

# *10th International Conference of Panel Data Users in Switzerland*

## *Workshop - Survey Methodology*

### **How Do Mixed-Modes Designs Affect Survey Responding?**

*Evidence from the SHP Pilot Study*

#### **Authors**

*Gian-Andrea Monsch, FORS*

*Oliver Lipps, FORS*

#### **Abstract**

In this contribution, we analyze responses from the pilot study of the Swiss Household Panel (SHP) conducted in 2018 and 2019. This pilot study incorporated a mixed mode experiment including three random groups: The first group responded mainly via telephone. Respondents of this group serve as a control group as they went through the traditional interview design of the SHP which uses the telephone if available and face-to-face else. Group 2 was interviewed by telephone on the household level and then pushed to a web survey for the individual questionnaire. Group 3, finally, was a web only design: Data on the household as well as on the individual level were mainly collected via web survey. As different follow-up modes make it difficult to disentangle mode from selection effects, we compare mixed-modes designs instead of single modes. Thereby, we hope to gain empirical insights from a real world setting that is comparable to other surveys. Specifically, we investigate effects on the frequency of don't know responses and item refusals, and mid-scale responding. In addition, we investigated effects on substantive answers. We take account of characteristics such as the number of words or effort needed to answer them.

We find different frequencies of don't know responses and refusals in the three designs. Questions with different characteristics are affected to different extents. The effects are substantial and remain significant when we control for variables known for their effect on survey responding. The question position interacts with the design for substantive answers. In contrast, mid-scale seems not to be affected by mixed-modes designs. The general conclusion is that response quality may change when changing the mode of a survey.