

**Book Review - Sampling elusive populations:
Applications to studies of child labour by Vijay
Verma, 2013 International Labour Organization,
Department of Statistics - Geneva: ILO**

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Child labour is a global, severe issue in urgent need of detailed and up-to-date statistics in order to assess its magnitude and nature, to untangle its determinant factors, to reveal its consequences and so generate public awareness and build up empirical ground for policies and projects to combat it. The book is written under the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FPRW/IPEC); it has been funded by the United States Department of Labor and it is dedicated to the memory of Leslie Kish, who the author named as both teacher and friend.

The book essentially shows two main purposes. First to complement a former work (2008) within a similar ILO program, where the author dealt with sampling issues in conventional, large-scale household surveys of child labor. In this more recent book, while still focusing on sampling issues for designing child labor surveys, Verma took a non-standard perspective, which allowed for enlarging the survey goals also to hidden, elusive sectors of the working children population such as child street vendors or child domestic workers. The second purpose, also a byproduct of the first one above, is then its contribution to survey methodology for difficult-to-sample populations as a contemporary research field actively facing the growing complexity of the global social research.

Moving from a not-so-known Kish review paper published in 1991, in which over 30 categories of elusive population are enumerated and classified into ten types, Verma provides a re-organized catalog of the ones most relevant in the context of child labour surveys. He puts together in one document a vast amount of materials on a number of non-conventional sampling designs, in a mixed effort blending state-of-the-art literature review, real-life examples, numerical illustrations as well as novel ideas on both the underlying theory and its practical implementation in child labour surveys. This has resulted in 14 chapters -plus annex of illustrations and case studies - for a grand total of

more than 800 pages.

The first introductory chapter, besides pointing the reader toward the main subject of surveying child labour, also outlines the content of each of the following chapters, which in my opinion gives a nice additional reference manual feature to the entire volume. The subsequent 13 chapters are gathered into five parts: part I introduces substantive and technical background for child labour surveys while in parts II to V the non-standard sampling topics promised can be founded: Imperfect Frames and Rare, Mobile and Reclusive Populations. These last four parts provide a wide review of sampling designs, implementation challenges and estimation needs described in simple words, with reduced technicalities and from a very practical point of view. Due to my personal research interests, Multiple Frame Surveys (discussed in Chapter 8 at its turn located in Part II: Rare Populations) naturally attracted my special attention. I actually enjoyed reading this part, which is suggested to increase population coverage with a special emphasis for developing countries where, although involved into the phenomenon of working children, limited experience in multi-frame designs can be traced. I cannot but agree with Verma who claim that such a technique has potential that should be exploited to the maximum extent possible for this purpose.

In conclusion the book appears as an awful amount of work, a tremendous effort, the utility of which goes clearly beyond the focussed field of child labour survey, to embrace a wide - and I reckon actually increasing - array of challenging practical applications of sampling methodology.