

When proxy interviews are acceptable: Does it help to speak with the spouse or partner?

An Examination of Proxy Reporting from the 2008 & 2012 Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts

Timothy Triplett, Rob Santos, and Doug Wissoker
Statistical Methods Group
Urban Institute

69th Annual AAPOR Conference – Anaheim, California
May 15, 2014



Overview

Purpose: Use 2008 and 2012 Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) to learn about accuracy of proxy responses.

Design: Compare the SPPA interviews of randomly chosen adults with proxy responses for their spouse.

Results: Spouse/partner proxy reporting on most variables matched closely to self-reported data.

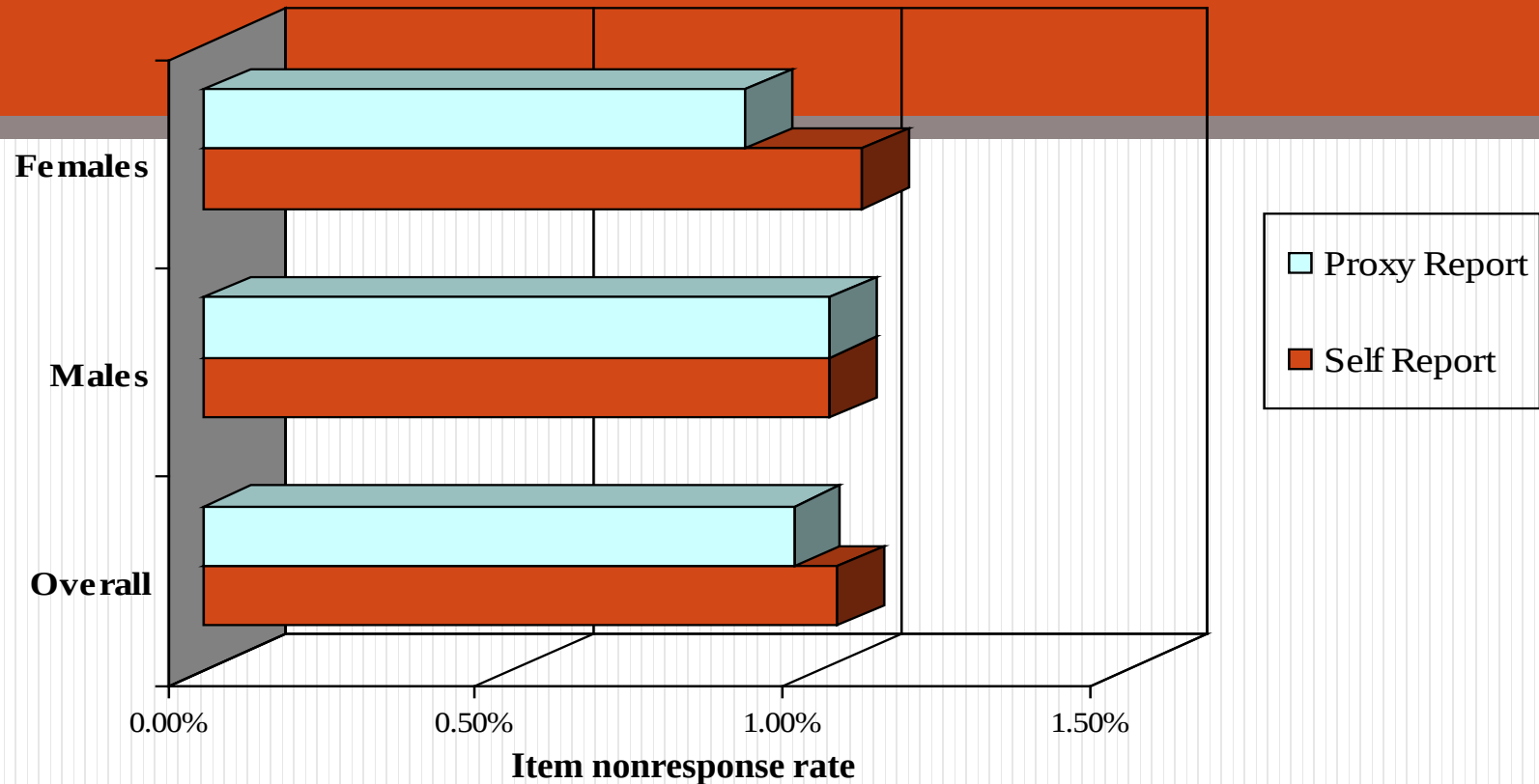


SPPA Survey Design

- Supplement to portions of the outgoing rotation of the Current Population Survey sample in 2008 and 2012
- One or two randomly chosen adult respondents (18 +)
- About half of the questions had a proxy option, with separate survey weights for proxy questions
- Response rate: 82% in 2008; 77% in 2012
 - 18,444 adults in 10,089 households in 2008 and 37,266 adults in 21,778 households in 2012
 - 5,926 spouse/partner reports in 2008 and 11,811 in 2012



Don't Know or Refuse to Answer Rates are Low for Self-Report and Proxy Report



Proxy versus Self-Reporting (Core Art Activities - Summary)

- Differences in rates of attendance at core art activities between self-report and proxy were generally quite small with minimal impact on overall estimates
- 3 exceptions with higher attendance in self-report at the 95% confidence level:
 - ✓ Reading Books (58.3% vs. 53.2%)
 - ✓ Reading Literature (51.7% vs. 46.7%)
 - ✓ Visit Art Museum (23.5% vs. 22.1%)

Point estimates suggest tendency for self-reports to be higher than proxy reports (core art activities)

Self-report was greater

- Jazz
- Latin / Spanish / Salsa
- Classical
- Musicals
- Non Musical Plays
- Ballet
- Other Dance
- Art Museums
- Art Exhibits
- Craft & Art Fairs
- Outdoor Festivals
- Historic Parks
- Live Book Readings
- Read Books
- Read Literature

Proxy-report was greater

- Opera
- Movies



Proxy versus Self-Reporting (Other Leisure Activities - Summary)

- 15 leisure activities had higher rates by self-report; 3 leisure activities had higher rates reported via proxy.
- Differences were generally small, but bigger than Core Art Activities
- More of the estimates differed significantly (95% confidence level) than in the Core :
 - ✓ Regular Exercise; Hours of TV Viewing
 - ✓ Doing Craft Arts; Playing musical instrument
 - ✓ Singing; Dancing; Acting; Teaching art



Again, point estimates tended to be higher for self-reports (other leisure activities)

Self-report was greater

- Sporting Events
- Exercise
- Play Sports
- Weaving, Needle Point etc...
- Do any Acting
- Painting, Sculpture etc...
- Crafts, Pottery etc...
- Creative Writing
- Gardening
- Play Musical Instrument
- Sing Choral or in a Choir
- Teaching Art
- Did Community Activities
- Volunteer/Charity Work
- Voted in the last presidential Election

Proxy-report was greater

- Watching TV
- Social Dancing
- Practice or Performing Dance

Self-Proxy Virtual Tie

- Outdoor activities
- Hunting/Fishing



Proxy versus Self-Reporting

Core Art Activities, by Gender

- Men and Women differ: Women tended to have higher self-reported participation rates and men higher proxy reported rates.
- One exception was reading literature - where men self reported reading more often than the proxy (43% versus 37%) - women were (59% versus 56%)
- Women had higher self reported estimates on 15 out 17 activities and many of them were significant differences higher than proxies – exceptions were going to the movies and outdoor art festivals
- Men had higher proxy report rates on 12 out of 17 activities and many of them were significantly higher than self-reported differences – exceptions were going to the movies and outdoor art festivals, reading, going to historic parks and art exhibits)



Proxy versus Self-Reporting Other Activities, by Gender

- Women tended across to have higher self reported rates than proxy rates on “other activities”. Rates were significantly higher on:
 - ✓ Exercise; Outdoor activities; Gardening; Playing a Musical Instrument; Community activities; Volunteering or Charity Work
- For men, it depended on the activity
 - Proxy rates were higher than self reports for:
 - ✓ Hours watching TV; Outdoor activities; Dancing & Social Dancing; Community activities; Volunteering or Charity Work
 - Self reported rates were significantly higher for:
 - ✓ Exercising; craftwork (wood, leather, metal); Singing



Proxy versus Self-Reporting by Race and Age

- RACE/ETHNICITY:
 - No Differences in patterns of proxy versus self reporting when looking at White versus Non-White estimates for either Core Art Activities or other leisure activities.
- AGE:
 - For both Core and other leisure activities, self reported estimates same as proxy reports for respondents 18 to 24 and 65 and older
 - For both sets of activities, respondents 25 to 64 had slightly higher self reported estimates.
 - Only exception is hours watching TV was higher for 18 to 24 years olds when proxy reported.



Proxy versus Self-Reporting by Income Groups

- For Core Art Activities
 - Self-reported and proxy estimates were almost identical for respondents with family income less than \$50k;
 - Slightly higher self-reported estimates for respondents with family income \$50k to \$100k or over \$100k.
- For other leisure activities, no difference when looking at family incomes of less than \$50k, \$50k to \$100k and over \$100k.



Proxy versus Self-Reporting by Education

- Respondents with less education
 - proxy reported values for Core Art Activities that were the same and or a little higher than self reported rates.
 - Higher proxy reported estimates for hunting/fishing, camping/hiking, and TV watching
- Respondents with some college or more
 - Higher self reported values on Core Art Activities
 - Higher self reported estimates for hunting/fishing, camping/hiking and craft arts (pottery, knitting, woodwork) , but lower for gardening.



Is proxy reporting effective when we look at harder-to-interview respondents?

- How well does proxy reporting work for respondents who are difficult to interview?
- **We looked at:**
 - Respondents from households that failed to complete a previous CPS month
 - Respondents that were interviewed by phone versus in person in month of supplement
 - CPS respondent (easier to interview) versus Non CPS respondent (often requires call back)

Results: Is proxy reporting effective when we look at harder-to-interview respondents?

- No difference between proxy and self report for households that failed to complete a previous CPS month
- Proxy versus self report is similar for phone and in-person interviews
- Non-CPS respondents tended to have higher self reported estimates - suggesting that it may be harder to proxy for hard-to-reach respondents
 - This finding may be telling, especially because women are much more likely to be the CPS respondents

Conclusions

- Overall estimates from proxy reports were remarkably similar to self reported estimates
- Proxy reports for most variables had lower participation rates, but were mostly too small to change the overall participation estimates.
- Estimates are slightly higher with only self-reported data for reading, visiting art museums, and exercise
- Women tend to have higher self-reported rates, while men had higher proxy-reported rates
- The non-CPS respondent typically had higher self-reported values – suggesting that proxy reports may be less accurate for harder-to-reach respondents



Contact: TTriplett@urban.org

