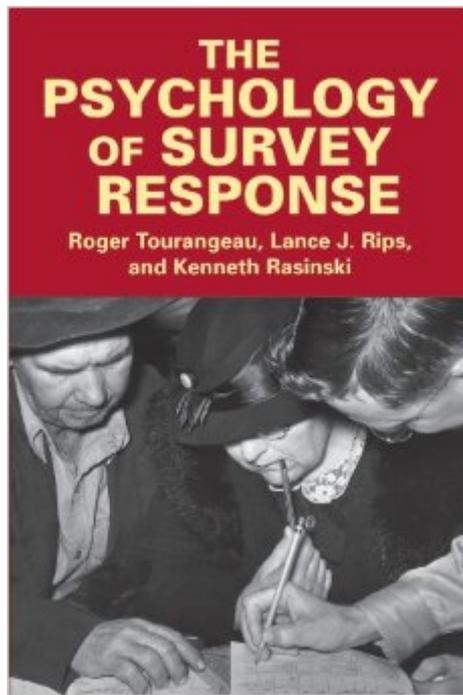


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# The Psychology Of Survey Response



## Synopsis

Drawing on classic and modern research from cognitive psychology, social psychology, and survey methodology, this book examines the psychological roots of survey data, how survey responses are formulated, and how seemingly unimportant features of the survey can affect the answers obtained. Topics include the comprehension of survey questions, the recall of relevant facts and beliefs, estimation and inferential processes people use to answer survey questions, the sources of the apparent instability of public opinion, the difficulties in getting responses into the required format, and distortions introduced into surveys by deliberate misreporting.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book distills years of research into a theory of how people answer survey questions. Authored by three respected survey researchers, it is written for "...(1) social psychologists, political scientists, and others who study public opinion or who use data from public opinion surveys; (2) cognitive psychologists and other researchers who are interested in everyday memory and judgment processes; and (3) survey researchers, methodologists, and statisticians who are involved in designing and carrying out surveys."The authors begin by reviewing previous theories of survey response and then introduce their own model. This model is organized around four mental processes that survey participants must perform: Comprehend the question, retrieve information from memory, make a judgment based on that information, and translate that judgment into a response. Much of the book is organized around this model. Subsequent chapters address how

participants understand--and misunderstand--survey questions, remember relevant information, and make judgments about it. We explore the effects of different question formats, alternative wording and variations in question order. Then the authors explore how survey participants decide to answer, including how they filter and edit their responses before committing to them. The book closes with a discussion of the implications of this model for future survey practice and research to improve that practice. This book is indeed useful for practitioners and researchers. It is worth digesting in its entirety, but its organization supports selective grazing by practitioners who want to focus on improving a single aspect of their surveys. Since it is over ten years old, the book has drifted behind current thinking in some respects.

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