



## **ANES Panel Study Proposals: Evaluative Criteria**

We will not include on the 2007-2009 Panel or the 2008 Time Series study any question that has not been asked before in one or more empirical studies and shown to function adequately (as demonstrated by quantitative evidence on response distributions and correlates of responses with other, theoretically relevant variables, hopefully election-specific variables). The quantitative evidence does NOT need to be derived from representative sample surveys.

Your proposal MUST explicitly address the temporal aspect of the Panel Study design. Proposals must include clear arguments about why the question(s) is (are) vital to a data collection that it will interview the same respondents over a politically-important 21-month period (September 2007-May 2009) and will be in the field for the same period as the ANES Time Series study.

These nine criteria will be focused on in the evaluation of each proposal:

1. Leverages the Design of the Panel Study. The panel study will be more useful to social scientists if it includes a common set of questions in all of the 6 core waves. This would permit tracking change over time in factors such as candidate preferences, turnout likelihood, citizen engagement, and the principal causes and consequences of them (using some traditional measurement approaches to allow comparability across data collections). In addition, each ANES wave will include some measures assessing exposure to particular recent events to allow for gauging the impact of them. And since three of the ANES waves will be run at the same time as the 2008 time series survey, running some of its questions will permit interesting mode comparisons. In many respects, therefore, this project offers wonderful new opportunities for innovation in measurement and theory-building for the ANES.

2. Novelty of Idea: Are the ideas in the proposal new, either for the study of elections or for another social science enterprise or both? If so, are they directly relevant to the mission of the ANES (i.e., understanding the causes or consequences of voter turnout or candidate choice)?

3. Building on Solid Theoretical Footing. Do the ideas in this proposal follow from strong, convincing theory about how people are likely to think and/or act? Given ANES's mandate to serve a broad user community, it is important that users be able to understand, and explain to others, the theoretical rationale for including particular concepts and questions on an ANES survey. Concepts should be defended as part of a set of cause-and-effect relationships that ultimately have the potential (alone or with other factors) to have a significant impact on vote choice or turnout. Given the temporal element of the panel study, relationships with a potentially significant temporal component will have an advantage. Regarding the questions that represent the concepts, it is important to think about the quality of the data that questions will provide. Quality, in turn, is a function of wording. If we ask a question that a nationally representative set of respondents understand in the same way, then the data has greater value in analyses that depend on comparing responses. Many questions, however, either confuse respondents or are asked in ways that should undermine an analysts confidence in the comparability of responses. Much of the feedback that we offer to OC proposers is in the spirit of working with them to arrive at more effective theoretical arguments about the relevance and role of particular concepts and questions.

4. Demonstrated Validity and Effectiveness of Questions. Questions may be taken from the inventory of questions that have been asked in prior ANES surveys (for lists of these questions, see <http://www.electionstudies.org/resources/questions/questions.htm>). Questions may also be those that have been asked in other empirical studies and have been shown to yield valid and reliable measurements of the constructs of interest. For questions new to the ANES, it is important that the proposer provide evidence of effective item functioning. For the Panel Study, we cannot run "new" questions for which no such evidence is available.

5. Building on a Solid Empirical Foundation. Have the ideas advocated in the proposal been empirically tested and supported by past research? For some proposals, it can be helpful to see that focal concepts have also been evaluated in a laboratory setting, in addition to past performance on sample surveys.

6. Breadth of Relevance and Generalizability. Will the ideas being advocated be interesting, and/or provocative, and/or counter-intuitive to many scholars? Most of the proposals we received in the past satisfied this criteria. There were some cases where some very good ideas were proposed but ultimately they were ideas that would serve a very narrow range of research hypotheses. While we were excited to see such research unfold, it is difficult to justify placing such items on the ANES when the opportunity cost is excluding questions that are just as interesting, but would have far broader value to users.

7. Suitability to ANES. What kinds of statistical analyses would be required to make the most of the proposed questions, and can these analyses be conducted with the array of measures that will be available to analysts of the panel study data? This criterion is critically important as most ANES users draw inferences from the data using statistics. This criterion may lead us not to act on some very good ideas, if the ideas are likely to produce very unusable data (e.g., proposals featuring questions for which it is likely that only a few respondents will say "yes"). While such frequencies can be valuable to know, they severely limit the usefulness of such variables to most ANES users. Of course, for people with temporal hypotheses, having no one say "yes" at a certain time can be quite informative and we are willing to consider proposals where such outcomes are possible. But we would encounter problems if such null results were expected most or every time the question would be run.

8. Bridge-Building. Can the ideas proposed build intellectual bridges from one or more research traditions to others? There is no single approach to explaining turnout or vote choice. Where possible, however, we would like to challenge researchers within certain paradigms to explore the consequences of interacting with other scientific communities. In the past, we have received proposals that brought ideas from outside traditional ways of looking at elections into the context in exciting and potentially path-breaking ways. Subject to such proposals meeting the other stated criteria, we like to see more of this.

9. Controversy-Relevant. Are the ideas proposed relevant to ongoing controversies among researchers, such that our adding particular questions can advance the debate?