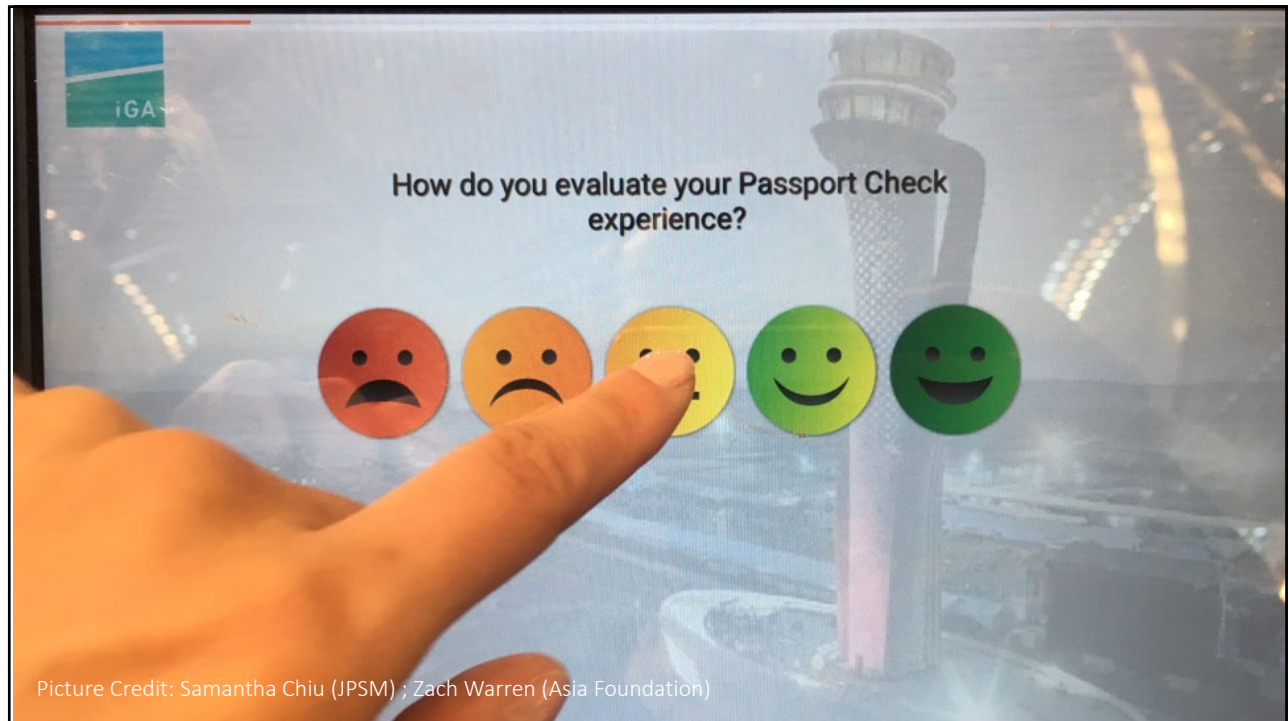


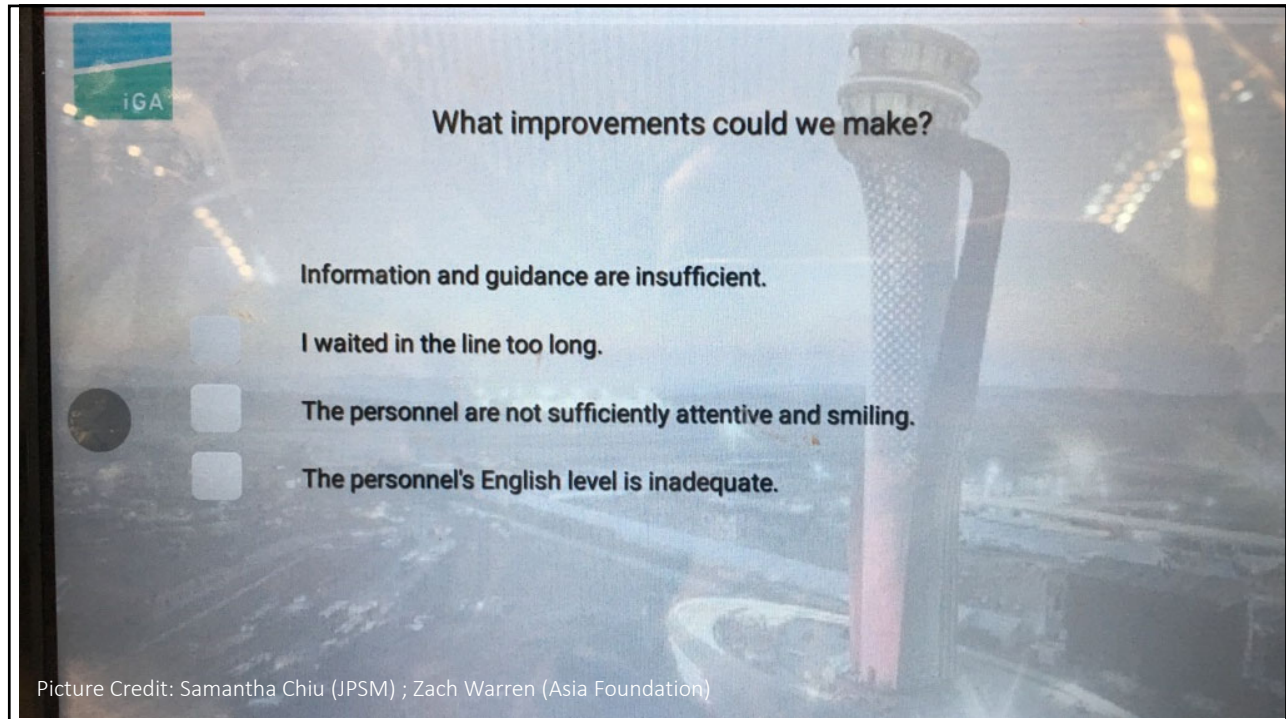
Sensitive Questions & Survey Mode

Frauke Kreuter – NYC – 12/6/2019
fkreuter@umd.edu @fraukolos

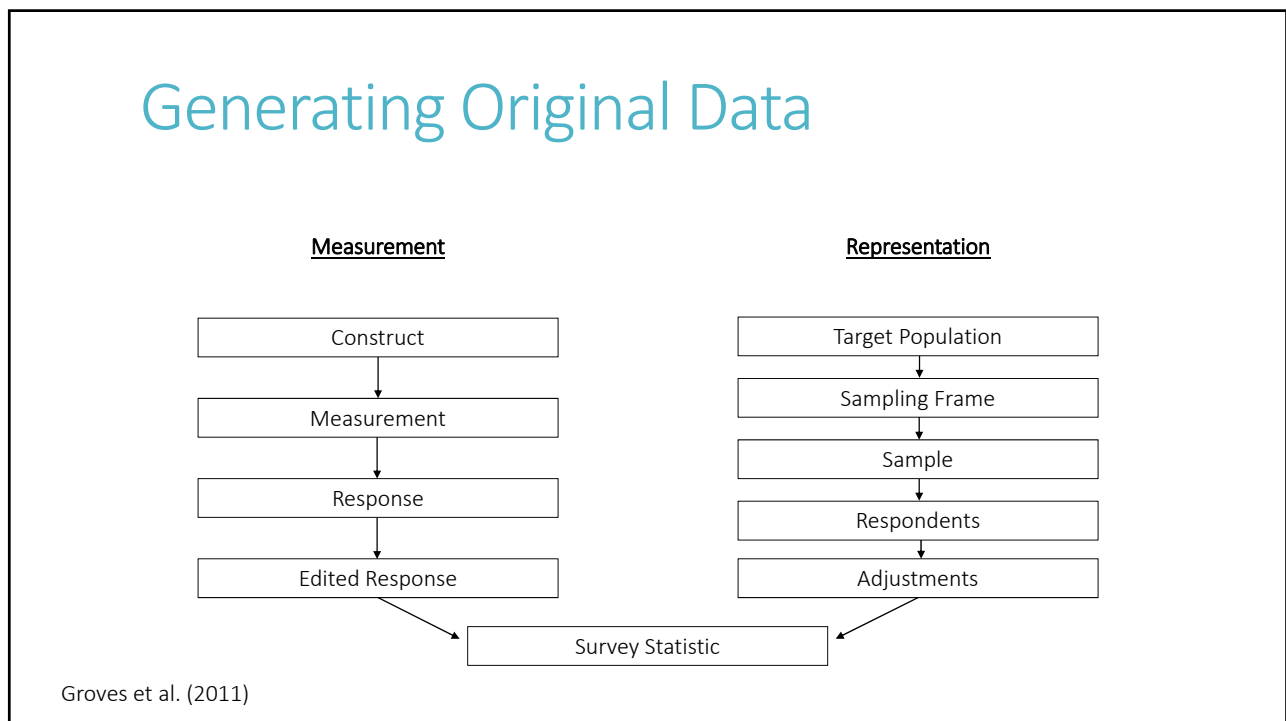
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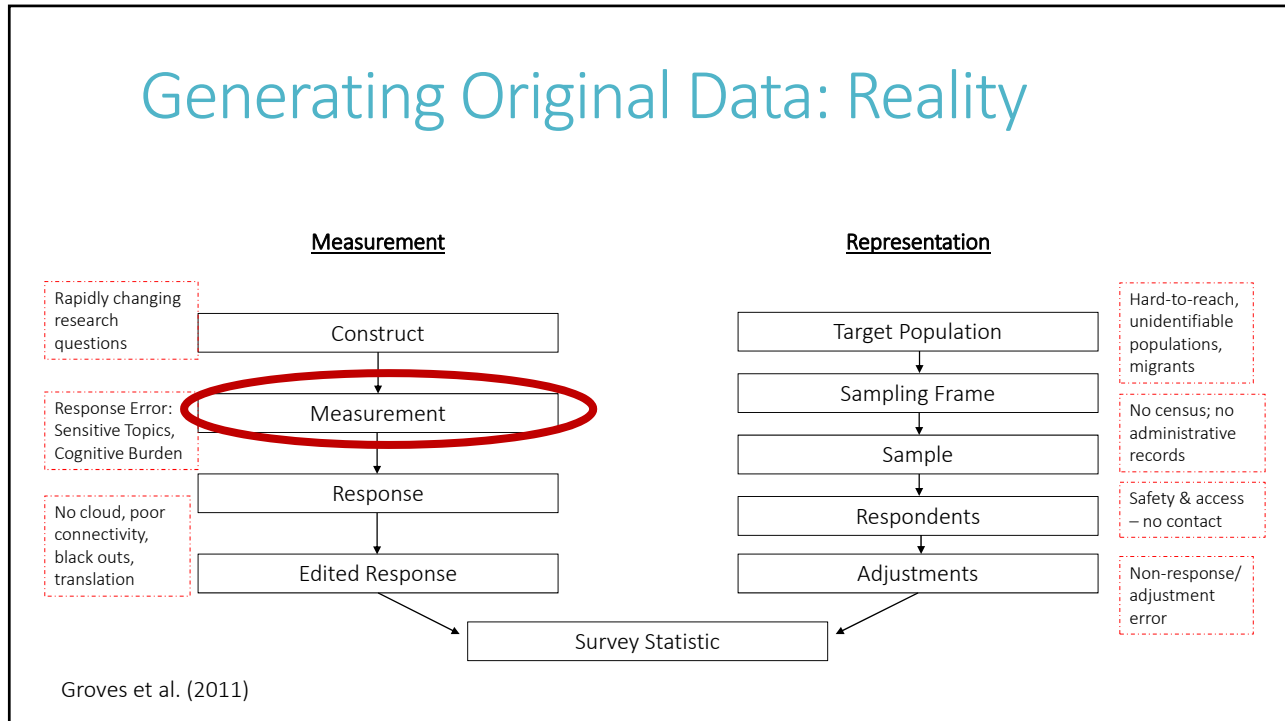


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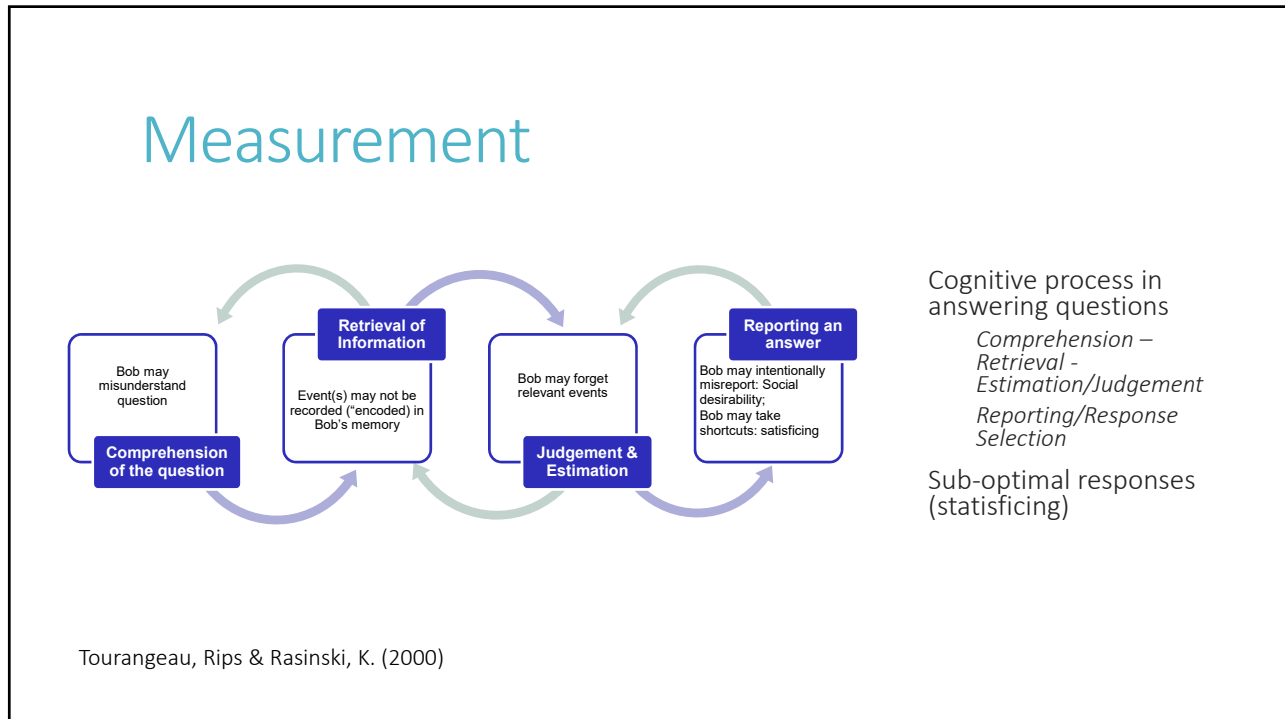
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Generating Original Data: Reality



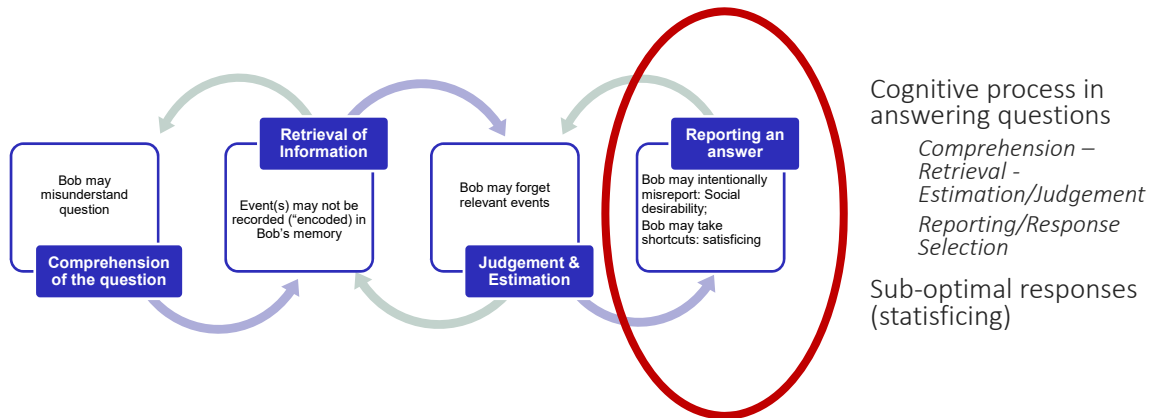
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Measurement



6

Measurement



Tourangeau, Rips & Rasinski, K. (2000)

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Questions about sensitive behaviors

Private Information

Income
Identifiers
(e.g., social security number)

Question is threatening to ask, regardless of respondent's answer.

E.g., Income
Respondents will refuse to answer

Illegal Behavior

Drug Use
Criminal offending
Sexual abuse

Question is threatening to answer.

E.g., Drug use
Respondent may give the wrong answer.
Depends on what the actual behavior is.

Socially stigmatizing behavior

Tourangeau & Yan (2007)

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Mixture of Issues



CAN THE INFORMATION BE
USED IN A LEGAL WAY?



IS THE INFORMATION
PERSONAL?



DOES THE INFORMATION
RELATE TO THE IMAGE OF THE
RESPONDENT?

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Mode

As one approach

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Mode: What we know (and don't)

Mode effects on social desirability

- SD bias stronger in interviewer administered surveys
- Assessment usually without record data
- Little knowledge about relative effects between self-administered modes

Effects on desirable and undesirable items

- Underreporting for undesirable behavior, overreporting for desirable
- Studies mostly done for undesirable behavior
- No knowledge for relative effects of desirable and undesirable behavior

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Kreuter, Presser, Tourangeau -- POQ, 2008

Sample of alumni

- Graduating classes 1989 - 2002
- Sample drawn from administrative records
- Academic record data available

Items asked

- Failing grades, academic probation, dropping a class
- honorable mention, GPA
- Donations/Donation '04; Amount donated '04
- Alumni association

<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Alumni eligible (number dialed)	7567	100.0
Screener completion	1501	19.8
Initially assigned	1501	100.0
Started main questionnaire	1094	72.9
Number of completers	1003	66.8
Response rate		13.2

Mode of administration

Initial contact by phone with random assignment to

Web

CATI

IVR

12

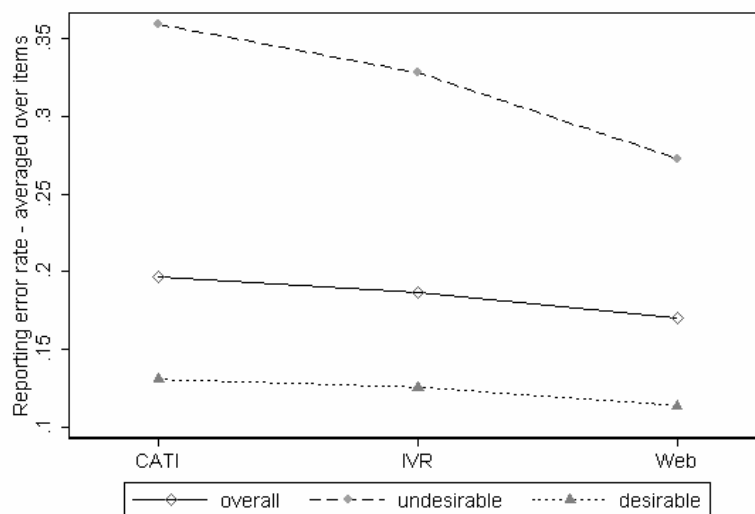
Study basics

	CATI	WEB	IVR
Completes	320	363	320
% complete	31.9	36.2	31.9
RR1	18.8	11.3	12.1

Kreuter, Presser, Tourangeau -- POQ, 2008

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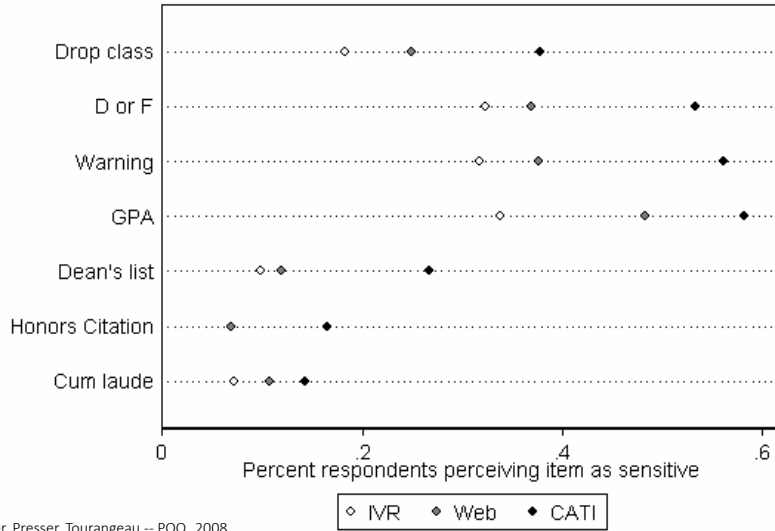
Error rates conditional on being in undesirable state



Kreuter, Presser, Tourangeau -- POQ, 2008

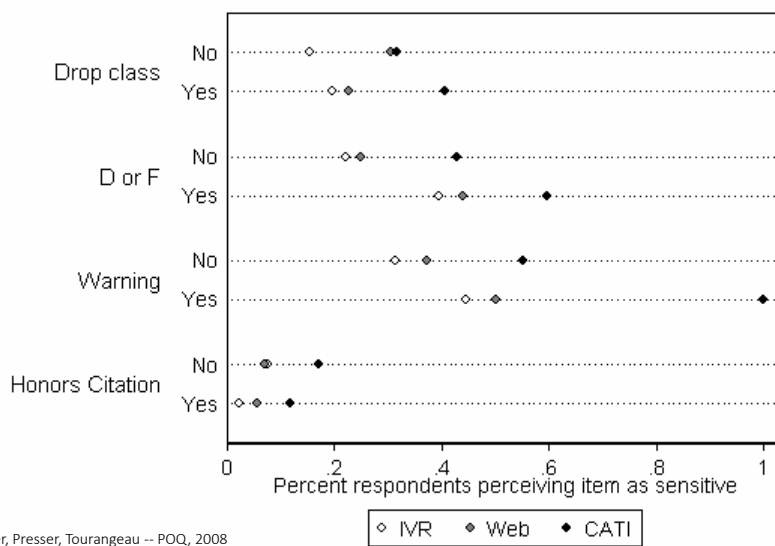
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Questions sensitivity by mode



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Sensitivity by mode and true score



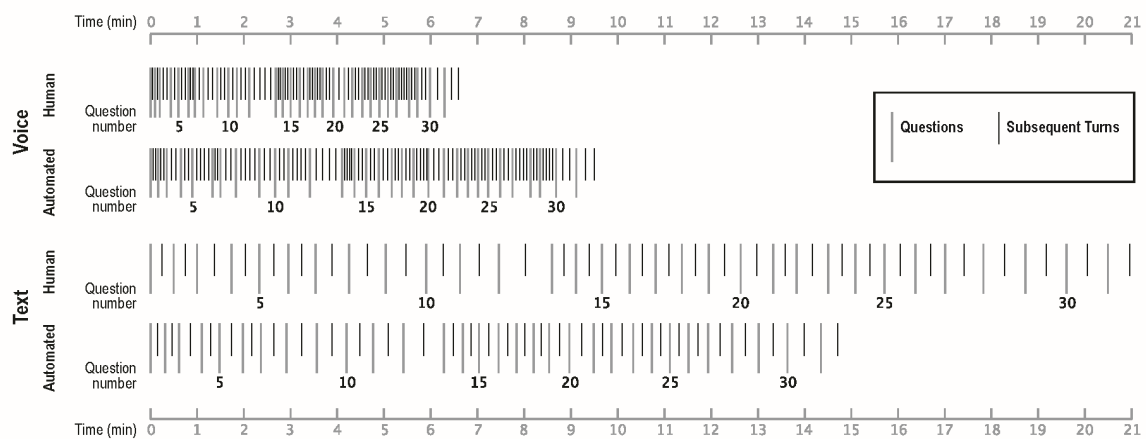
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More Modern Modes

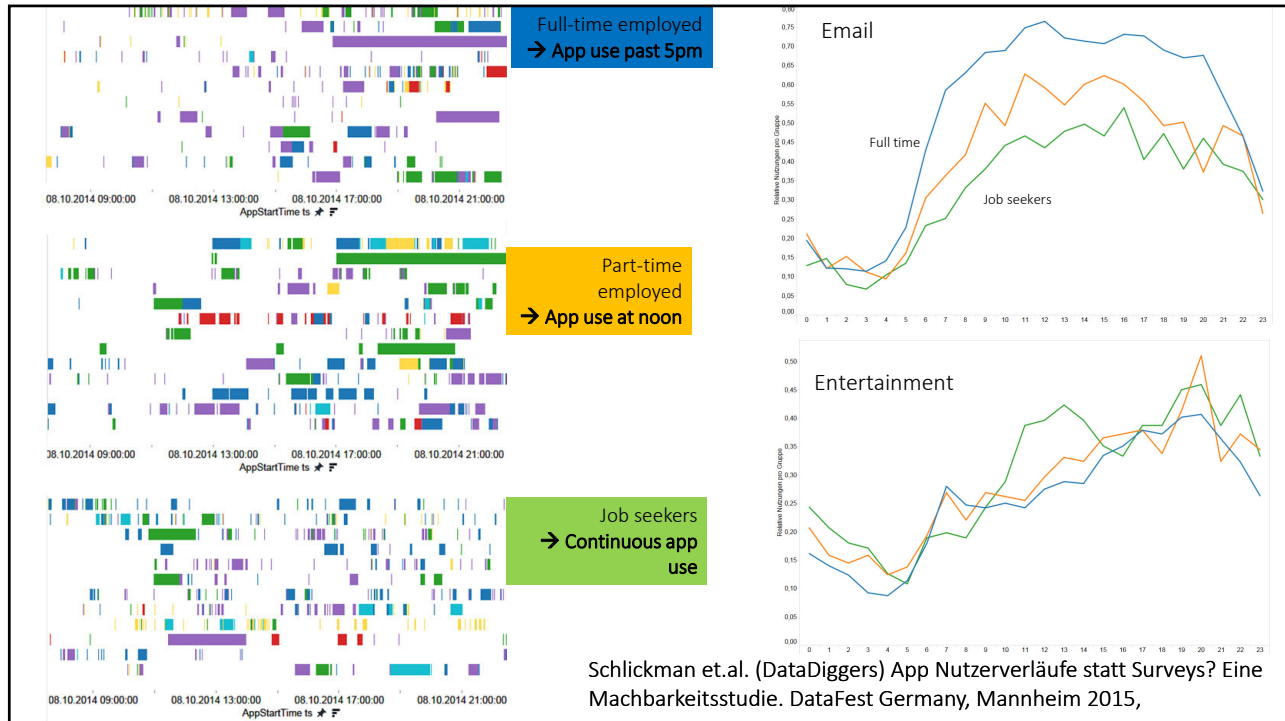
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Smart Phones --- Schober et al. 2019

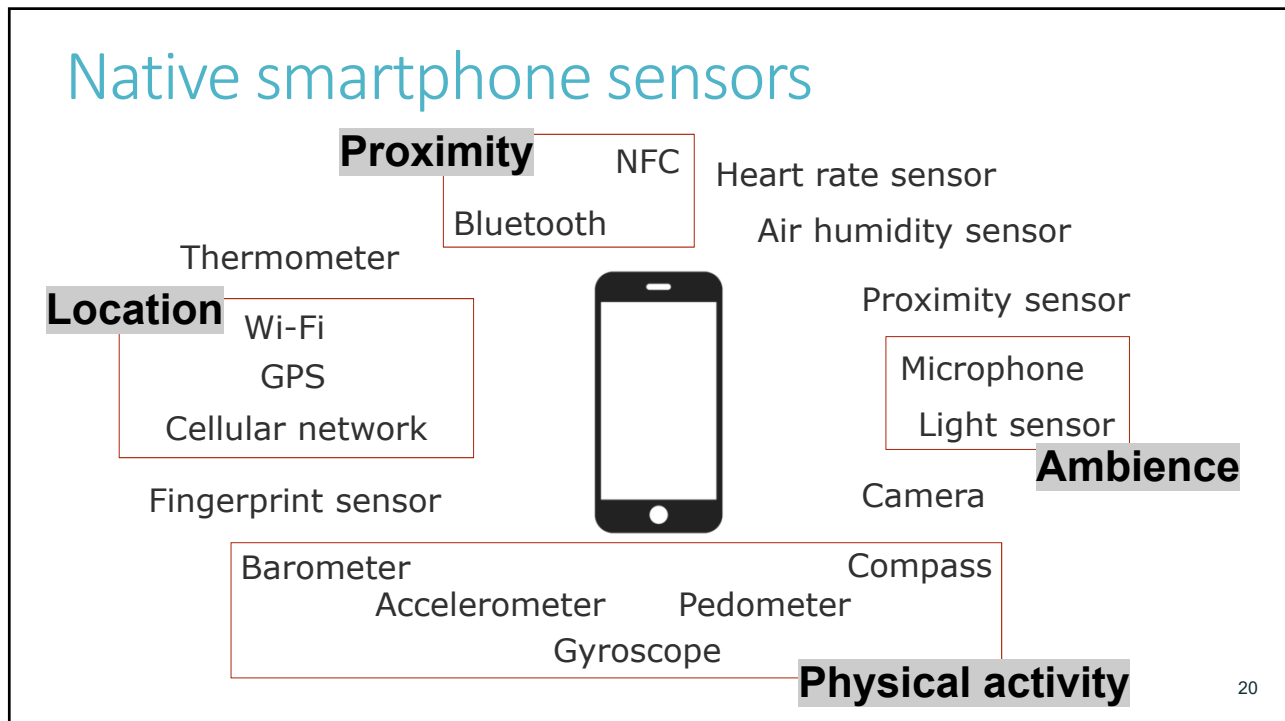
Texting interviews (vs. voice) improved both participation rates and measurement (more disclosure of sensitive behavior); More disclosure in automated vs. human interviews



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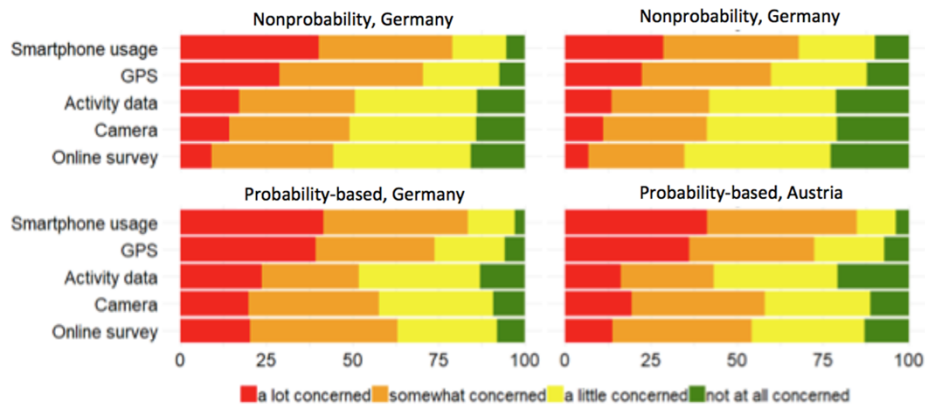
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Privacy Concerns (Keusch et al. 2019)

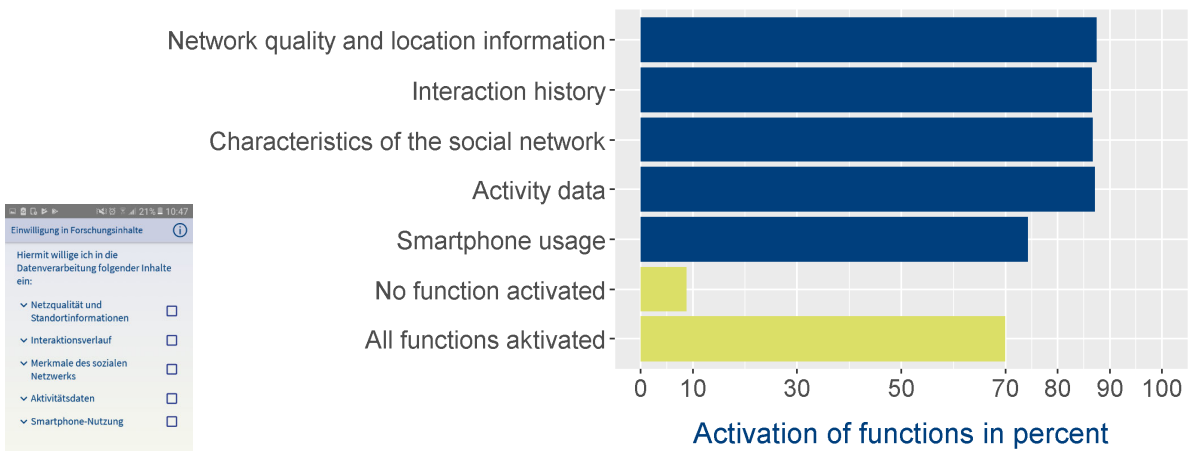
- higher privacy concerns correlate with lower willingness to participate



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Consent by Data Type (IAB-SMART Study, Kreuter et al. 2019)



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Summary



When asking sensitive questions,
mode of data collection matters.



Choice of mode should
- not by increased rates alone
- examine total survey error



Alternative modes can help. If
privacy is taken into account.

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