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Title: Issues in Analyzing Data from the Dual-Mode 2000 American National Election Study

Date: April 30, 2003

NES Technical Report Number: nes010751

Dataset(s): 2000 NES

Abstract

For scholars interested in methodological issues concerning survey response and the analysis of incomplete survey data, the 2000 American National Election Study (ANES) is a gold mine of research opportunities. However, unless researchers proceed with caution, the riches of the 2000 ANES may turn into fool's gold. The 2000 study differs from previous ANES studies by interviewing respondents in three different ways: individuals were contacted and interviewed over the telephone, in person, or a combination of the two. In addition, the questionnaire contained numerous experimental manipulations. The combination of the dual-mode design and the experimental manipulations creates several potential pitfalls for the researcher using the 2000 ANES that he or she may not typically encounter.

Before proceeding to discuss the issues surrounding the 2000 ANES, it may be useful to offer the following suggestions with regards to the dual-mode design. If the researcher seeks to maintain continuity and consistency with research that has utilized studies from previous years, the best solution is to use only the face-to-face respondents. If the researcher seeks to analyze the impact of congressional district level variables on individual behavior and attitudes, it may be better to analyze the respondents that were interviewed over the telephone in the pre and post-wave of the survey. If there are concerns that necessitate using all of the observations, such as having enough respondents in particular categories (e.g. black, female, age 25-35), the researcher should proceed with caution and check the robustness of any results using the different sets of respondents. In other words, we suggest running the analysis on the face-to-face respondents and the telephone respondents separately, as well as on all of the respondents, in order to assess if there are any significant differences in the results. If this is not possible, the researcher should at least compare the sample statistics (e.g. mean, variance, etc.) of the relevant variables for each mode to detect any significant differences between the modes.