or partner did not complete a questionnaire or where he/she failed to provide his/her own income, is the report from the primary respondent. This is, however, only a minor problem which should not affect anything.

There is a yet another minor complication which we will not discuss here because it is of little importance to the issue under consideration. In a small number of cases where the primary respondent is married or cohabiting but is not a householder, there is a "tertiary" respondent who is asked to report incomes of all household members. This proxy information is used in constructing incomes when there is not a report from the recipient him/herself.

The couple income variable has an NA category. This category includes cases where at least one component of couple income was not ascertained, i.e., it was not given by the primary respondent (refused, don't know, or no answer) and the component was not picked up in the

secondary respondent questionnaire. Thus, some cases are included in the NA category BECAUSE there was not a completed secondary respondent questionnaire [either because the primary respondent (householder) should have, but did not report the earnings of the secondary respondent or because the primary respondent was not a householder and was not asked to report any income of the secondary respondent].

We considered using the income of the primary respondent, instead of couple income, as a predictor of the probability of a completed secondary questionnaire, but that confounded the effects of sex of respondent since women were much more likely not to be in the work force, or if working to have very low incomes. It also is not a very good indicator of the economic situation of either the couple or the secondary respondent.

We also ran the analysis without including any income measure at all. In the analyses presented in the first table, we will report results of this analysis along with the results of the full sample with couple income. Because it makes little difference we do not carry this forward into the other later analyses.

Finally, as we will note later, we ran the analysis for the total sample and for cohabitators alone, restricting the analysis to cases where the primary respondent was the householder.

We have concluded from all of this that the results reported in this paper are not severely biased by including an income variable with a category that is somewhat confounded with what it is we are predicting - the response probability of the secondary respondent.

Differentials in the Response Rates of Secondary Respondents by Basic Social and Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 shows differential rates of response for each of the variables in the basic model.

In the table there are four columns:

1. the number of cases in each category of each independent variable;
2. the response rate for the category expressed as a deviation from the sample mean;
3. a net differential associated with being in that category after adjusting for the effects of all other characteristics in the basic model including couple income; and
4. a net differential adjusting for all variables except income.

The adjustment is done using standard dummy variable regression (multiple classification analysis).

After describing response rate differentials in relation to the variables in this basic model, we will add other variables one or two at a time to those in the basic model.

Table 1. Differential Response Rates of Secondary Respondents:
National Survey of Families and Households
by Characteristics of the Primary Respondent

(Both married and cohabiting respondents are included.)

		(Mean = 82.5%) Deviations		
	N	Gross	Net1	Net2
Age				
<25	725	2.6	4.5	4.4
25-29	1101	2.5	1.6	2.6
30-39	2226	0.2	-0.2	0.6
40-49	1290	-4.5	-4.6	-4.2
50-59	863	-2.1	-1.8	-2.3
60-69	788	2.2	2.7	0.8
70+	469	1.7	1.7	-1.1
Education				
<12	1501	-2.5	-0.0	-0.9
12	2964	-0.3	-0.1	-0.2
13-15	1520	1.6	0.6	1.2
16	976	2.4	0.1	1.0
17+	501	-0.1	-1.6	-1.5
Race/Ethnicity				
Black	905	-7.8	-5.7	-7.0
Non-Hispanic White	5887	2.2	1.8	2.0
Mexican-American	379	-7.8	-7.6	-7.6
Puerto Rican	81	-13.4	-12.6	-12.1
Other	291	-9.7	-8.2	-8.2
Sex				
Male	3426	5.0	4.8	5.1
Female	4036	-4.2	-4.0	-4.4
Children Ever Born/Fathered				
None	1458	3.0	1.0	1.1
Some	6004	-0.7	-0.2	-0.3
Cohabiting/Married				
Cohabiting	678	-6.1	-4.8	-6.9
Married	6784	0.6	0.5	0.7

Table 1 is continued on next page

(Table 1 continued)

Quality of Relationship

1 - very unhappy	142	-7.9	-6.9	-7.1
2	100	-2.5	-3.4	-2.1
3	144	-7.5	-6.1	-6.4
4	541	-5.6	-3.7	-3.7
5	906	-3.6	-2.9	-2.6
6	2044	1.1	0.2	0.5
7 - very happy	3186	2.4	2.3	2.2
NA	399	-3.8	-2.2	-3.2

Total Couple Income

<\$10,000	650	-3.2	-3.0
\$10,000-19,999	1058	2.4	1.8
\$20,000-29,999	1115	0.7	0.4
\$30,000-39,999	1122	4.9	4.4
\$40,000-49,999	806	5.3	5.0
\$50,000+	1501	3.5	3.8
Not ascertained	1210	-13.4	-12.5

Age:

Response rates are lowest for partners of primary respondents in their 40's, and highest for those of persons under age 30 and over age 60.

Education:

The crude response rate is positively related to education. However, when other characteristics are controlled, the relationship with education disappears, except for a slightly lower than average rate for spouse/partners of persons with 17 or more years of education.

Race/Ethnicity:

Blacks have a response rate that is 10 points below whites; after controlling for other characteristics, the differential is reduced to 7.6 percent.

Sex:

The wives and partners of male primary respondents have a response rate that is 9.3 points higher than husbands and partners of female primary respondents. This differential is not affected by other characteristics.

Parental status:

There is only a small net difference in the rate of response by parental status of the primary respondent. The 3.7 point gross differential is reduced to 1.2 percent when other characteristics are controlled.

Cohabiting/Married:

Partners of cohabiting respondents have a response rate that is 6.7 points below the spouses of married respondents. The differential is reduced slightly to 5.3 points when other factors are controlled.

Relationship Quality:

The response rates of spouses and partners of respondents who reported that their marriage/relationship was quite happy (6 and 7 on the scale) have a higher response rate than those who reported that it was less happy.

Couple income:

Income is positively associated with the response rate of the secondary respondent. Those whose income was less than \$10,000 (the bottom decile of the distribution) have lower than average response rates. The highest response rates are for secondary respondents with couple income of \$30,000 or more. The lowest rates are found for respondents whose couple income was not ascertained because one or more components were not reported. This is in part artifactual, as discussed above.

Including or excluding couple income from the analysis does not affect the relationship of other variables and the response rates very much. The net1 and net2 patterns are about the same. The only exception is that the cohabiting/married differential is considerably smaller when income is controlled than when it is not. This is the case, in part, because some of the effect of income is the result of cohabitators being in the NA category of income because there is not R2 questionnaire. This, then attributes to income some of the effect that is rightfully associated with being a cohabitor.

We also ran the analysis restricting the sample to respondents who were householders. The results were indistinguishable from those from the entire sample; even the "effect" of "income not ascertained" was identical. Later, when we report differentials within the cohabiting population, we will look at the results for householders only, because this may be a serious problem for cohabitators. For the remaining analyses of the married couples and all couples, we will not worry any further about this problem.

Differential Response Patterns Between Blacks and Whites, Married and Cohabiting Persons, and Men and Women

In this section we will examine "interactions" of race, sex, and being married versus cohabiting and the other variables in the "basic model." The approach that we take is to run the analysis within subpopulations, and to compare the patterns observed. Table 2 shows the patterns for blacks and majority whites; Table 3 for married and cohabiting respondents; and Table 4 for husbands (male partners) and wives (female partners).

Table 2 shows differentials in response rates for black and non-hispanic white respondents separately. There is somewhat more age variation for blacks than for whites, with very low response rates for the spouse/partners of 40-59 year olds. For blacks there is a strong NEGATIVE relationship between education and the probability of a secondary respondent questionnaire being completed. For whites, there is no relationship at all. There appears to be less of a differential between married and cohabiting respondents for blacks than for majority whites. There is a greater differential by quality of relationship for blacks than for whites. Finally, for blacks there appears to be a U-shaped relationship with couple income, with the highest and lowest categories having higher than average response rates; for whites the relationship is positive.

Table 3 subdivides the sample between married and cohabiting respondents. For cohabitators, two sets of net effects are shown: the first is for the regression with the entire sample included and the second limits the sample to cases where the primary respondent is the householder. The patterns are quite similar for the two groups. There does not appear to be as much of a black/white differential for cohabitators, as there is for married respondents. For cohabitators, there appears to be a differential between parents and non-parents, but it is not statistically significant.

Table 2. Differential Response Rates of Secondary Respondent by Characteristics of the Primary Respondent: Black and Non-Hispanic White Respondents

	Black			Non-Hispanic White		
	N	Gross Mean = 76.4	Net	N	Gross Mean = 83.1	Net
Age						
<25	64	6.5	7.4	586	1.5	3.6
25-29	131	3.9	6.6	860	2.5	1.3
30-39	288	-0.0	-0.3	1695	1.0	0.1
40-49	174	-6.9	-6.6	1007	-3.8	-4.1
50-59	117	-4.6	-6.1	674	-1.9	-1.5
60-69	88	3.7	1.8	653	1.2	2.5
70+	43	11.4	10.3	412	-1.0	0.1
Education						
<12	260	3.8	4.1	961	-1.9	-0.6
12	349	-1.3	-0.7	2401	-0.4	0.0
13-15	182	-1.1	-1.2	1242	1.4	0.7
16	80	-2.2	-4.5	846	1.5	0.0
17+	34	-4.1	-6.2	437	-0.3	-1.0
Sex (primary respondent)						
Male	445	2.6	1.6	2680	5.0	4.8
Female	460	-2.5	-1.5	3207	-4.2	-4.0
Children ever born/fathered						
None	126	-0.9	-2.0	1230	2.1	0.9
Some	779	0.1	0.6	4657	-0.6	-0.2
Cohabitation/married						
Cohabiting	122	-4.2	-2.7	488	-5.2	-5.0
Married	783	0.7	0.4	5399	0.5	0.4
Quality of Relationship						
1 - very unhappy	22	-11.1	-11.0	109	-6.7	-5.9
2	8	0.3	-5.4	81	-0.8	-1.0
3	21	-17.6	-18.6	112	-6.1	-5.1
4	103	-5.8	-5.2	379	-4.0	-2.8
5	136	-9.2	-8.8	699	-2.3	-2.4
6	212	2.2	1.8	1669	1.0	0.3
7 - very happy	341	6.5	6.3	2544	1.5	1.7
NA	62	-3.7	-1.9	294	-3.4	-2.4
Total Couple Income						
<\$10,000	111	8.2	3.7	410	-3.7	-4.6
\$10,000-19,999	139	2.3	-0.2	765	2.6	1.9
\$20,000-29,999	153	-0.8	-0.4	854	1.0	0.5
\$30,000-39,999	109	-3.1	-2.0	935	5.2	4.9
\$40,000-49,999	73	2.5	3.8	681	5.4	5.4
\$50,000+	113	7.6	12.2	1326	1.8	2.6
Not ascertained	201	-9.0	-9.0	916	-13.4	-12.8

Table 3. Differential Response Rates of Secondary Respondent by Characteristics of the Primary Respondent: Cohabiting and Married Respondents

	Cohabiting				Married		
	N	Gross	Net1	Net2*	N	Gross	Net
		Mean = 76.4				Mean = 83.1	
Age							
<25	191	5.3	5.3	3.4	534	3.2	4.1
25-29	160	4.8	1.5	0.6	941	2.5	1.5
30-39	204	-3.4	-1.3	-1.2	2022	0.5	0.0
40-49	86	-11.3	-10.5	-6.0	1204	-4.2	-4.2
50-59	25	-0.4	2.5	3.3	838	-2.6	-2.0
60-69	10	-6.4	-8.4	-1.6	778	1.8	2.8
70+	2	-26.4	-28.4	-22.7	467	1.2	1.7
Education							
<12	165	-6.7	-1.7	-3.1	1336	-1.8	0.4
12	255	1.2	1.2	0.9	2709	-0.5	-0.2
13-15	170	0.7	-1.6	-1.7	1350	1.9	0.8
16	70	5.0	-0.5	1.2	906	2.1	0.1
17+	18	18.0	16.7	24.0	483	-1.2	-2.4
Race/ethnicity							
Black	122	-5.9	-1.9	-3.6	783	-7.8	-6.2
Non-Hispanic White	488	3.1	1.7	2.3	5399	2.0	1.8
Mexican-American	25	-15.9	-11.9	-5.2	248	-8.1	-7.3
Other	43	-15.9	-11.9	-11.3	248	-8.1	-7.3
Sex (primary respondent)							
Male	323	7.2	6.2	5.3	3103	4.8	4.6
Female	355	-6.5	-5.7	-5.1	3681	-4.0	-3.9
Children ever born/fathered							
None	317	6.2	2.4	2.5	1141	3.2	0.5
Some	361	-5.5	-2.1	-2.1	5643	-0.6	-0.1
Quality of Relationship							
1 - very unhappy	1	-21.9	-21.7	-18.7	131	-6.8	-5.8
2	7	-5.0	-5.4	-8.9	93	-2.5	-3.1
3	22	0.9	0.6	-2.0	122	-8.6	-7.2
4	61	-7.6	-7.1	-3.3	480	-5.2	-3.4
5	103	-3.6	-3.8	-3.9	803	-2.8	-2.8
6	191	5.8	3.7i	2.8	1853	0.6	-0.1
7 - very happy	220	0.9	1.5	1.8	2966	2.3	2.3
NA	63	-3.4	0.5	1.1	336	-3.4	-2.8
Total Couple Income							
<\$10,000	77	-2.4	-1.9	7.7	573	-3.2	-3.2
\$10,000-19,999	125	8.4	7.0	8.0	933	1.8	1.1
\$20,000-29,999	111	2.0	1.0	0.8	1004	0.6	0.3
\$30,000-39,999	77	8.0	8.0	5.5	1045	4.5	4.2
\$40,000-49,999	56	9.3	7.5	7.2	750	4.9	4.7
\$50,000+	90	6.9	5.9	3.8	1411	3.1	3.6
Not ascertained	142	-20.1	-17.0	-22.2	1068	-12.4	-11.8

* Excluding cases where primary respondent is not a householder.

Table 4. Differential Response Rates of Secondary Respondents by Characteristics of the Primary Respondent: Male and Female Respondents
 (Note: Data in the Male panel refers to the response rates of Wives/Partners of Male Respondents. The Female panel refers to Husbands/Partners of Female Respondents.)

	Primary Respondent is Male			Primary Respondent is Female		
	N	Gross Mean = 87.5	Net	N	Gross Mean = 78.3	Net
Age						
<25	242	4.7	5.0	483	3.2	4.2
25-29	495	2.6	2.0	606	2.5	1.3
30-39	1012	0.5	0.6	1214	0.0	-1.0
40-49	612	-3.5	-2.5	678	-5.6	-6.2
50-59	392	-0.7	-1.1	471	-3.2	-1.9
60-69	399	-1.3	-1.6	389	5.0	7.0
70+	274	0.1	-0.7	195	1.2	4.0
Education						
<12	739	-0.7	2.0	762	-4.8	-1.7
12	1207	0.8	0.3	1757	-0.3	-0.6
13-15	698	0.1	-0.9	822	3.0	1.7
16	486	0.8	-1.0	490	3.3	1.6
17+	296	-2.7	-2.7	205	0.7	1.2
Race/ethnicity						
Black	445	-10.2	-9.2	460	-6.2	-3.0
Non-Hispanic White	2680	2.2	2.1	3207	2.2	1.5
Mexican-American	170	-3.4	-5.5	209	-11.3	-9.5
Puerto Rican	37	-11.8	-11.9	44	-14.7	-11.4
Other	94	-4.5	-2.0	116	-11.1	-9.0
Children ever born/fathered						
None	749	0.9	-0.4	709	4.2	2.0
Some	2677	-0.2	0.1	3327	-0.9	-0.4
Cohabitation/Marriage						
Cohabiting	323	-3.9	-3.2	355	-8.5	-6.2
Married	3103	0.4	0.3	3681	0.8	0.6
Quality of Relationship						
1 - very unhappy	68	-11.0	-9.6	74	-5.4	-3.9
2	46	-0.5	-2.3	54	-4.2	-3.7
3	62	-8.3	-8.2	82	-6.4	-4.3
4	216	-7.4	-6.6	325	-3.6	-1.4
5	403	0.1	-0.1	503	-5.4	-5.3
6	967	1.7	0.9	1077	0.3	-0.3
7 - very happy	1467	2.2	2.3	1719	2.5	2.1
NA	197	-9.8	-7.4	202	1.4	2.8
Total Couple Income						
<\$10,000	13	-41.3	-38.3	14	-35.5	-37.0
\$10,000-19,999	313	0.4	0.6	310	-4.8	-3.2
\$20,000-29,999	513	2.4	1.9	545	1.9	1.7
\$30,000-39,999	526	-0.0	-0.3	589	1.1	1.2
\$40,000-49,999	513	5.1	4.3	609	4.8	4.7
\$50,000+	400	3.3	3.3	406	6.7	6.3
Not ascertained	671	0.9	1.3	830	5.9	5.7

Table 4 divides the sample by sex OF THE PRIMARY RESPONDENT. There are some striking differences between the response rates of husbands and wives. (For simplicity, we will refer to the spouse/partners as husbands and wives.) Wives of young men are more likely to respond, but there is little differences among the age groups over 35. Husbands of young women also are more likely to respond; however there is a very low response rate for husbands of women in their late 30s. Husbands of women age 55 and older, however, have strikingly high response rates. In absolute terms the response rates of husbands and wives are very similar at ages 55 and older. The effect of education is small for both husbands and wives. There is a much larger black-white differential for wives (11.3 points) than for husbands (4.5 points). The husbands of Mexican American women have an extremely low response rate. Men who have fathered children have a response rate that is slightly below (2.5 points) those who have not. There is a larger differential for husbands and partners of female cohabitators (6.8 points) than for wives and partners of male cohabitators (3.5 points). The effect of couple income is similarly positive for both husbands and wives. The relationship is somewhat stronger for husbands than for wives.

Effects of Other Characteristics on the Response Rates of Secondary Respondents

In the sections which follow, we will add other characteristics one or two at a time to the eight characteristics in the basic model.

Number of times married:

The number of times the primary respondent has been married was entered in regressions run separately for married and cohabiting respondents, along with the variables in the basic model (Table 5). Spouses of married primary respondents who have been previously married had a response rate that was about 3 points lower than those who were still married to their first spouse.

The cohabiting partners of previously married primary respondents, on the other hand, had a slightly higher response rate than partners of never married respondents.

Table 5. Differential Response Rates of Secondary Respondents:
National Survey of Families and Households
by Marital History of Primary Respondent

		N	Deviations	
			Gross	Net
Married Respondents (Mean = 83.2%)				
Times married				
1	5215	0.6	0.7	
2+	1541	-1.9	-2.4	
Cohabiting Respondents (Mean = 76.4%)				
Times Married				
0	358	3.0	-1.2	
1	250	-4.0	0.9	
2+	69	-1.0	2.9	

Children and Step-children:

In this section, we restrict the sample to respondents who had children under age 19 living in the household.

Net of other characteristics in the basic model, the secondary response rate is lower for couples with a child under age 2 and for couples with youngest child of high school age, than for respondents with youngest child between ages 2 and 11 (Table 6).

Table 6. Differential Response Rates of Secondary Respondents:
by Age of Youngest Child in Household
(Couples with Child Under Age 19)

Age of Youngest Child	N	Deviations	
		Gross (Mean = 82.2%)	Net
0-2	1411	1.0	-1.1
3-5	744	1.0	1.0
6-8	593	1.1	2.2
9-11	457	.0	1.7
12-17	760	-3.7	-1.6

Next we examine differentials by the existence of four different categories of step-children under age 19.

1. Primary respondent's children in the household who are the step-children of the secondary respondent.
2. Secondary respondent's children in the household who are the primary respondent's step-children.
3. Primary respondent's children living elsewhere - most often with the other parent.
4. Secondary respondent's children living elsewhere.

Secondary respondents who have children under the age of 19 living elsewhere have a lower response rate than those who do not (Table 7). The gross differential of 10 points is reduced to 5 points when other characteristics are controlled. The existence of the other three types of step-children is not associated with the probability of the completion of the secondary respondent questionnaire.

Table 7. Differential Response Rates of Secondary Respondents in Relation to the Presence of Children Within and Outside the Household:
(Sample Restricted to Primary Respondents with Children in the Household)

	N	Deviations Gross Net (Mean = 82.1%)	
Primary Respondent Has Children Under Age 19 in the Household Who Are Not the Children of Spouse/Partner			
No	3565	.6	- .0
Yes	465	-4.7	-0.4
Spouse/Partner Has Children Under Age 19 in the Household Who Are Not the Children of Primary Respondent			
No	3604	-0.4	-0.2
Yes	426	3.8	1.6
Primary Respondent Has Children Under Age 19 Who Live Elsewhere			
No	3745	- .2	- .0
Yes	285	2.5	.4
Spouse/Partner Has Children Under Age 19 Who Live Elsewhere			
No	3707	.8	.4
Yes	323	-8.7	-4.5

Marriage Duration:

There are only small, irregular differences in response rates by duration of marriage (Table 8).

Table 8. Differential Response Rates of Secondary Respondents in Relation to Duration of Current Marriage: Married Respondents

Duration of Marriage	N	Deviations	
		Gross	Net
		(Mean = 83.2%)	
<1 year	423	2.3	2.1
1 year	383	3.7	1.9
2-4 years	1068	1.3	0.5
5-9 years	1130	-0.7	-0.6
10-14 years	780	-0.0	1.5
15-19 years	697	-0.3	1.2
20+ years	2275	-1.2	-1.6

Subjective Probability of Splitting:

An alternative measure of relationship quality is the subjective probability of splitting up. We substituted this variable for the "quality of relationship" variable, with similar results. The spouses and partners of those respondents who reported that they thought that their relationship had an even or high probability of splitting up had a lower response rate than those who thought the probability was low (Table 9).

Table 9. Differential Response Rates of Secondary Respondents: by Primary Respondent's Assessment of Permanence of the Relationship

	N	Deviations	
		Gross	Net
		(Mean = 82.6%)	
1-very low	4828	1.0	0.6
2-low	1112	1.3	1.2
3-about even	573	-3.6	-2.2
4-high	104	-7.2	-4.8
5-very high	53	-7.2	-4.8
6-NA	763	-4.2	-3.2

Characteristics of Place of Residence:

The secondary respondent response rate is lower for couples living in large metropolitan areas than for those living in non-metropolitan areas or in smaller metropolitan areas (Table 10). The highest response rates are found in non-metropolitan counties that are not adjacent to metropolitan areas. There are only small differences in response rates of secondary respondent's by region of the country.

Table 10. Differential Response Rates of Secondary Respondents in Relation to Characteristics of the Area in Which the Couple Lives

Type of Area	N	Deviations	
		Gross	Net
(Mean = 82.6%)			
Metropolitan			
Population 1,000,000+			
Core	1696	-5.6	-4.5
Fringe	1153	-2.0	-2.5
250,000 - 999,999	1787	0.1	0.5
< 250,000	662	3.0	2.8
Non-Metropolitan			
Place of 20,000+ in County			
Adjacent to Metro Area	289	2.5	1.5
Not Adjacent to Metro Area	339	9.1	7.1
Place 2500 - 19,999 in County			
Adjacent to Metro Area	670	1.7	1.4
Not Adjacent to Metro Area	522	7.0	6.1
No Urban Place in County			
Adjacent to Metro Area	169	3.2	3.5
Not Adjacent to Metro Area	146	2.3	1.3
Region			
Northeast	1384	-3.0	-1.4
North Central	2030	1.6	0.9
South	2652	0.0	-0.4
West	1367	0.6	0.9

Other Characteristics:

A number of other characteristics were included in regressions along with the variables in the basic model. These differentials are not shown in the tables.

Global happiness:

Primary respondents rated their "overall happiness" on a seven point scale. Spouse/partners of respondents reporting the lowest "happiness" and those who did not complete the question (NA's) have somewhat lower than average response rates.

Work Status:

The number of hours worked last week by the primary respondent was not related to the secondary response rate. Since the primary respondent did not report on the work characteristics of the spouse/partner we have no way of examining the effect of the secondary respondent's work status on his/her probability of completing the questionnaire.

When the interview occurred:

We suspected that there might be a drop in the secondary response rate for interviews completed at the end of the study period because of the rush to finish the study. In addition, since the secondary questionnaire normally required that the interviewer return to the home to pick it up, we thought that in the last few months of the study when the interviewers work was not so geographically concentrated, it would be more difficult to arrange to retrieve the questionnaire. In fact, there was only a slightly lower secondary response rate for respondents who were interviewed in the last few months of the field period. The differential is quite small and the pattern is not very regular.

Main versus oversample:

There was no difference in the secondary response rate in the main sample and the oversample.

References

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