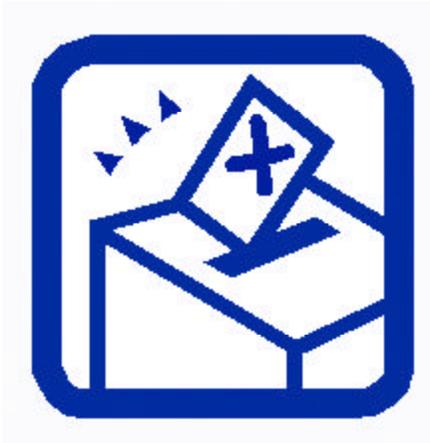


The American Electoral Behavior Workshop: A 10-Year Outlook for the National Science Foundation



Report of the

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Frank Scioli and Jim Granato
Political Science Program Directors
National Science Foundation

e-mail: fscioli@nsf.gov and jgranato@nsf.gov

Part One: Executive Summary and the History of NSF Support of Election Studies

I. Executive Summary

On February 14 and 15, 2003 the Political Science Program sponsored an American Electoral Behavior Workshop at the National Science Foundation in Ballston, Virginia. The Workshop's objective was to provide advice on the Program's forthcoming recompetition for the study of American Electoral Behavior.

The participants at the Workshop included members of the American National Election Studies Board and external (national and international) experts knowledgeable in the methodology and/or substance of survey research and electoral research.

Workshop participants were given a set of discussion points and asked to provide written commentaries related to the discussion points. Participants were also given the option to present their own concerns and vision for the future. The Workshop was transcribed and the comments are available on the Program's Web page (<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/ses/polisci/start.htm>). This report serves as the basis for a re-competition of the current American National Election Studies (ANES) award supported by the Political Science Program (SES-0118451). An announcement and call for proposals will be issued during the spring of 2004.

In both written and/or spoken commentaries, American Electoral Behavior Workshop participants recommended that the Political Science Program at the NSF address the following methodological and substantive challenges in the next 10 years.

- The need to support a presidential study that includes a core component.
- The possibility of using a panel design for the presidential election study.
- The value of maintaining primarily face-to-face interviewing of the core component.
- The need to ensure that investigators have the capacity to conduct pilot research on innovative methodologies and substantive issues specific to a time and place.
- The value of including a dynamic component that captures on-going events of political importance.
- The importance to Political Science of having a core national study as a "docking station" for substantive modules submitted by researchers who may not be part of the current ANES community.
- The need to encourage the research community to seek cooperative arrangements with private funding organizations, other government agencies (e.g., using census addresses for mail surveys), other surveys (e.g., Bureau of Labor Statistics), and the like.

II. History of NSF Electoral Support

A. The ANES and NSF: 1948-1980¹

The University of Michigan's Survey Research Center (SRC) first conducted a survey on presidential elections in 1948. Under the direction of Robert Kahn and Angus Campbell the SRC administered a pre-post survey for the 1948 U.S. presidential election. Among the innovations was the use of Leslie Kish's area probability sampling procedure that was in part a response to faulty sampling methods. Kish's methodology and innovations had acumen: the pre-election results had Truman the winner (Sapiro 1999: 7).

A second survey was used to study the 1952 presidential election and resulted in the publication of the classic book, *The Voter Decides (1954)* by Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin, and Warren Miller. In the wake of this success Campbell and Miller wanted to extend the election study series, which meant they immediately faced the problem of how to fund its continuation. There were then few private sources of funding for basic social science research and, while the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and a number of different defense-related agencies had sponsored survey research, there was not yet any federal agency with an interest in social science research per se.

1. External Funding and Innovation in Data Collection

A turning point in the quest for funding came in 1956, when Campbell and Miller obtained funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. In addition, the collaborators sought funds to continue the series of election studies in a way that allowed for continuous monitoring and replication over subsequent elections. They prepared for the first major panel study, which ultimately included re-interviews of the 1956 sample during the 1958 congressional and 1960 presidential election studies (Sapiro 1999: 9-10), even before they had secured funding for it.

This panel design became a model emulated and further developed by many studies over the years. Miller secured supplementary funding to interview the congressional candidates associated with a sub-sample of the congressional districts represented in the mass survey in 1958. In the period from the 1956 study to that of 1958, the project incorporated both a cross-sectional time series and panel data into the design. The researchers' objective was to integrate the mass survey with other types of data in order to generate more theoretically sophisticated models and better empirical tests of specific hypotheses about the nature of electoral behavior.

The 1960 election study completed the first (of three) multi-election panels. A series of influential articles, known primarily to elections experts rather than the larger readership of *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960), was the collection published as *Elections and the Political Order* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1966). This also includes some of the representation work as well as cross-national analysis (Sapiro 1999: 11).

¹ This section is based on the recollections of Frank Scioli, who has been Political Science Program Director since 1981, and excerpts from the 1999 paper "Fifty Years of the National Election Studies: A Case Study in the History of 'Big Social Science'" by Virginia Sapiro, a former ANES Principal Investigator.

The SRC election studies continued through the 1960s. Survey instruments combined continuity and innovation. Maintaining a time series of core questions, repeated from one survey to the next, preserved continuity. Innovation was encouraged through the incorporation of new batteries or design features geared toward the specific circumstances of the political and electoral context and scholarly and scientific developments, such as the emphasis on new theoretical approaches and methodological techniques.

2. The Political Science Program's Increasing Role with the ANES

In 1970 NSF provided funding to the ANES for an election study as a whole, thus initiating a relationship that continues to this day. The basic funding for each wave came from NSF, although in 1974 the John and Mary Markle Foundation also provided important funding. The 1974 study had a substantial focus on the mass media, including detailed information on which media sources respondents used, thus allowing researchers to incorporate information on those sources into the data.

An issue that was raised early in NSF's involvement in the ANES, because it had implications for the overall quality of the ANES, was the need to extend the funding cycle. To accomplish this, Warren Miller entered into discussions with NSF program officers (David Legee in particular) over the possibility of long-term funding for the election studies that would obviate the need for facing the uncertainties of seeking funding every two years.

There were obvious difficulties. In the mid-1970s, the NSF Political Science Program was a small part of the social sciences at the Foundation, having been frozen for some time with an annual budget of approximately \$1,000,000. In light of the competition among the many sub-fields of political science, any given proposal for a national election study would be asking for one-third to one-half of the disciplinary budget. The Political Science Program's budget was not large enough to contain a "big science" project (Sapiro 1999: 16).

Legee and Miller addressed this particular problem in ways that would have major effects on the future of the election studies, on the Political Science Program and, indeed, on the social sciences more broadly. Legee "considered the models offered in the biological and physical sciences, and began to devise a plan for what he and the Foundation came to define as a 'national resource in the social sciences.' He worked with Miller on ideas for transforming the project and Richard Dawson, Legee's successor at NSF, continued these efforts" (Sapiro 1999: 16).

Their efforts resulted in the creation of the American National Election Studies. It was to take on the character of a national social science resource. It now would have up to a five-year funding period that could be renewed only upon submission of a full proposal to NSF which would be reviewed in the usual way by the appropriate program.

The specific features of the 1977 proposal were the following:

- The University of Michigan served as host for the project.
- The Principal Investigator and study staff were based at the Institute for Social Research.
- The PI, however, would be advised by a national Board of Overseers representative of the community of scholars interested in American national elections.
- The Board would, in conjunction with the Principal Investigators, develop long-range plans, review work programs and budgets, make decisions regarding priorities in the instrument, assist the principals in developing further proposals, and make an annual report to the ISR
- From the outset, the Principal Investigator was responsible to the Board with NSF having to approve members of the Board.

As Sapiro (1999) notes: “the new plan for the project could still have been hampered by the relatively small size of the NSF Political Science Program budget. It did not, after all, make the project cheaper” (pp. 19). To address this Legee sought joint review and funding of political science proposals that had a multidisciplinary emphasis. As a consequence, a Political Science Program budget of roughly \$1,000,000 could be expanded by more than 50 percent.

As a consequence of this work by Legee, the 1977 proposal for “Long-Term Support for the American National Election Studies,” succeeded in making the project a national social science resource with a wholly new structure, and guaranteed funding for five years (1978-1982). This was followed by a two-year grant (1982-84), two more five-year grants (1984-1988; 1989-93) and three four-year grants (1994-97; 1998-2001; 2002-2005) (Sapiro 1999: 15).

The ANES also changed the funding environment for other large-scale social science surveys. Following the lead of ANES, the General Social Survey and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics started to work with the Foundation to develop multi-year proposals as “national social science resources” (Sapiro 1999: 20).

B. Events Leading up to the First ANES Recompetition

In the years following the 1977 framework, the Board of Overseers worked with the Principal Investigators to formulate data collections. “Each election study was developed by a ‘Planning Committee’ selected by the Board and consisting partly of Board members and partly of other scholars with interests and expertise especially relevant to the themes and problems of the study” (Sapiro 1999: 20).

In the ensuing years, the list of Principal Investigators has evolved. From 1978 to 1988, Warren Miller continued as Principal Investigator. In 1990 and 1992 Miller was joined as a Principal Investigator by Donald Kinder and Steven Rosenstone. In 1997 Rosenstone resigned from the University of Michigan faculty to take a Deanship at the University of Minnesota, and Virginia Sapiro of the University of Wisconsin–Madison was now part of the team of Principal Investigators. In the ANES grant for the period 1998-2001 Sapiro and Rosenstone appeared as Principal Investigators. Starting in 1999 Nancy Burns and Donald Kinder, both of the University of Michigan, joined the project as a Co-Principal Investigators.

During this period there were important events within the larger political science research community that had implications for the ANES. There was continued and increasing pressure on NSF to fund other projects that were deemed to be as intellectually exciting and important as the ANES. This was bound to occur as other subfields within political science became increasingly proficient in using technical and scientific means to examine theories and hypotheses. The technical advantage held by students of American political behavior and institutions (Congress in particular) over other subfields was narrowing.

It was the intersection of these forces that ultimately lead to the re-competition of ANES in 2000. The documents are presented in chronological order.

1. The 1990 Committee of Visitors Report²

In 1990, NSF was under increasing pressure to re-compete the ANES for purposes of saving money for other worthy projects as well as letting market forces encourage innovation in the ANES. The 1990 Committee of Visitors Report states:

...we believe that it would be useful at this juncture for the Foundation to set up a committee to review both the research and planning aspects of the ANES and the actual fieldwork. Because we believe that markets have salutary effects, this committee would be charged with considering the possibility of having the Foundation solicit competitive bids for the field work portion of the study and with finding ways to ensure the ongoing leadership, planning, and research function carried out by the ANES board.

2. The National Science Board Resolution on Recompetitions (1997)

There was also a renewed emphasis on re-competitions from within NSF. On November 13, 1997 the National Science Board (NSB) released a Resolution Concerning Competition, Re-competition, and Renewal of NSF Awards (NSB 97-224). In this Resolution it states that the NSB:

Affirms its strong support for the principle that expiring awards are to be re-competed unless it is judged to be in the best interest of U.S. science and engineering not to do so. This position is based on the conviction that peer-reviewed competition and re-competition is the process most likely to assure the best use of NSF funds for supporting research and education.

And

Requests that the Director, NSF, take such steps to ensure that NSF practices embody this principle.

3. The 1998 Committee of Visitors Report

As with the 1990 Committee of Visitors Report, the 1998 Committee of Visitors reiterated the need for a re-competition. The 1998 Committee of Visitors Report states:

While recognizing the important contributions of the ANES to the discipline, the Committee believes it is now appropriate to consider the possibility of re-competing it. A vital initial step in any re-competition will be to investigate a variety of questions related to the survey methodology currently employed by the ANES. The present methodology is expensive, and cost-effective alternatives must be carefully investigated. . . To this end, the Committee recommends that the NSF Political Science Program constitute a committee of methodologists charged with conducting an inquiry into the substantive consequences of a re-competition of the ANES. We recommend that the Committee members should be political scientists who are experts in various aspects of survey research methodology, and at least some should have experience in conducting large-scale ANES-style surveys in the United States and other countries.

² A Committee of Visitors is constituted approximately every three years by NSF management to conduct an evaluation of each discipline-based program. The Committee advises NSF on the management of the Program and future directions and opportunities for the Program.

4. The Political Science Infrastructure Workshop (1999)

In keeping with the Committee of Visitors Report, the Political Science Program convened an Infrastructure Workshop of leading scholars who fit the description of the 1998 Committee of Visitors recommendation.

The Infrastructure Workshop was held on October 15, 1999. The discussion of the ANES resulted in the following recommendations. First, a re-competition was to be held for the August, 2000 cycle. Second, there was to be a cap of \$2,000,000 over a 4-year period, or \$500,000 annually.

The justifications for these recommendations rested on the Workshop members' thinking that the ANES could be done more economically. Members of the Workshop had considerable experience with similar surveys and had assessed their costs to be much less expensive than the existing ANES practice. Another concern, expressed also by previous Committee of Visitors, was that outstanding projects were being "crowded out" for funding because of the sheer enormity of the ANES. At the time (1999) it was consuming approximately 25% of the Political Science Program's annual budget. A third concern dealt with ancillary projects the ANES produced. These projects, it was thought, could be competed in the Political Science Program and, independent of the large Presidential study, and where meritorious, could be funded as separate individual projects.

C. The Recompetition Announcement (February, 2000)

Within the backdrop of the events of the 1990s, the Political Science Program made a formal announcement to the political science research community regarding an ANES re-competition. The February 1, 2000 re-competition announcement followed the recommendations of the 1999 Infrastructure Panel. In particular, a cap of \$2,000,000 over a 4-year period, or \$500,000 annually, was imposed for the next round of submissions (August, 2000).

The re-competition announcement issued in February, 2000 resulted in an award to Nancy Burns and Donald Kinder, Principal Investigators, University of Michigan, for the period 2002-2005 in the amount of \$3,000,000.³ The current project involves a 2004 study of a national probability sample of 1,200 individuals interviewed in the pre-presidential election period. Approximately eighty-five percent of those respondents will be re-interviewed in the post-election period. Both interviews will last approximately fifty minutes, and will be carried out face-to-face. All data are to be made quickly available via a Web site and through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. A Board of Overseers, Chaired by John Mark Hansen, University of Chicago, advises the Principal Investigators and serves as representatives of the larger community of users of the ANES data.

1. NSF's Role in the Future Study of American Electoral Behavior

Given this history of NSF involvement and support of the ANES, the political science community will be invited to submit proposals for the ANES recompetition during the first quarter of 2005. With this in mind, the Political Science Program Directors have begun conversations with the ANES Principal Investigators, the Board of Overseers, and the larger political science community to encourage them to develop innovative plans for future studies of American electoral behavior. Implicit in this encouragement is the belief that innovations are necessary to advance the science of electoral studies and to do so at a reasonable cost.

Based on the February 14-15, 2003 Workshop, NSF staff stress methodological rigor and potential utility for theoretical development as the two key features of any further studies of the American electorate. Theoretical development is, in fact, a problematic standard when one is creating a common data resource since if the design is carefully planned to test certain (the Principal Investigator's) theories, it may be poorly planned to test theories others bring to the data. There are some important trade-offs here. To assist NSF in understanding how the best gains in studying the American electorate can be realized, the Workshop met and discussed goals for the future of electoral behavior studies.

³ NSF management decided that the original cap of \$2,000,000 was unrealistic.

Part Two: Challenges

I. Overall Study Characteristics

The study of elections involves a process with a known termination point where a joint (aggregate) decision is made nearly simultaneously. Over the course of the process there is both common and variable exposure to a variety of information and stimuli that can influence the final voting decision. As such, the study of elections has elements of a natural experiment that is unusual in the social sciences.

Workshop participants advised the Political Science Program officers that the next ANES platform — and those that follow — should be flexible enough to allow for foundational examinations of behavior. The studies should allow researchers to find out what people are doing, not just what they are saying. Furthermore, we have been advised that having an instrument that follows the same voter(s) over an extended period of time can ensure this.

With these challenges in mind, the goal of the next 10 years of study should have characteristics that address a variety of issues.

A. Dynamics

Despite the considerable attention that electoral behavior has drawn in the press and academic community, there are still questions regarding how, how much, and under what conditions citizens vote. There is also a sense that recent research strategies for studying political phenomena can be strengthened.

Workshop participants asserted that an emphasis on dynamics in studying electoral behavior should allow determination of how voters forecast, react, learn, and adjust to new information. As noted above, individuals react, within the context of elections, to a process with a known termination point (election day) where a joint (aggregate) decision is made. This is a dynamic process.

Further, voter assessments of candidates are dynamic, but harden over time. The speed with which voters make judgments about candidates varies, given the information they possess at the start of the electoral process and that which they receive during the campaign, but it is clear that over the course of a campaign, voters learn and update their assessments. As voters update, it is also possible that they can be surprised from time to time and will reassess their projections. These (re)assessments include, among other things, expectations about candidate character and policy stances. Sources of these surprises include the acquisition of new information through campaign activity, changes in assessment by friends and acquaintances, and exogenous shocks like illnesses or employment that change the relative salience of different candidate positions.

The relationship and roles of both voters and elected officials create interesting methodological challenges. Most studies of electoral behavior have relied on static models, using for example static regression (logit) analysis of a single survey based on cross sectional data. Yet, a significant t-statistic from a single empirical equation means little scientifically since this amounts to an attitudinal assessment at a single point in time. This fails to capture important aspects of what happens during the election season (campaigns).

B. Continuity and Innovation

Workshop participants noted that dynamics are key characteristics of emerging theories of voting behavior. The data acquired must allow for testing dynamic theories and also be conducive to the resolution of theoretical conflicts. Time frames of interest include those spanning just single campaigns as well as those that span numerous elections. This creates tension between the twin goals of historical continuity and overall innovation.

The Workshop participants spent a considerable amount of time discussing what has been called the “core” of the American National Election Studies. For the last two cycles of the studies funded by the National Science Foundation, support has been provided for a core and the ANES has sought ancillary support for modules and other add-ons. During the Workshop the ANES Principal Investigators stated that the core component of the survey involves approximately 60% of the interview time undertaken during the presidential study.

Workshop participants agreed that maintaining the core is critical for reasons of continuity. Much of the scholarly research that employs ANES data is based on interest in retaining long standing questions that allow for examining long-standing relations. But what is important is maintaining equivalent measurement of key concepts not necessarily identical modes of probing them. Indeed, identically worded questions may have different meanings at different points in time. Consider, for example, the question whether former communists should be allowed to teach at colleges and universities as a measure of tolerance for unpopular opinions in 1954 and today. Thus, scholars who might consider competing in an ANES recompetition have considerable room for innovation even in their treatment of the core.⁴

The Workshop had no difficulty determining that the gathering of social and demographic data had to be continued and thought it best left to the Board of Overseers (or some similarly constituted body) to determine which of the conceptual items need to be preserved.

The Workshop participants had similar thoughts on preserving innovation in ancillary studies associated with the ANES. Traditionally, modules for add-ons were vetted by the Board of Overseers and pre-tested in pilot projects. Unfortunately, budget constraints imposed by the NSF on the ANES when they were considering what to include in a proposal submission meant submitting a proposal for a core-only study. This precluded the ANES Principal Investigators from including substantive modules and pilot tests in their continuing investigation. The modules sometimes came in to the Program’s regular competitions as independent entities and competed with all other proposals.

Workshop participants agreed that for a first-rate study to be undertaken it is critically important to include funding for pilot testing of potential conceptual and methodological innovations. NSF management and staff agree on the necessity of encouraging innovations and the testing needed to develop them. In the next recompetition, prospective submitters will be encouraged to solicit ancillary support for modules and pilot studies. ANES could be envisioned as a “docking station” that includes a core with modules and pilot studies attached to it. It is not clear, at this point, whether NSF will have the resources to fund a study that includes these additional, add-ons, but a proposal should account for their cost and discuss the trade-offs that will have to be made if the NSF budget cannot fully fund them.

⁴ For a full explication of the discussion of the core, see the transcript on the NSF Website *op. cit.*, especially pages 123-141.

C. Mode Issues

As Workshop participants noted in their discussion and commentaries, the question of representativeness in survey research is a crucial and obvious issue. The standard approaches to collecting data are telephone and face-to-face surveys. Trade-offs exist between the two approaches, and both affect representativeness.

A drawback to telephone surveys relative to face-to-face surveys is their exclusion of households without telephones. As noted in the Workshop discussion and commentaries roughly 5 percent of the U.S. household population has no access to a telephone. The continuing rise in the number of households that possess only a cellular telephone (roughly 4 percent of the general population, substantially more for important subgroups) also represents a limitation for telephone surveys. These households are automatically excluded from the sample population and many people are reluctant to converse at length on cell phones given the costs entailed.

It is acknowledged that coverage is likely to be worse in telephone than in face-to-face surveys. Depending on the exact aims of the study, however, these coverage problems may not introduce dramatic biases. For example, it was noted in Workshop commentaries that, as a percentage of likely voters, the omissions from telephone surveys might be relatively small.

Workshop participants also discussed rising nonresponse rates in household surveys. This phenomenon is not restricted to the United States, and is occurring in the rest of the world as well. It was noted that throughout the developed world the increase in nonresponse influences both telephone and in-person surveys, but the problem is worse for telephone surveys.

The seriousness of the potential non-response bias is not clear. A series of studies have shown that larger nonresponse rates do not necessarily signal larger biases in subsequent statistical models, but this does not mean that nonresponse is never a problem. The issue is an empirical one of whether the variables of interest are unrelated to the factors that produce nonresponse (as they seem to be in exit polls).

Workshop participants thought that reporting differences are not likely to be great. Although modality might have a substantial effect on response rates (favoring the face-to-face sample), they argued that there were relatively few differences in the estimates from differently conducted surveys. However, it was agreed that in responding to open-ended questions, face-to-face respondents were likely to give longer answers than telephone respondents. This suggests that the face-to-face interviews may be conducted at a slower pace or foster greater motivation in the respondents. In general, the differences between telephone and face-to-face interviews are thought by many to be small, but with telephone interviews providing relatively less capacity for in-depth responses.⁵

There were, however, some participants who pointed out that the ANES is one of social science's "gold standard" surveys against which many other surveys are calibrated and they felt that to maintain this level of quality, face-to-face interviewing should be maintained. There was also some question about whether changing modality might undermine comparisons with the historical core. Thus, in the recompetition NSF will entertain proposals that include either face-to-face or telephone interviewing, or some combination of the two as well as a protocol for a controlled and evaluated transition from one mode to the other.

⁵ There is also the concern about differential response rates between face-to-face and phone surveys. One practice that can have adverse consequences is the use of quota sampling to address poor response rates. This can harm the random design.

The combination approach received the greatest support in the workshop. There seemed to be a consensus that the best design should probably include certain features:

- Include face-to-face interviewing of a sample much like the current area probability design.
- Include a combination of list and random digital dialing (RDD) sampling methodology based on congressional districts (or some other geographic stratification directed specifically at measuring electoral behavior).
- Take advantage of the information in the overlapping portions of the telephone and face-to-face frames to produce estimates for the telephone design that are enhanced from information in the face-to-face frame.

These approaches, it was argued, could yield improved estimates from the telephone design. In addition, cost savings from telephone use could be achieved while realizing some of the benefits of face-to-face interviewing.

The method chosen should be carefully justified in terms of both costs and benefits. We do not mean by this discussion to rule out completely other modes of collecting survey data such as postal or internet surveys. However, it is unlikely that a proposal that relies exclusively on one or the other will have the quality we seek and, as with other modes, costs and benefits must be carefully considered.

D. Design Issues⁶

1. Panel Design

Another important topic of discussion at the Workshop was the use of panel designs by the ANES. It was noted that the choice of panel designs depends on the measurement goals and substantive theoretical goals of the survey. Panel designs were seen as important for their overall power in testing competing theories.

Nevertheless, Workshop participants pointed out that there are trade-offs involved with longitudinal panel sampling strategies. Longitudinal panel surveys may not support adequate cross-sectional analysis, particularly as the panel ages and respondents drop out after having been in the field for several rounds. There is also an important cost issue involved with panel surveys that is the result of the increased expense associated with locating and gaining cooperation from the panel subjects (with the passage of time).

Workshop participants noted that to minimize estimation problems, cross-sectional samples could be included. However, costs will most likely be larger than for a design that is entirely cross-sectional. Cost considerations can be addressed by increasing the degree to which telephone interviewing is used.⁷ However, this gives rise to the issues associated with telephone vs. face-to-face interviewing. The considerations center around whether the potential analyses made possible by the use of the panel methodology would outweigh the associated increase in costs and loss of precision in cross-sectional analyses. This issue should be carefully evaluated in any ANES submission.

⁶ There was also discussion of other designs including rolling cross sections. Other design issues are summarized in the book, *The Analysis of Household Surveys: A Microeconomic Approach to Development Policy (1997)* by Angus Deaton.

⁷ For example, telephone interviewing is now used with the majority of interviews for the 1979 cohort of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth.

E. Relation to the Community

Future NSF support of electoral studies of the size of the current ANES will include requirements for oversight provided by an independent Board of Overseers. This must include distinguished scholars representative of the scientific community of ANES users. At present, the ANES Board has played a key role in representing interests of the broader political science community. Workshop participants noted that it is important to have the right balance. Board members should be substantial scholars and represent the views and interests of the research community broadly defined, including interests and perspectives that are not well-represented by core project staff. Board membership should not preclude those serving from submitting research proposals for electoral studies to the NSF and/or other funding agencies.

Workshop participants thought that the ANES Principal Investigators and staff have done a superb job of making data available to the scholarly community in a user friendly manner. Data are archived at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan and are readily available for interested users. The NSF expects that this same high standard will be maintained in future investigations.

F. Funding

It was generally agreed that funding support for the ANES has not kept up with increases in survey research costs and that NSF funding for the ANES is in danger of falling below what is needed to support a “gold standard” survey. Moreover, some desirable innovations in ANES, like a panel component, and needed improvements, like greater pilot testing, can only add to the cost. NSF cannot in this report commit to a specific level of funding, though we hope to increase, perhaps substantially, the amount available for support. Estimates of available support will be indicated in the recompetition announcement.

Two approaches to funding, which may be combined, were discussed at the workshop. One is to fund a complete, theoretically coherent, ANES. A second is to fund the ANES core and allow researchers, who may or may not be ANES Principal Investigators or Board members, to compete for funds that can be linked to the core. Proposals to the ANES recompetition should make clear what elements constitute the core, what proportion of the funds requested are needed to support the core, what proportion of the funds requested are to support projects around the core and, how open the ANES will be to funded modules from researchers not otherwise included in the ANES core survey.

Part Three: Summary

In the course of structuring a recompetition process to allow for innovations in studies of electoral behavior for the next 10 years, it is important to note the overall aim of NSF's investment in electoral studies. Consistent with the Executive Summary, certain attributes are expected, including:

- The data gathered must be sufficiently rich to allow researchers to address issues using both simple (e.g., cross-tabular) and more sophisticated research designs and must allow advances in our knowledge of voting behavior without resorting to empirically ungrounded or unrealistic assumptions.
- The instrument developed must capture variability in behavior that expands on what is known about voting behavior.

These two strengths mean the data should be revealing in cross-tabulations even while supporting more complex models with direct, testable implications. To use a well known example, Warren Miller has shown that cross tabular analysis of biennial panel data can answer the question: "When a voter's political opinions and party identification are divergent, which one usually adjusts? For all but college-educated voters, the answer is: Opinion" (Achen 1999: 145).⁸

The finding that party identification takes precedence over voter opinion is among the more powerful lessons from past ANES research and points the way to issues that can be explored using more advanced, yet theoretically informed, statistical methodologies. These basic findings also have been important in making the ANES not just a science resource, but also a public resource. As a general resource the ANES must answer questions, at many levels and be of value to many different users. Proposals should have different user communities, including student users, in mind.

The Workshop participants noted that the challenge for future investigators is to develop a platform that includes a basic core and allows for innovative ancillary studies. Furthermore, the ancillary studies should feed into the core and build upon it. A platform that allowed for concurrency, the rapid incorporation of innovation done in a seamless way, is essential. As was noted above, these rapidly incorporated innovations would not be limited to substantive areas of electoral studies but include innovation regarding design (panel, rolling cross-section) and mode (face-to-face interviewing, telephone interviewing, computer assisted interviewing, etc.).

Overall the Workshop participants concluded the ANES has been of tremendous importance in understanding the American Electoral system as well as serving as a model for similar studies around the globe. Numerous books and articles, including a number now regarded as classics, could not have been written without ANES data. For more than fifty years (and more than thirty with NSF support) the ANES has been a flagship for students of the American Electoral process. The challenge is to maintain its relevance and importance for the decade, and the half-century, to come.

⁸ Christopher H. Achen, 1999. "Warren Miller and the Future of Political Data Analysis." *Political Analysis* 8, 2: 142-146.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Participant Commentaries

APPENDIX B: 1999 Recompensation Notice

APPENDIX C: Workshop Discussion Points

APPENDIX A: Participant Commentaries

1. Chris Achen (achen@isr.umich.edu)
2. Andre Blais (andre.blais@UMontreal.CA)
3. Henry Brady (hbrady@csm.Berkeley.EDU)
4. Nancy Burns (nburns@n.imap.itd.umich.edu)
5. Harold Clarke (hclarke@utdallas.edu)
6. Mark Hansen (jhansen@uchicago.edu)
7. Don Kinder (drkinder@umich.edu)
8. Ian MacAllister (ian.mcallister@anu.edu.au)
9. Kathleen McGraw (mcgraw.36@osu.edu)
10. Diana Mutz (mutz.1@osu.edu)
11. Rob Santos (rsantos@nustats.com)
12. Richard Sinnott (Richard.Sinnott@ucd.ie)
13. John Thompson (thompson-john@norcmail.uchicago.edu)
14. Roger Tourangeau (rtourangeau@survey.umd.edu)

Comments for NSF Workshop on “American Electoral Behavior,” February 14-15, 2003

Christopher H. Achen, University of Michigan

The Importance of NES

Let me say first that, in spite of my current institutional affiliation, I have never had any connection to NES administration. I have never served on the NES Board, nor been involved in an NES pilot study, nor have I proposed even one question that NES might ask. Indeed, I first arrived at Michigan when I was already in my forties, and all my education and the great bulk of my career have been spent elsewhere. The NES staff work down the hall from me in ISR, but then so do specialists in American history, social work, and African politics.

That said, I have been a relentless user of NES data, beginning with my dissertation. There are thousands more like me in the profession. Over the years, it has been the most valuable item that NSF Political Science has supported. Most of what we know about voting in America derives from it. Hundreds of academic, governmental, and private sector users make use of it every month, and tens of thousands of people around the world have used the data at some time or another.

Naturally, it is easy to imagine ways in which NES might be reformed to better fit one’s own private research agenda. Or to suppose that if NES were abolished, most of the money would go to NSF proposals like one’s own. Many complaints about NES that I’ve heard over the years fall into those categories. Obviously, though, NES is a cooperative enterprise, and necessarily involves compromise. By its nature, it will not satisfy all of us all the time. But political scientists above all should realize that compromise is the art of making large data sets possible.

Of course, NES needs continual updating and revision. That is the nature of research. Even with the many constituencies involved, improvement of NES is undoubtedly possible. Doing so, however, is by no means as easy as many critics imagine. Much of what scholars dislike about NES consists of items that many other intellectually powerful researchers have insisted that NES include. The enemy is us. Thus the trick to revising NES is to find a package of changes that advances the subject, benefits most researchers, and that does so at a price that NSF can be convinced to pay. That task is not simple. It is also necessarily collective, but I will try to contribute a bit toward it in this memo.

Where Are We Now?

Voting behavior and public opinion research continue to be empirically rich, indeed the richest part of political science. Within the subfield, researchers largely agree on the facts, and in political science, that is no small achievement. Moreover, there is broad agreement on a set of empirical generalizations about voting, a necessary, indeed crucial, step in the building of theory. There is no other part of political science for which those statements are equally true.

The best empirical political scientists of the Thirties and Forties disliked the unbridled political speculation of their era, and they lamented the paucity of trustworthy information. To help discipline theorizing about democracy, they called for just the sort of research activities that NES represents. We have met that challenge. In consequence, the field of voting behavior has driven out the cheap talk of an earlier era and replaced it with verifiable information. Far more than any other research enterprise, NES made that possible, and without NES it would not have happened.

That said, we have reached a stage in voting research different from that of the founding generation and their immediate successors. At the time of the early studies, the practicable statistical methods were mostly tabular. Regression analysis and its cross-sectional extensions eventually succeeded cross-tabulation in the Sixties and early Seventies. Those methods were perfect for descriptive work in cross-sectional studies. They were not very good when theoretical questions arose: Does party ID cause attitudes, or vice-versa, or both, and how much? An initial flurry of interest in structural equation models occurred when they seemed to offer a solution in the Seventies and Eighties; those hopes have largely been dashed.

Empirical findings continue to pile up, and they are always valuable. Less happily, though, theoretical integration has often eluded us. The result is a kind of statistical sprawl in the literature, frequently making it difficult to distinguish genuine causations from statistically fancy correlations. The disjointed undergraduate readers on “developments in public opinion and voting behavior” tell a sad tale.

Serious, agreed-upon theory is everyone’s goal, but it has proven elusive. Where might we look for inspiration? Consumer choice theory is perhaps the part of social science closest to voting studies. Like us, it deals with individual choices. Like us, it uses surveys. Unlike us, it has made powerful theoretical advances that have strong empirical support and receive consensus approval from the discipline. How?

Consumer theory’s initial successes occurred in the first part of the previous century as economists sought to explain how categories of consumer spending (food, durables, etc.) varied with income. Psychological aspects of the choosers or the choices were set aside. Instead, relentless attention was paid to clearly **observable actions**, and that proved to be the key step. Empirical regularities among the observables were found. Then, to explain consumer actions, a large theoretical structure of unobservable features of people (utilities, characteristics of goods, and so on) was constructed and gradually tied to consumer survey data for testing. Rigorous mathematics was used throughout, and theory was tied closely to explaining **firm empirical generalizations**.

Consumer theory had a considerable advantage in getting started as an empirical science. Consumers have different incomes, and they buy a complex market basket of goods. The result is a large array of continuous data. Moreover, economists can measure incomes and expenditures rather well, which cuts the noise.

The problem for voting behavior, by contrast, is that our observable data are relatively thin. In most countries and most elections, each voter has a single vote and assigns it to one party or candidate. Compared to the choices in a grocery store, the list of candidates in an election is extremely short, and the choices are discrete rather than continuous. At any one time, the voters do not do much.

Our best academic survey, the NES consists mostly of single cross-sections, with the voters casting a single vote for a few federal offices. Thus we have relatively little hard evidence to work with. Inevitably, the temptation to revert to purely descriptive cross-sectional work or to try measuring the near immeasurable to get supplementary variables is very strong. Many of these supplementary variables in the social psychological framework are quite noisy in survey implementation. In consequence, too much of the voting and public opinion literature consists of a jumble of findings, many disputed. The social psychological tradition has taught us most of what we know about voting, but it is fair to say that within that tradition, consensual theory has been slow to emerge. In my view, data limitations—data limitations about behavior, not attitudes—are a large part of the reason.

Certain political scientists have proposed an alternative, or at least the beginnings of one. Essentially borrowed whole cloth from consumer theory, this alternate framework is the spatial voting model. Consumers are turned into voters, goods turned into candidates, and the same logic applied. The result is a theoretically impressive literature that has forever changed how we think about elections.

The spatial model was never designed to explain the well known empirical generalizations from survey research. The argument for it was instead that larceny from an adjacent discipline was so easy, and that other aspects of elections, notably candidate and party competition would be illuminated. That promise was amply fulfilled. With respect to the voters, however, the result is a relatively elaborate structure with many degrees of freedom for fitting the sparse data of individual political choices. Since only a few different decisions are possible in the voting booth for any given office, then if we have no additional information, the model can be made to fit a given election only too well. Thus if we concentrate on describing observable behavior in a cross-section, the spatial model on its own has little power. Worse, even after many years of elaboration, very few of the standard empirical regularities of voting research can be derived from this model.

In consequence, political scientists have been driven to supplementing the spatial voting model with more information. Perhaps the voters can **tell** us where they and the candidates are located in the multidimensional space, with no distortion due to misperception, projection, cognitive dissonance reduction, or sheer fibbing. Then we can just ask them. But of course these assumptions are very doubtful. The voters just don't know that much about their own mental processes, and they often know little about politics.

In fairness, the main thrust of spatial voting theory is directed at political elites. Only an ancillary part of it relates to the voters. However, that part struggles for theoretical persuasiveness, just as the social psychological tradition does. By the nature of the subject, our data are thin, and so in both traditions, we are currently forced to do too much guessing.

Doing Better

How might we do better? One approach is to borrow from consumer theory, not their models, which are inappropriate for us, but their rather more appropriate style of work. That is, pay more attention to voter actions and less to attitudes, and second, direct formal theory toward empirical generalizations. Both ideas lead, I believe, to longer panel studies.

First, I believe that all our explanatory traditions would be aided if we could start paying more attention to what voters do rather than what they say. That would discipline our hunt for evanescent variables to help us with our cross-sections. The problem, as already noted, is that our observables at any one time are few. We need to look at more than one time period, so that we have many voting choices rather than just one. Once we do so, we can leave the cross-sectional world and begin seeing dynamically. "Voting for the Democrats" means one thing in 1936 when FDR is running, and quite another in 1988 when the candidate is Michael Dukakis. It also means different things when the voter is just entering the political system at age 21, and quite another when it is done by a life-long Republican. Thus paying attention both to the dynamics of the political system and also to the dynamics of individual lives seems to me to offer us a great opportunity for moving forward theoretically.

My own prejudices lie with Bayesian voter theory, which has made some striking initial progress along these lines. Abandoning the attempt to represent voters in their full complexity, its stark modeling has led to theorems that subsume many of the empirical generalizations we already knew from social psychology, and that also point the way to quite new perspectives and research programs. Created by political scientists over the last decade and a half, Bayesian theory shares the explanatory style of consumer theory: a collection of substantively plausible unobservables are studied in a greatly simplified but rigorous mathematical fashion to derive the well established empirical regularities in the field.

The Bayesian emphasis on observable actions offers quite precise, agreed-on predictions from rigorous theory. It also offers those predictions in an easily tested framework that survey researchers have mostly already implemented and would have no trouble completing. The main limitation of the Bayesian approach is that Bayesian voters lack the depth and realism of social psychological voters. The current Bayesian models are very simple, undoubtedly wrong in at least some respects, and conceivably so wrong that the entire effort should be abandoned. Empirical

testing is sorely needed. Unfortunately, it has been hard to truly check the main Bayesian claims with the NES data that we have, because the theory has a strong time series flavor that requires longer panels than we have. And so legitimate doubts persist about the entire approach, due to the same data limitations that have bedeviled the social psychological tradition and the spatial model.

We have learned much from all three of the theoretical viewpoints I have mentioned and from others as well, and this essay is not the place to make the argument for any one of them. My point is more embracing and has no real connection to any one theoretical perspective. Throughout political science these days, when theoretical claims need testing, time series methods are usually the statistical technique of choice. Causal claims are much easier to establish when we study the same people over time rather than try to match them with “similar” people in a cross-section. Bayesian theory leads rather directly and logically to looking at time series data on voting, but so do virtually all other theoretical perspectives. The social-psychological tradition and the spatial model framework would profit just as much from longer time horizons.

Unfortunately, with the exception of the three short panels, the current NES data offer almost no opportunity to use time series methods. Even in a four year period, which is the length of our longest panel studies, the voters cast at most two presidential votes, two Senate votes, three Congressional votes, and generally just one or two gubernatorial votes. Time series methods can barely get started. A few little dynamic studies have been done, but they are crippled by data limitations. We have never had the money to do anything more.

It is important to recognize just how thin our time series data on voting really are. Ask yourself, for instance, what percent of the eligible population voted for Reagan both times and for Bush senior as well? Or for Clinton both times but for Bush the younger in 2000? The answer is that no one knows. We have no data whatsoever for those election triples or for any other such election combinations in our history. No voter has ever been tracked for more than four years. (The exception is a few nineteenth century counties where people voted out loud, but those historical datasets are very small in size, very few in number, and mostly locked up in Australia (sic) outside the public domain.) Indeed, to my knowledge, there is no place in the world where a representative sample of individual voting records can be traced for more than two national elections. In consequence, a gigantic research area, critical to all our current theoretical frameworks, is blocked.

A Different Future for NES?

The inference from all this seems clear: we need longer panels of voters. One option is rolling cross-sections. In some ways these are the easiest panels to construct, and they offer substantial advantages to researchers, as the 1984 “Rolling Thunder” design has amply proven. But we might also consider whether NES might conduct a long, perhaps ten-year, panel, or even an ongoing, permanent panel where some voters rotated in for long periods. It does not take long thought to realize the strikingly new research opportunities such a design would generate for us all.

Needless to say, doing longer panels will be neither easy nor cheap, particularly not in the longest versions. Respondents have to be paid to avoid excessive attrition, and they have to be rotated in and out in staggered fashion to avoid re-interview effects and a host of other evils. It is not a job for an inexperienced research team with temporary staff. But it can be done, as the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) has shown. Moreover, the more we focus on concrete behavior and the less on attitudes, the smaller the interview effects should be.

In short, I believe that there is an opportunity here to remake the study of voting from all perspectives. This future is not cheap, and it may require a political battle to retire some of the worn-out explanatory variables that may have taught us a lot in the past, but have now outlived their usefulness. It may also require us to persuade a broad group of NSF decisionmakers that the money would be well spent. But in my judgment, the case is there.

Whatever the future brings, whether these suggestions or others, NES cannot and will not stand still. There are opportunities in front of us, whatever they may turn out to be. The NES future is well worth fighting for. NSF could help.

The Canadian Election Study

André Blais, Université de Montréal

1. Funding

- Since 1968, an election study has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SHRCC) or its predecessor for every election except in 1972. 9 elections out of 10. There was an election study for each of the last 8 elections.
- Recent election studies have been funded under the Major Collaborative Research Initiatives (MCRI) program. The program funds “major” projects over a five-year period. These projects typically involve researchers from different disciplines and universities. There is a competition every year. Typically, around 30 projects (letters of intention) are submitted every year. There is an initial screening of these projects, about 10 teams are invited to write a detailed proposal, and about 5 projects are funded.
- There is no guarantee that there will be an election study. The CES is in competition with other projects, most of them interdisciplinary. There can be two or more different election study proposals (this has happened) or there could be no proposal. Or proposals can be turned down (this happened in 1972).
- The timetable is a serious problem. The last two elections were “early” elections. In 1997, the study got funded in January 1997, and the election was called in April. In 2000, the snap election was called in October, took place in November, and got funded in December.
- SHRCC encourages teams to have partners. Elections Canada was a partner in 1997 and 2000. The Institute for Research on Public Policy was also a partner in 2000.
- The MCRI program is geared to fund “excellent”, “innovative”, “new frontier”, “cutting edge” research. The focus is very much on innovation. SHRCC is keen on international collaboration. The Canadian team was an active participant in the CSES project and it initiated a collaborative project involving 9 countries about the impact of leaders in elections.
- The 2000 CES team obtained a total budget of \$1 million (US) for a five-year period, 0.8 million from SHRCC and 0.2 million from universities and partners. The fieldwork corresponds to 30% of the budget. The MCRI program is strong on student training and dissemination of research. A large fraction of the budget goes to graduate students and post-docs. The study funds course release time for the principal co-investigators, travel expenses, the organization of workshops and seminars.
- The CES data become publicly available one year after the election.

2. The design

- The CES has three components: a campaign telephone rolling cross-section survey of about 3500 respondents, with about 100 interviews for each of the 35 days of the campaign; a post-election telephone reinterview of about 3000 respondents and a mailout questionnaire filled and returned by about 1800. The CES also performs a content analysis of TV news. The campaign and telephone interviews last about 30 minutes. Almost all the questions are close ended. The questionnaire includes quite a few experiments.
- The most original aspect of the CES is the campaign rolling cross-section element. The main impetus for the rolling cross-section design was the suspicion that campaigns matter, that vote intentions, leader images and opinions move during the course of the campaign, that there are priming effects. We have observed substantial change in each of the elections that we have examined (as well as in the 1992 referendum on Charlottetown).

- Region is a major concern. The Bloc québécois is a major actor, with more than 40% of the vote in Quebec, and does not have candidates outside Quebec. Most of the time, we perform separate analyses of Quebec and outside Quebec, with subsamples of 1000 and 2500. And there are strong regional divisions outside Quebec. In 2000, the Canadian Alliance got 50% in the West, 24% in Ontario, and 10% in Atlantic Canada. To the extent possible, we perform separate analyses for the West and Ontario.
- The daily samples (about 100) are too small. They are OK to measure the impact of big shifts but more problematic when these shifts are small and/or confined to some regions. Fortunately for us, the key campaign event, the leaders' debates, occurs at mid-campaign.
- The plan for the 2000 election study was to double the size of the sample. The snap election prevented us from implementing that strategy.
- In the 2000 election study, we incorporated contextual (constituency level) data into the data set.
- In the 1997 election study, small groups of students were invited to watch the (almost full) coverage of the campaign on one TV station from day one of the campaign to day 35. A total of about 100 news stories. They were asked to rate each news story as positive, negative, or neutral for a given party. A similar study was conducted in the 2000 election, this time with small groups of survey respondents.

3. Substantive contributions

- Perhaps the main contribution has been the study of campaign dynamics. This is very much the focus in *Letting the People Decide* and *The Challenge of Direct Democracy*. A particular emphasis on the impact of televised debates.
- A great interest in the impact of media coverage on the vote. The empirical findings have been somewhat equivocal.
- A major interest in the role of information in elections. What do people learn over the course of election campaigns? Does the information gap increase or decrease? Do the better informed vote differently, on the basis of different considerations? Does learning contribute to vote shift? This is a major theme in *The Challenge of Direct Democracy* and is being explored further in on-going work on the 1997 and 2000 elections.
- A concern with measurement issues and with experiments. Particularly with respect to party identification. See "Measuring Party Identification". Experiments conducted in the 1997 post-election survey and in the 2000 campaign election survey.
- A concern with strategic considerations and their impact on the vote. The CES includes questions tapping respondents' perceptions about the various parties' chances of winning.
- Turnout has declined very substantially in Canada and this has become a hot topic. It has been difficult to include specific questions about the decision to vote or not to vote, and so the contribution of CES to our understanding of the motivations for voting or abstaining is somewhat limited. But we have recently pooled election studies since 1968 in order to disentangle life-cycle and generation effects.

4. governance and accountability

- the project is administered like all other MCRI projects. No special rule.
- SHRCC strongly encourages us to have an international and interdisciplinary advisory board. The board is utilized especially in the early stages of the project...unless there is an early election.
- there is much flexibility in the administration of the budget. It is relatively easy to shift budget items, provided that the total budget is respected.

- SHRCC strongly urges us to disseminate findings to the “interested” public. We publish short pieces in the newspapers immediately after the election, we launched our book at the Press Club in Ottawa, we organized a one day workshop last year in Toronto (at the time of the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association), mostly for graduate students, to show how to use the CES.

5. continuity versus innovation

- as indicated above, SHRCC puts much more emphasis on innovation. The MCRI program does not fund data collection as such.

For more information, see: www.fas.umontreal.ca/pol/ces-ec.

To: Participants in “American Electoral Behavior Workshop”

From: Henry E. Brady

Re: Future Design Recommendations

The Accomplishments of the ANES⁹ – It makes no sense to talk about future design recommendations for the American National Election Studies without asking what the ANES is supposed to accomplish. Throughout its history, the ANES has been true to its name. It has been primarily a national election study. Starting from its emphasis on the presidential vote, it has expanded to a concern with Congressional and Senatorial elections, but these elections are essentially national elections, albeit situated in specific geographical areas. In all these studies, vote choice has been the primary concern, and the basic design of the studies, either both pre- and post-election in the presidential years or just post-election in the midterm elections, has been focused on getting a post-election measure of vote choice and explaining this choice. Indeed, the vote validation studies, which have been one of the ANES’ major research efforts, indicate the centrality of voting to the studies.

Most of the innovative instrumentation that has been developed in the past fifty years has also been concerned with explaining vote choice, identifying the party and coalitional structure of the electorate, and studying the representation of constituencies through the electoral process. The ANES (and the surveys from which it is descended) have contributed the party identification question, the queries about likes and dislikes of the parties and candidates, seven point individual and candidate placements, economic and financial conditions questions, 100 point thermometers for individuals and groups, the traits and feelings batteries for candidates, measures of people’s closeness to and estimation of the influence of groups, perceptions of the constituency services of Congressional candidates, and estimates of party differences. The responses to these questions are invaluable for explaining vote choice, party identification, and representation. They have been used in many path-breaking volumes and articles:

- **Presidential Votes:** In *The American Voter*, Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes provided the point of departure for all subsequent work. In *The Changing American Voter*, Norman Nie, Sid Verba, and John Petrocik made a controversial case for increases in issue voting. In *Restrospective Voting in American National Elections*, Morris Fiorina provided a new perspective informed by rational choice thinking. And in *The New American Voter*, Warren Miller and J. Merrill Shanks demonstrated the importance of issues while returning to themes from *The American Voter*. Many other books have explored these themes.
- **Congressional Votes:** In *The Politics of Congressional Elections* (and other works), Gary Jacobson explored the importance of money, name recognition, competition, and strategy in Congressional elections. In *The Personal Vote*, Bruce Cain, John Ferejohn, and Morris Fiorina demonstrated the importance of constituency service and incumbency. And many other volumes have explored these themes.
- **Elections as a Whole:** The series of books on “Change and Continuity in American Elections” by Paul Abramson, John Aldrich, and David Rohde have provided a detailed analysis of each election, primarily using the ANES data. Other volumes have done the same.

⁹ Any memorandum about the ANES should begin by thanking those people, especially the Principal Investigators and the staff, but also the Board Members and others, who have contributed so much to the ANES enterprise. Having been a PI for the Canadian National Election Study, I have some idea of the effort that goes into getting funding for national election studies and getting them off the ground. Those people who have devoted themselves to the ANES deserve our heartfelt thanks and our admiration for their dedication to the enterprise.

- **Representation:** Warren Miller and Donald Stokes in “Constituency Influence in Congress” (*APSR*, 1963) and Christopher Achen in “Measuring Representation” (*AJPS*, 1978) set out a research agenda that gets at one of the fundamental questions of democratic governance. Do those who win elections represent their constituents? Subsequent work on Congressional elections has elaborated on this theme by demonstrating the importance of incumbency and constituency service for re-election.
- **Party Identification:** Starting with *The American Voter*, party identification has been a central concept in political science. Since that time, other important works on party identification have included Herbert Weisberg, “A Multidimensional Conceptualization of Party Identification,” *Political Behavior*, 1980; Charles Franklin and John Jackson, “The Dynamics of Party Identification,” *APSR*, 1983; Bruce Keith et al., *The Myth of the Independent Voter*, 1992; Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds*, 2002.

In a recent paper, “Trust the People: Political Party Coalitions and the 2000 Election” (in *The Unfinished Election of 2000*), I personally learned about the richness of the ANES goldmine, and I found that it was invaluable for characterizing the coalitional structure of the American electorate, the representation of interests, and the vote choice in 2000. There is simply no other source for this kind of information.

ANES has also developed important innovations for measuring people’s religious involvement and orientation, their media attentiveness, and their knowledge. These factors structure coalitions, contribute to the formation of attitudes, and affect vote choice. The work done by the ANES has substantially improved our ability to determine how they do these things. The ANES has also added contextual information on Congressional and Senatorial races that has been very helpful to researchers.

While focusing on vote choice, the ANES has done less to study the following topics, although it has nevertheless made some remarkable contributions to these areas as well:

- **Dynamics of Political campaigns** (but consider the 1980 panel and cross-sections and the 1984 weekly continuous monitoring designs and the 1988 primary study; also consider Larry Bartels, *Candidate Choice and the Dynamics of the Presidential Nominating Process* or Henry Brady and Richard Johnston, “What’s the Primary Message: Horse Race or Issue Journalism?” in *Media and Momentum*)
- **Political participation** (but consider the use made of these data by Steven Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*)
- **Public opinion in general** (but consider almost any textbook on public opinion in America which will make extensive use of ANES data and consider John Zaller’s pathbreaking *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, 1992).

- **Political tolerance, efficacy, and trust** (but see Jack Citrin, “The Political Relevance of Trust in Government,” *APSR*, 1974; Stephen C. Craig, Richard G. Niemi, and Glenn E. Silver, “Political Efficacy and Trust: A Report on the NES Pilot Study Items,” *Political Behavior*, 1990; and for a review of the literature on trust which shows that ANES has made major contributions in that area, see Margaret Levy and Laura Stoker, “Trust and Trustworthiness,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2000)¹⁰
- **Political Identity and Group Consciousness** (but see Arthur H. Miller, Patricia Gurin, Gerald Gurin, and Oksana Malanchuk, “Group Consciousness and Political Participation,” *AJPS*, 1981.
- **Attitudes towards race** (but consider Ted Carmines and James Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* or Donald Kinder and Lyn Sanders, *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*)
- **Political values and democratic ideals** (but consider the work by Stanley Feldman, “Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values,” *AJPS*, 1988.)
- **Interpersonal networks and their impacts on political attitudes or voting** (but see Stephen Weatherford, “Interpersonal Networks and Political Behavior,” *AJPS*, 1982).
- **Impact of the media and advertising on politics** (but see Stephen Ansolabehere, Shanto Iyengar, and Adam Simon, “Replicating Experiments Using Aggregate and Survey Data: The Case of Negative Advertising and Turnout,” *APSR*, 1999 and Kim Fridkin Kahn and Patrick Kenney, “Do Negative Campaigns Mobilize or Suppress Turnout? Clarifying the Relationship between Negativity and Participation,” *APSR*, 1999.)

Although the ANES has contributed to these areas, it seems safe to say that most of the major work in each area has used datasets other than the ANES.¹¹

Methodologically, the ANES has developed a number of new designs such as continuous monitoring with the Rolling Cross-Section (1984), representational studies using the Congressional District as a sampling unit (1978 and 1980), and studies of the dynamics of presidential primaries using various designs (panels and cross-sections in 1980, national continuous monitoring in 1984, and state and regional level surveys around the time of the primaries in 1988). But the ANES has not been a leader in:

- **Embedding substantive experiments in surveys** (see Paul Sniderman and Douglas Grob, “Innovations in Experimental Design in Attitude Surveys, 1996),¹²

¹⁰ Although ANES has made very little contribution to the study of tolerance and only modest contributions to the study of efficacy, it has made substantial contributions to the study of trust in government.

¹¹ It would be tendentious to name the major works in each of these areas, but my quick review suggests that only a handful of them make extensive use of the ANES. Instead, researchers have designed new surveys (or experiments) or they have used existing Roper, Gallup, Harris, media, or exit polls. Nevertheless, a quick review of John Robinson, Phillip R. Shaver, and Lawrence Wrightsman, *Measures of Political Attitudes* suggests that ANES sponsored work has made substantial contributions to about a third of the areas covered by the thirteen chapters including political partisanship, political information, trust, and economic values and inequality. No other single project has contributed anything like this to our measures of political attitudes.

¹² The ANES has tried many methodological experiments where they have varied question formats (e.g., five point branching versus seven point scales), but it has done very little experimentation that used question wording to probe people’s opinions.

- **Developing methods for studying social networks and social context** (see the many articles by Robert Huckfeldt and his book, *Politics in Context: Assimilation and Context in Urban Neighborhoods*, 1986),
- **Developing batteries of issue questions to study political agendas** (see J. Merrill Shanks, “Political Agendas,” in *Measures of Political Attitudes*),
- *Exploring people’s perceptions of the generalized other*, (see Diana Mutz, *Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes*, 1998).

Overall Assessment – What’s the bottom line on all of this? Without any doubt, the ANES has been extraordinarily successful as an election study. It is the survey data of record for every national election since the early 1950’s, and it has developed measures that are unmatched for explaining vote choice and the coalitional structure of the American electorate. It has been the core dataset for developing new explanations of party identification, presidential voting, Congressional voting, Senatorial voting, and the dynamics of presidential primaries. The ANES is also an extensive and detailed time-series that can be mined for comparing election results and public opinion over time.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the studies is that they are about the warp and woof of politics. They focus on the electoral linkage between the public and the political parties and their candidates. Because of the ANES, we know much more about elections and voting than we did a half century ago. They have advanced political science as a discipline in many different ways. No other single enterprise has done as much to further the scientific study of politics.

The ANES has been less successful in moving outwards from its core mission to consider political campaigns, political participation, public opinion, and the impact of the media. The ANES has had trouble moving outwards because there are very strong reasons to maintain a focus on elections, to preserve scarce survey time for core election items, to maintain the continuity of the time-series, and to limit the number of projects given the available resources. In addition, the major mode of administration, namely in-person surveys, has not lent itself to some kinds of designs (e.g. rolling cross-sections or representative samples of small areas) and some kinds of instrumentation (e.g., survey experiments)¹³ that would be useful for studying other topics. *One of the major questions that we might ask during this weekend is whether the ANES’ core mission must be sacrificed in order for ANES to become more than an election study, and if parts of it must be sacrificed, then which parts?*

The ANES has also had a mixed record in bringing new social science perspectives to bear on the study of voting and public opinion. The relationship between the ANES and rational choice theorists (especially those doing spatial modeling and those thinking about Bayesian information processing) in the 1970s and 1980s was very productive with the invention of seven point placement scales to mimic the issue dimensions of spatial models, the investigation of the origins and stability of party identification touched off by Morris Fiorina’s article on “An Outline for a Model of Party Choice” (*AJPS*, 1977), the extension of V.O. Key’s notion of retrospective voting by Morris Fiorina and others, the development of new ways to think about economic voting by Donald Kinder and Rod Kiewiet, the identification of challenger strength as an important variable, the development of models of momentum in presidential primaries, and many other innovations.

¹³ As noted below, modern Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing can incorporate experimentation in a way that traditional in-person pencil and paper forms could not.

But in the 1990s the ANES seems to have been less successful in linking up with the latest theoretical innovations such as work in cognitive psychology on information processing, research in behavioral economics on decision-making, theoretical and empirical work in social psychology on political identity, and the research in sociology on social networks and social context. It is not clear why this is so. One possibility, which should not be dismissed easily, is that the ANES did not have the resources in the 1990s to support this kind of research. Another possibility is that some of these areas of research (e.g., behavioral economics and cognitive psychology) rely heavily on experimentation, but the ANES's focus on voting and its use of in-person surveys are not conducive to experiments. Another possibility is that some areas of research such as social networks and social context require new instrumentation and the collection of new kinds of information that do not fit easily into the traditional pattern of the ANES. And still another possibility is that the ANES has not attracted scholars with these kinds of interests. *Thus, we might also ask how could the ANES do a better job of attracting scholars who want to do these kinds of things and how their needs could be met?*

New Topics – One of the great strengths of the ANES is that it has been fundamentally concerned with politics: with voting, with elections, with representation, with party identification. This concern is equally, if not more, important than a concern with advancing scientific knowledge about decision-making or attitude formation. I, for one, would not like to see the ANES become dominated by a desire to test new theories in cognitive psychology, behavioral economics, social psychology, or social network theory to the exclusion of a focus on politics. Thus, I begin by suggesting a few fundamentally *political* things that the ANES might emphasize because they are close to its core mission of studying elections. These areas are political participation (especially political contributions), political issues, political context, and political parties.

Political Participation – Despite the fact that money in politics has been a major topic of debate for decades, the ANES does not do a particularly good job of measuring political contributions and other forms of political participation. As a result, for example, we do not have a time-series on the average contribution to politics by Americans over the last fifty years. Yet, there are reasons to believe that this time-series, broken down by various demographic and socio-economic characteristics, would be very interesting. Other research shows that contributions are heavily skewed by income level, and some observers of American politics have suggested that Americans have been substituting contributions for the time that they used to devote to politics. With the substantial increase in income inequality during the 1980s and early 1990s, it also seems likely that the rich may have increased their contributions while the poor may have decreased theirs. It is a shame that we can't test these hypotheses. And it is a shame that we don't know more about how what large contributors want out of politics differs from what the small contributors want. It is time to remedy this lacuna in the ANES.

Political Issues – The ANES could also do a better job of conceptualizing and measuring political issues along the lines recommended by Merrill Shanks. The ANES has some very good issue questions, but they are certainly not comprehensive, and they do not make it possible to track the emergence of new issues or to describe the nuances of Americans' issue agendas. Yet, issues do matter, and agendas do differ. We should know more about these things because they are the fundamental stuff of politics.

Political Context – Although there is strong evidence that the political contexts of the workplace, the church, the neighborhood, the Congressional district, and the state matter a lot for politics, the ANES is not well equipped to study context. In a recent article, Laura Stoker and Jake Bowers ("Designing Multilevel Studies," *Electoral Studies*, 2002) show that district level variables have a sizeable impact on Congressional vote choice. From other research, we know that workplaces, churches, organizational memberships, and family members also have a substantial impact on political attitudes and preferences. We need to know more about these contextual influences.

Political Parties – The atomized design of a sample survey is almost inherently antithetical to the study of groups like parties. The ANES and its predecessors elided this problem by focusing on party identification – the individual manifestation of party in the electorate. This approach has made party identification a central concept in political science, but it has done little for the study of political parties as organized entities. It is time to bring parties back in, and to develop a design that will allow researchers to study how parties operate at their natural level which is electoral districts and the American states.

These four topics fit together in the following way. We need to know how issue concerns get activated and reinforced in local areas and in local institutions. We need to know what role parties and candidates play in this process. We need to know how concerns about issues and the actions of political parties and candidates lead to political participation through voting, contributing and campaigning. We need to know how these processes contribute to the “red-blue” electoral map of 2000 that located Republicans in the South and in the Great Plains of the west, while Democrats were in the Northeast and the far West. Or even more specifically, we need to know how they lead to an advantage for Democrats in the cities and the Republicans in the towns and suburbs.

New Designs – This discussion leads us inexorably to the consideration of new designs. I will not dwell on the practicalities of various modes of survey administration, although as the director of a Survey Research Center, I am keenly aware on a daily basis of declining telephone response rates and the high costs of in-person interviewing. I am also aware that Internet interviewing has not yet come of age, although it can be useful in some circumstances – but probably not for a national election study as this time. But I will ignore all these concerns and just talk about designs.

I believe that ANES should think about designs that allow for variation in space, time, and question wording. A mid-term survey using the telephone or the internet could be designed with Congressional Districts as the sampling units so as to get maximal variation across space. Laura Stoker (“Design of the Midterm Studies”) has already proposed such a design. A continuous daily monitoring study, such as the Canadian Election Studies or the 2000 Annenberg Study, would provide variation in time. And a telephone or internet study with embedded experiments would provide controlled variation in question wordings for probing attitudes and preferences. All three designs have substantial merit.

Congressional District Sampling Units – This design would allow researchers to study context, social networks, political parties, candidates, and representation by sampling some of the 435 Congressional Districts and then sampling randomly within those districts. But the design presents some difficult problems for in-person interviewing because national sampling frames for in-person surveys *cluster* their interviews within approximately 80 primary sampling units. As a result, these surveys are typically only representative of large regions and, of course, the entire United States. But a sample of Congressional Districts would ideally start with a substantial fraction of all 435 districts (say 150) and then sample *randomly* within those districts. This design, therefore, would require an entirely new sampling frame (a large expense in itself) and then it would require much less clustering within each district than the usual sample, thus substantially increasing transportation costs for interviewers. Although the design can be (and has been) done with in-person interviews, it presents serious obstacles.

Although this design is difficult to implement with in-person interviewing, it is very simple with random digit dialing (RDD) samples because such studies choose randomly from every CD. In our Canadian election studies we could use this fact to analyze variations across the approximately 295 Ridings (Canadian Parliamentary districts) in Canada. For this kind of analysis which focuses on context, the effective size of the sample is the 295 Ridings and not the number of interviews which, in the Canadian case, was over 3500.

Thus, if context matters, then the goal should be to get as much variation in context as possible which suggests sampling over a large number of Congressional Districts. But with 435 Congressional districts, and a sample of 2175,

there would be only five people per district. Furthermore, it would be necessary to get contextual information on all 435 districts which might prove costly for some variables. Consequently, it might make sense to cluster districts according to interesting characteristics (competitiveness, incumbency, composition, political history, political party characteristics, etc.) and to choose randomly from within the clusters. It might also make sense to stratify by these characteristics and to over-sample especially interesting types of areas. All of this, of course, would have to be done while being ever mindful of preserving a (weighted) national representative sample. It might also be done with the goal of being representative of at least some, if not all, of the states.

Some thought would have to go into the optimal way to do this. Stoker considers a number of designs. One involves sampling 27 people for 80 CDs and several people for 80 more CDs for a total N of about 2500. Many other designs are possible, and their utility depends upon the total sample size, the amount of contextual variation that is expected and needed, and the degree to which within district analyses are useful. It might, for example, make sense to get relatively large samples in some districts in order to understand the social networks, media usage, or other contextual features of those districts. Of course, whatever the design, collecting useful contextual information would have to be one of the major goals.

Continuous Monitoring – In a continuous monitoring study, respondents are interviewed in such a way that a (small) random sample of the population being studied is interviewed every day (or week). In the 1984 ANES Rolling Cross-Section, about 100 people were interviewed every week. In the Canadian election studies, about 75 people have been interviewed every day during the 40 days of a Parliamentary campaign. In the 2000 Annenberg study, approximately 300 people were interviewed every day from January through December – for a total of almost 100,000 interviews.

Rolling cross-sections have been invaluable for studying the dynamics of campaigns, although some have criticized their lack of baseline information. Because they consist of repeated cross-sections, changes in the mean value of some characteristic from one day to another can reflect sampling error instead of real change. Panel studies help to control for this by providing baseline information against which new observations of individuals can be compared to their initial circumstances to see if real change has occurred. Johnston and Brady (2002, “The Rolling Cross-Section Design,” *Electoral Studies*) have therefore recommended combining a post-election interview (to get at vote choice and to provide something like an “endline” instead of a “baseline”) with the rolling cross-section design. They suggest a statistical estimator that, under conditions that they make explicit, will do as well as a panel estimator with a baseline.

With or without a panel component, I believe that continuous monitoring is the best way to capture the impact of daily events during campaigns such as debates, gaffes, new issues, or other events. The design has also provided insights into how quickly information flows to people and how events affect attitudes and votes (see Richard Johnston, Andre Blais, Henry E. Brady, and Jean Crete, *Letting the People Decide*, 1992). It has revealed that debates, advertising, and media coverage do have impacts during the course of a campaign.

The drawback of continuous monitoring is that it requires large samples in the American context because of the drawn-out campaigns. The Annenberg project seems to have overcome this problem by getting enough funding for nearly 100,000 interviews. It seems unlikely that the ANES could match this funding. In short, it seems likely that the Annenberg group currently has a head-start and even a monopoly on this design. It is not clear that ANES should try to match what Annenberg has done.

Embedded Experiments – Beginning in the late 1980s, the Canadian election studies and other survey projects began to incorporate experiments in their designs. In the early 1990s, the “Multi-Investigator Study” organized by Paul Sniderman, Phil Tetlock, and Henry Brady put together a group of researchers who were committed to the idea of embedding experiments in surveys. Survey experiments use variations in question wording to probe people’s

attitudes and preferences. They are a powerful way to investigate the causal structure of people's attitudes and opinions, and they have proved useful in investigating racial attitudes, campaign rhetoric, the strength of opinions, the degree of people's tolerance, and many other topics.

Experiments are sometimes criticized because they are difficult to administer and they lead to different questions for different parts of the sample, thus making it hard to make a summary statement about people's attitudes. But if randomization is done properly, these different questions are administered to a random subset of the sample, and hence provide representative information on the population. Furthermore, the ANES has actually already engaged in numerous experiments, but almost all of them have been methodological experiments. The 2000 survey, for example, randomized many different question formats in order to determine the impact of different formats using in-person or telephone interviewing. The administration of these complex questionnaires was easy for both modes of administration because with modern CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) systems, it is as easy to randomize question administration on personal interviews as it has been to randomize questions in Computer Assisted Telephone (CATI) interviewing.

Despite this history of significant methodological experimentation, the amount of substantive, as opposed to methodological, experimentation on the ANES has been meager. There is no reason why this should be so, and the ANES could profit a great deal by including more substantive experiments. Experimentation could inform us about the structure and strength of people's political opinions and preferences, and it could provide a wonderful vehicle for testing theories from behavioral economics, cognitive psychology, and social psychology.

Conclusions – A combination of embedded experiments and either continuous monitoring or Congressional district sampling would provide a very powerful design for attacking interesting political questions and for simultaneously testing social science theories. I would opt for Congressional district sampling because Annenberg has already implemented a continuous monitoring design and apparently has plans to continue.

Given the importance of the in-person time-series, it would be best if it could be preserved for both the presidential and mid-term elections, and the new innovative study could be an "add-on" to the current design. But the 2002 study has already seen a break with this tradition. Consequently, a second-best solution would be to try this innovative study in mid-term elections and to retain the in-person time-series for presidential elections. Although this will reduce comparability between presidential and midterm elections, it will nonetheless provide an opportunity for significant innovation.

It is easy, of course, to make paper recommendations for changes in the ANES. All of us, however, should remember that there are powerful reasons for keeping the ANES time-series intact. Consequently, we must wrestle with the question of how to combine the virtues of innovation with the wisdom of repetition.

**An American National Election Study?
Justifications, Requirements, and Prospects for the Future**

Nancy Burns, Mark Hansen, and Don Kinder

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We are pleased that the National Science Foundation is sponsoring a conversation on the future of an American national election study and pleased again to have been invited to participate in it. Our brief remarks are organized around three principal themes: justifications (why should NSF support a national election study?), requirements (what resources – material, technical, and intellectual – does it take to do a national election study right?), and prospects for the future (over the next decade, what should a national election study attempt to do?).

I. Why a National Election Study?

What is the justification for a national election study: that is, for a unitary project, focusing on elections, and supported by the National Science Foundation?

Why a study of elections?

The questions it engages. The importance of a national election study derives in the first instance from the importance of the questions it engages. For society, the questions are, in one way or another, about democracy, about the promise and reality of self-governance. Democracy means more than elections, of course, but when all is said and done, voting remains, as William Riker once put it, democracy’s “central act” (1982, p. 5). In a democracy, elections supply a primary point of contact between citizens and their government. How does this link function, and how well?

To date, the National Election Studies have made possible an intensive empirical investigation of democratic politics that is unparalleled in place and time. They have identified the centrality of partisanship in citizens’ evaluations and choices, the limitations in the public’s appreciation and application of policy issues in voting, the role of self interest and ethical reasoning in public opinion and behavior, the mass processes through which the media create campaign momentum, the way in which incumbency produces electoral advantage, why some Americans take part in politics and why many do not, the conditions under which voters’ demands and aspirations influence the decisions of public officials, as theories of democracy insist they must – the list goes on. Over the past half century, as the world has moved to democracy, national election studies carried out in the United States have provided the scientific foundation for deepening social and scholarly understanding of the democratic experience in a growing number of countries.

The issues and topics taken up by the scientific analysis of national election study data are not only of academic importance, for the answers reached inform ongoing debates about democratic practice. They affect how one thinks about the value of political parties, the effects of campaign finance reform, the conduct of the mass media, the possibilities for a more deliberative politics, and more (see, for example, Bartels & Vavreck 2000; Zaller 2002).

Moreover, the normative questions that animate a national election study have not diminished in importance, nor is it likely that they will anytime soon. First, as academic discourse progresses, scholars proffer new answers to enduring questions. As social psychological approaches challenged sociology, as rational choice accounts contested social psychology, as cognitive psychological approaches questioned rational choice, the American National Election Studies provided a platform for investigation of what each had to offer. Second, as American political practice evolves, democratic politics itself puts new questions before us. Through fifty years, elections have become vastly more expensive, more centered on candidates, and more intensive in use of the media. By analyzing national election study data, we can understand the sources and the implications of these alterations.¹³

A natural laboratory for social science: a coordinating event. As valuable as an election study is in producing a normative understanding of a key set of societal institutions, it is equally valuable for social science understanding of a broader sort. For elections are, or can be, a locus for inquiry into collective processes of comprehension, evaluation, and choice.

The opportunity for science in elections stems first from the special features of decisions in elections. Elections, we argue, are coordinating events that are unique in the social sciences. Here, we mean “coordination” in four ways. First, in a temporal sense, elections are the moments in which vast numbers of people face an important decision at roughly the same time. What people hear varies, what they bring to the decision varies, and so do the exact decisions each is asked to make. But the underlying similarities in the decision are substantial and provide a ready-made laboratory for the study of many critical dynamics of human perception and choice. By putting the same choice at the same time before different people, elections abstract away the rich but unmanageable heterogeneity in the objects of choice in most other natural decision contexts. Elections are contexts in which people must coordinate on a limited number of common choices.

Moreover, elections are coordinating events in a decisional sense. In a single election, American citizens participate in a set of choices over candidates for executive and legislative posts in national, state, and local contests. The choices are not conceptually separable, as in a market basket of goods and services, but rather inextricable. Each choice contributes to the formation of a government whose decisions in *toto* affect citizens’ daily lives in significant and immediate ways. By putting related choices before people, elections pose the problem for individuals to fit their decisions together. Elections are contexts in which people must coordinate their own choices in consistency with their own interests and intentions.

Further, elections are coordinating events in a collective sense. Elections are choices among public goods bundled together by party and campaign platforms. The decisions are not limited in their effects, either to the person or to the small group. In elections, citizens decide for themselves but also – because public policy applies to all – for others as well. By putting public choices before entire communities, elections raise considerations of self-interest, fellow feeling, principle, and strategy in individual perception and behavior. Elections are contexts in which people must coordinate with others in producing outcomes.

Finally, elections are events that coordinate other social processes. As a generation of scholarship on the institutional process of American government underscores, elections are never far from mind when government elites make their decisions, whether legislative or executive. Nor are they distant when lobbying groups approach. Elections are where the decisions of citizens and governors come together, where we can observe the influence one important social process has on another. By sampling a crucial point in the ongoing process of democratic governance, elections give insight into the way choices feed back from outcomes into further choices. Elections are contexts in which people coordinate the experience of their past with their hopes for the future.

The coordinating event that elections represent is certainly of prime interest to political scientists, who have historically played the largest role in the development of the American National Election Studies and whose ranks contain the world's leading experts in the essential dynamics and mechanics of the electoral process. Seminal works on a wide variety of subjects rely exclusively or importantly on NES data, ranging from the paradigmatic study *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes 1960) to such notable works as *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (Fiorina 1981), *Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice* (Bartels 1988), *Issue Evolution* (Carmines & Stimson 1989), *The Nature and Origins of Public Opinion* (Zaller 1992), and *The Macro Polity* (Erikson, MacKuen & Stimson 2002).

More generally, the appetite for national election study data is large and growing, a point we document in the Appendix to our memorandum. Books, conference papers, journal articles, and dissertations all show the same upward trajectory. In the last five years alone (1998-2002), NES data were featured in 76 articles in the *American Political Science Review* and the *American Journal of Political Science*, arguably political science's most prestigious journals. At the most recent meeting of the American Political Science Association, two of the top four book awards in the field of American politics went to works that made significant use of NES data (Burns, Schlozman & Verba 2001; Mendelberg 2001). The NES Bibliography, a partial catalogue on the published uses of NES data, now lists more than 3400 items.¹⁵

An interdisciplinary laboratory. National election studies especially attract the attention of political scientists. But the substantive issues for which elections are a unique laboratory – perception, comprehension, choice, strategy, collective action – are also of central interest to psychologists, sociologists, and economists. Indeed, through the years scholars from all these disciplines have participated in the design of the studies and benefited from the availability of the results.¹⁶

The cross-disciplinary interest in elections raises a second aspect of the social scientific opportunities inherent in the study of elections: the unique constitution of political science as a discipline. As a field, political science is defined by a context rather than a predominant research approach. As a result, its contributions and controversies take a different form than those emanating from disciplines such as psychology and economics. In political science, people with training in a discipline such as psychology interact in close and frequent proximity to those with training in disciplines such as sociology, philosophy, mathematics, history, and economics. There is no presumption that any particular theoretical approach dominates all others within the field of study. Instead, such credibility is earned through performance. This is different than what currently occurs even in cross-disciplinary parts of the other social sciences. In behavioral economics, for instance, standard practice is to retain the foundations of microeconomic reasoning and to use insights from particular psychological experiments to augment the theories. It is a valuable integration but one with an underlying hierarchy. In political science, by contrast, different approaches meet on a more level playing field, without a near-universal presumption of hierarchy. Consequently, even the most basic aspects of disciplinary approaches to research are extensively debated, and universal, context-free resolutions are unlikely. But from the

¹⁵ Available through the NES Website: www.umich.edu/~nes. NES data also show up regularly in the prestige press, including, in just the last several years, *The Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, NPR, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, and *The National Journal*.

¹⁶ In the last several years alone, NES data have shown up in journals in the fields of psychology, demography, aging, communications, sociology (including articles in the discipline's flagship journals: *The American Sociological Review* and *The American Journal of Sociology*), labor economics, natural resources, computing, and business.

apparent cacophony arises an unusual underlying respect for different forms of social inquiry and a basic presumption that multiple scientific perspectives can provide a unique wisdom about critical social phenomena. The debates are not always pretty, and their conduct can be puzzling to people outside of the field. But when the scholarly community, in a wide variety of theoretical guises, seeks answers to questions about fundamental social dynamics, they very often turn to studies such as the National Election Studies. The study of elections is where both the substantive interests and the theoretical approaches of the social sciences convene.

Why study elections with sample surveys?

Few complex social problems lend themselves so readily to investigation by the sample survey as the “one-person, one-vote” ethic of democratic theory. A properly drawn cross-section of the enfranchised adult population is a sample of the electorate, active and otherwise. Not for nothing has the sample survey become the social scientist’s telescope, as indispensable to the measurement of “flows of information, opinion, and feeling” through society (Converse 1987, p. 1) as the telescope has proven to the scientific exploration of space. The analogy may be extravagant, but it is hard not to be impressed by the depth of the technical literatures that have developed around virtually all aspects of the sample survey method: sampling design, problems of sample coverage and non-response, mode effects, the integration of experimental and survey methods, the formulation and placement of survey questions, and more (e.g., Schwarz, Groves & Schuman, 1998; Holbrook, Green & Krosnick 2003; Groves, Dillman, Eltinge & Little 2002).

Why a national study?

These days, an American National Election Study will surely not be the only survey-based examination of the American electorate underway in an election season. Collectively, candidates for office spend millions of dollars on surveys of likely voters. Newspapers and networks commission dozens of polls leading up to and through Election Day.¹⁷

Campaign and media polls versus a scientific study. With all these alternatives at hand, why should a study of elections be a national resource, the beneficiary of support from the National Science Foundation? The answer is that media and campaign polls, as valuable as they might be for other reasons, are inherently limited in the contribution they make to social science. Their processes are not inclusive. And their purposes are not scientific.

Media, candidate, and commercial polls are proprietary. In most cases, the results are not made available promptly and without restriction to the scholarly community. By commercial agreement, most pollsters never make public release of candidate polls. Data dissemination is beyond the capabilities of many of the regional media organizations, and some of the national organizations. Media, candidate, and private organizations are under no obligation to give their data to the public for its scientific benefit, and they usually do not.

Some organizations, particularly the major media polls, do make their data available to researchers, not immediately, but on fairly short order. They make their data available, but often without providing essential procedural details: sampling, weights, field periods, interviewer training, response rates, and more (Voss, Gelman & King 1995). Even when the scientific community is permitted access to such data, this is secondary analysis at best. Design and planning remain under the control of others.

¹⁷ During the last presidential election cycle, both the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard mounted elaborate surveys of prospective voters. We will take up these studies below.

And those who design and plan polls have different purposes in mind than those of social science. The agenda of the media polls is set for the most part by journalists, who want to write compelling stories. As for privately commissioned political polls, the agenda there is set by candidates and parties, who want to win elections and direct policy. In contrast, the agenda of a national election study should be set by the clash of theoretical perspectives that shape the social sciences. Some of these disputes will naturally have implications for practitioners, but first and foremost, social scientists come to national election study data to test theories of human behavior. The purpose of a national election study is only incidentally to deepen appreciation of the public's view on some contemporary controversy, however important it may be, and it is never to provide tactical advice to candidates and parties.

Differences in purpose lead to differences in operation. By comparison to the National Election Study, polls, in their haste to keep up with news or provide timely advice, make substantial compromises in quality. Such compromises affect virtually all phases of operation: sample design, non-response, the development and testing of survey items, questionnaire design, the training of interviewers, and the maintenance of a professional staff (Converse & Traugott 1986; Brady & Orren 1992; Mosteller *et al.* 1949; Traugott & Lavrakas 1996).

We do not mean to suggest that nothing good ever comes of polls. On a few occasions, social scientists have exploited the sheer density of measurement spawned by poll proliferation to develop useful aggregate indicators of opinion. In this way, we have learned much about the dynamics of presidential popularity (e.g., Hibbs, Rivers & Vasilatos 1982; Ostrom & Simon 1985), the movement of national partisanship (or "macropartisanship": MacKuen, Erikson & Stimson 1989; Box-Steffensmeier & Smith 1996), fluctuations in public mood (Stimson 1998), the political culture of the American states (Erikson, Wright & McIver 1993), and more. These literatures constitute real contributions to our understanding of public opinion, but such investigations are necessarily limited by the characteristic features of polls: questionable sampling procedures, amateur interviewing staffs, variation in basic procedures, over time and across firms (often undocumented), and brief and superficial interviews preoccupied with the topics of the moment.

For all these reasons, polls do not, and as currently constituted, cannot, do the work of a national election study. The first answer to why an election study must be a national resource is that private organizations do not address the important questions of democratic politics in a way that advances social scientific understanding. The relationship of media and political polls to the science of society is rather like the relationship of television weathercasters to the science of meteorology. Each plays an important role in informing the public about critical phenomena, but each serves the public in a different and irreplaceable way.

The unique contributions of a collaborative study. The second answer to why an election study is a national resource is that the resource is not only in the data. It is also in the benefit of a large, unitary collaborative project to social science. An election study that is national in its participatory compass accomplishes more for science than any equal-sized collection of discrete and isolated studies.

First, a national collaborative study must be open to the contributions of researchers from all walks of scholarly life. In its very inception, the project is too big and its aims too broad not to need the help of the scholarly community, the root source of new and borrowed concepts, innovations in design, fresh instrumentation, inventive statistical models, and more. A national collaborative study affords scholars the opportunity to see their best ideas implemented in a high-quality academic survey.

Second, a large collaborative study realizes economies of scale in the promotion of effective social science. Many scholars with powerful ideas lack the expertise to turn them into instrumentation and survey designs. Not only can a collaborative study help scholars test their ideas, it can also help them improve the power and expand the relevance of the test. Moreover, a national project can also maintain a professional staff with the ability to undertake a wide

range of customer service activities, such as data distribution, documentation, and requests for special access. The intellectual payoff per dollar spent is very high.

Third, a collaborative study produces intellectual human capital for the benefit of individual scholars and for the improvement of the scientific disciplines. Collaboration in a national project creates an environment for learning, juniors from seniors, authorities on substance from experts on methods, and the reverse. It spurs healthy competition, as instrumentation must pass tests both of substantive importance and of measurement quality to make a successful claim on scarce survey time. Participation in study planning is an intensive postgraduate seminar in public opinion, political behavior, survey methodology, and measurement theory. It is training for better social science.

Finally, a unitary national study provides coordination that leverages resources. It insures continuity in study design, procedures, instrumentation, and content, changes in any of which can have profound effects on data quality and usability. It promotes harmonization across studies, say in presidential and midterm years, in federal and state contests, or in primary and general elections, so that each relates to the others in ways that facilitate effective analysis. Finally, it fosters uniformity in documentation, data formats, data cleanliness, and data access.

A truly national study provides broad access to a process whose aim is scientific discovery and whose results are available to all.¹⁸

Why add another to the series of election studies?

At 50 years, the American National Election Studies are the longest continuous research project in the social sciences, an effort without parallel anywhere in the world. In the beginning, an interdisciplinary team from the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan undertook a series of national election studies covering all thirteen presidential and midterm elections between 1952 and 1976. Since the creation of NES with the support of the National Science Foundation in 1977, the project has provided unbroken coverage of all mid-term and presidential elections from 1978 to the present. The 2002 study, funded entirely from private sources, is the twenty-fifth in the series. With so many election studies already in hand, why do more?

Enabling systematic comparison. First, a central requirement of scientific practice is the ability to undertake systematic comparison. Comparable measures of core variables, posed to comparable samples at regular intervals, provide the foundation for comparison and a platform for historical analysis. Researchers can exploit the NES time series to understand, *inter alia*, participation and withdrawal from political life, the emergence and consolidation of incumbency as an electoral asset, the life history of partisan issues, and the dynamics of electoral choice. They can explore processes that unfold over long periods of time: for example, the partisan realignment of the South; the

¹⁸ The Annenberg and Kennedy School studies we mentioned earlier fall short on exactly these dimensions: they aren't open to the contributions of researchers from all walks of scholarly life; their private nature prevents them from realizing economies of scale in the promotion of effective social science; because they operate in a closed way, they can't do the work that a collaborative study can in building intellectual human capital; and without coordinating with other studies – studies done at other times and in other places – they have limited ability to leverage resources.

breakdown of the New Deal party system; the incorporation of newly-enfranchised blacks, 18- to 20-year olds, and immigrants; and the evolution of public attitudes on the role of government. Precisely because of the continuity in the study, each new edition is not just a study in itself, but also a study that can put the current election in the context of 50 years of elections. Another way to put this is that NES data have a long shelf life and can, in fact, increase in value as they age.¹⁹ A new idea or special conditions today can quicken interest in elections past.

Poised to study change. Second, things change. American politics and social science are both vastly different now from what they were in 1952. Just as new perspectives on public opinion, political behavior, campaigns, and elections arose in the past, so will they arise in the future. The NES predates Downs on issue voting, Key on partisan realignment, Verba and Nie on participation, and Kramer on economic voting, and sometime soon in the future the National Election Study will test and refine new theories just as it tested and refined those. New opportunities will arise as well as history happens. As significant political events unfolded – the 2nd Reconstruction, Vietnam, urban unrest, the end of the Cold War – the National Election Study was there to chronicle them in the experience of the mass public, and to exploit their potential to advance our understanding of key social processes. Opportunities for the advancement of social science cannot necessarily be known beforehand.

II. What Does It Take To Do A National Election Study Right?

A national election study that is a national resource, worthy of the Foundation's sponsorship, entails responsibilities. It entails responsibilities to the social scientific research community. It entails responsibilities to effective science. What does it take to make possible the maximum value to social science from a national election study?

1. *A study that leverages resources.* A coordinated series of studies enable replication and make context – time and place alike – a serious component in the study. The current studies relate to each other in various ways. Most obviously, as addressed following, they share content. But they also share a design, face-to-face interviews with respondents drawn from a national area probability sample. And sometimes they also share respondents, with panel studies embedded in the cross sections. The integration of the studies has enabled the social science community to realize benefits that could not be obtained from a series of unrelated studies: the opportunity for longitudinal analysis of two different kinds, improvements in instrumentation, design, and administration, the introduction of innovations in ways that allow assessments of both substantive and artifactual effects, and the removal of the confounding effects of differences in study design and administration. And the integration of the studies has enabled the incorporation of new elements into the study, from new content to contextual data to the American module for the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems.²⁰

2. *Core content, carried consistently.* The value of a study to an analyst depends not only on the content of central interest but also on dependable access to indicators of constructs that are essential to any analysis of electoral choice, public opinion, and political behavior. One might say, in fact, that core content makes analysis possible. Moreover, core content creates the opportunity to investigate questions that did not necessarily guide the creation of the

¹⁹ In just the last four years of articles in the *American Journal of Political Science* and the *American Political Science Review*, scholars have employed data from the 1952, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1966, 1956-58-60 panel, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1991 pilot, 1992, 1993 pilot, 1994, 1995 pilot, 1996, 1998, 2000, the 1988-92 Senate Election Studies, and the 1948-2000 Cumulative Data File.

²⁰ As Curtice (2002, 10) says, “By exploiting the developing time series within countries, and by engaging in systematic programmes of international collaboration between countries, ... [national election studies] are beginning to make it possible to turn elections and systems from constants into variables.”

instrument, through novel use of existing items. Bartels's (1988) imaginative reuse of "feeling thermometers," designed as measures of affect toward candidates, opened up new possibilities for the study of the role of uncertainty in electoral choice. Finally, core content enables analysis of historical change. Examining public opinion change over the life cycle of issues requires comparable content, carried throughout the cycle (e.g., Carmines & Stimson 1989; Zaller 1992).

3. *Commitment to measurement excellence.* Throughout the social sciences, measurement is always a research problem, even if it seldom is taken to be one. No quantity of sophisticated theory and cutting-edge statistics can make up for variables that are poorly measured. A national election study must choose instrumentation carefully. It must be able to demonstrate that indicators measure what they are intended to measure. It must have indicators that are reliable, often through multiple measures for concepts. Only through extraordinary care in measurement will the study produce reliable results, replicable results, results that work deeply into the data at hand. In the promotion of high standards for measurement, a national election study is a necessary complement to the theoretical and statistical concerns of the project on Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models.

4. *High technical standards to insure useful, long-lasting data.* Ensuring a quality national election study requires capacity and expertise. This means a professional and experienced staff, overseeing a professional and experienced survey center. A national election study doesn't just happen. Or rather, while it happens, invisible to nearly all those who will make use of the data ultimately produced, a whole series of problems needs to be surmounted: a sample designed, instrumentation standardized and checked, randomization schemes implemented, interviewers trained, initial refusals converted, study progress monitored, errors caught, data cleaned, and on it goes. High quality survey research is not cheap, and there is a reason for it. Partly what we mean when we say that the American National Election Study is and should continue to be a national resource, is a commitment to professional capacity and expertise that make election study data worth analyzing, now and for many years to come.

5. *Venues for innovation.* Radical theoretical departures require investments in basic research and development. Innovation requires planning conferences to map the research questions and to refine the conceptual content of the study. Innovation requires pretesting, either through pilot studies or through some other vehicle, to enable assessment and to facilitate the most efficient choices in new instrumentation. Innovation requires a body empowered to adjudicate claims on the inevitably scarce commodity of survey time, to insure analytic coherence and to defend scientific validity. Finally, innovation requires an organization with the knowledge and skill to translate a set of items into the interview schedule that is put before study participants.

6. *A process for responsiveness and access for the research community.* As a national data resource, a national election study is different from other NSF-funded projects. They are not the private research domain of the Principal Investigators or a Board of Overseers. They are for the public good of the community of scholars whose research interests touch on the study of elections. The stewardship of a national resource brings with it the obligation to serve the broader community of research scholars. Before the study reaches the field, it requires a process by which research scholars in addition can contribute to the design and content, through public comment and through direct involvement in planning conferences and pilot and study planning committees. After the study returns from the field, it requires a process by which research scholars may gain access to the data in a form that facilitates analysis. Data should be made available expeditiously, with every interested researcher enjoying equal, simultaneous, and unrestricted access.

7. *Service to the research community.* Leveraging the data means making the data accessible to the research community, and this entails making sure that the research community can ask questions of the study – about details of research design, about details of survey implementation, about the availability of specialized datasets of open-ended or geographic data, and more – and can expect the study to offer valuable assistance. Researchers should expect data, documentation, and data resources to be available easily on the Web. They should expect these

materials to be constantly updated and improved – and constantly coordinated with the study’s ability to respond to individual requests for data and information and assistance – so that the resources of the study are available to scholars, students, journalists, and policymakers alike.

III. What Next for a National Election Study?

Having articulated reasons why there ought to be a national election study and then a set of standards that such a study should meet, we turn in this third and last section to the future. We will be sketchy here, in part because any future national election study must be nimble enough to respond to new ideas and new methods in the social sciences, and to new circumstances and practices in politics. And while this is neither the time nor the place to spell out a detailed proposal, we hope to provide points of departure for a profitable discussion.

A commitment to continuity. We are clear about one thing: a future American national election study should include a commitment to continuity. At the very beginning, the National Science Foundation charged NES with the goal of maintaining and extending the time-series collection of core data on elections, public opinion, and political participation initiated in 1952. This should continue. In doing so, we leverage the best of NES’s past.

The NES series now consists of twenty-five biennial national surveys covering some 50 years. As such, NES has been witness to a remarkable period in American society: alternations between Democratic and Republican administrations, united and divided control of the government, prosperity and recession, peace and war, domestic tranquility and disorder, moments of dramatic political change and quiet consolidation. To assess the political nature and electoral consequence of such historical transformations, NES has supplied core measures, posed to comparable samples, distributed at regular intervals across fifty years of history. Sustaining the NES series makes fundamental work on political and social change possible.

What kinds of turbulence await American society as the new century opens, no one can say. Consider the remarkable and utterly unpredictable chain of events set in motion by the razor-thin presidential vote of 2000. To assess the consequences of the 2000 election and its contested outcome for Americans’ faith in democratic procedures requires what? It requires placing the 2000 experience in context. It requires, more specifically, that comparable questions on democratic procedure be posed to comparable samples of Americans, not only in the midst of an electoral crisis, but under ordinary, more tranquil, circumstances as well. The same holds for understanding the political consequences of September 11, as it does for the other “natural experiments” that history has in store for the United States. Continuation of the NES series will place social scientists in position to describe and explain whatever changes come. Thus the objective that was central to the Foundation’s creation of NES a quarter century ago should remain at the heart of any national election study of the future.

Adding new scientific leverage. While continuity is crucial in just the ways we’ve outlined, we believe there are ways to expand a national election study’s scientific potential. These innovations would serve two goals: they would provide even greater leverage on the decision context that American elections offer, and they would offer tighter linkages between institutions and individuals. Both of these innovations would open new opportunities for social science.

We start our discussion of new designs by highlighting the leverage the existing design provides. With this discussion in hand, it will be easier to see the contributions additional pieces of a portfolio could offer. So what does the study provide already?

First, the study enables scholars to understand causality in a cross-section, a cross-section centered on the coordinating event. Of course, in a cross-section, powerful results come not from a single parameter estimate. Rather, scholars learn about this coordinating event by working deeply in the data to find many observable

implications of causal arguments. This deep work is made possible by high data quality and by a wide-ranging survey instrument.

Second, the existing design enables scholars to study causality in coordinated, replicated cross-sections. This way of studying causality relies on the methods used to study causality in a cross-section, but then adds to those. Scholars can replicate results across contexts, working deeply in the data in multiple contexts, inside multiple sorts of coordinating events, across multiple kinds of institutional settings, building linkages between individuals and institutions and fine-tuning the understanding of the effects of elections by taking advantage of variance across electoral contexts.

Finally, the existing design makes use of panels to enable scholars to understand dynamics. These panels come in two varieties: pre- and post-election panels, which are standard features of past Presidential studies, and cross-study panels coupled with small fresh cross-sections. Of course, these parts of the design add another way to put causality in the service of understanding elections. Here the conception of causality relies on the methods used in cross-sections and in coordinated cross-sections. It adds the important ability to track dynamics within an individual. This design is easily compromised, of course: dynamics on increasingly unusual or trained samples are not especially informative. For these reasons, NES has relied on relatively short panels coupled with fresh cross-sections to enable these short panels to be useful.

As valuable and crucial as these three parts of the design are, one could simply do more to take advantage of the laboratory elections offer.

An enhanced portfolio of coordinated studies. First, we would give scholars the ability to compare decision-making, judgment, and behavior inside elections with decision-making, judgment, and behavior outside elections. Scholars would come to see elections more clearly through clean comparisons both across kinds of events, between quiet times and coordinating times, and over individuals. This clarity of vision would come from *independent rolling cross-sections in non-election years*, with respondents empanelled from a Presidential year study, plus small fresh cross-sections to compensate for panel conditioning and attrition. The aggregation of the independent rolling cross-sections could allow for richer samples of geographic units – and, thus, of political institutions – and of particular groups. The brief panels would enable scholars to compare this central coordinating event with other kinds of coordinating events (September 11th with the 2000 election with the 2002 election, for example). In the end, we'd have a portfolio of data to use to understand decision-making, opinion, participation, and elections. And because there would be a number of studies carrying core content, there would be many opportunities from scholars from a range of disciplines to shape these rolling cross-sections.

A second innovation would be in the service of understanding the dynamics of coordinated decision-making. This design would incorporate *rolling-cross-sections within the campaign*. Done repeatedly and consistently, we would have clean comparisons of dynamics. To provide enough statistical power, the surveys would be done via large daily replicates and the survey instrumentation would be identical from day to day. By itself, this innovation would provide important data on dynamics. It would also be easily integrated with data from the last 50 years, enabling continuing comparisons. The earlier election studies have utilized related design features – square take, relatively even take, and multiple replicates – that would enable one to compare the rolling cross-section data aggregated across the election with election data taken in the past and with election data from other countries. There are reasons to couple this design with the rolling cross-sections in non-election years. Rolling cross-sections within the campaign would offer more limited opportunities to draw in a broad group of scholars from across the social sciences because every day's study would, of necessity, carry the same instrumentation. And, of course, there is one other reason to couple this design innovation with the design we outlined in the last paragraph: this design doesn't offer comparisons across kinds of decision-making contexts, that is, across institutions and across kinds of coordinating events.

A third kind of innovation centers its attention most conspicuously on institutional variation. Here one would invest in state-based over-samples, over-samples that would add power to the off-year independent rolling cross-sections we mentioned earlier. Of course, the power of the design would come from the incorporation of representative respondents sprinkled across many states (Stoker and Bowers 2002), states chosen to maximize variation in institutions. For every state incorporated here, scholars would gain the ability to connect institutional configurations – state legislatures, legal institutions, bureaucracies, the Senate, for example – to individuals. The consequence would be a study that fosters – even more than it does now – the ability of scholars to integrate theories about institutions with theories about individuals.

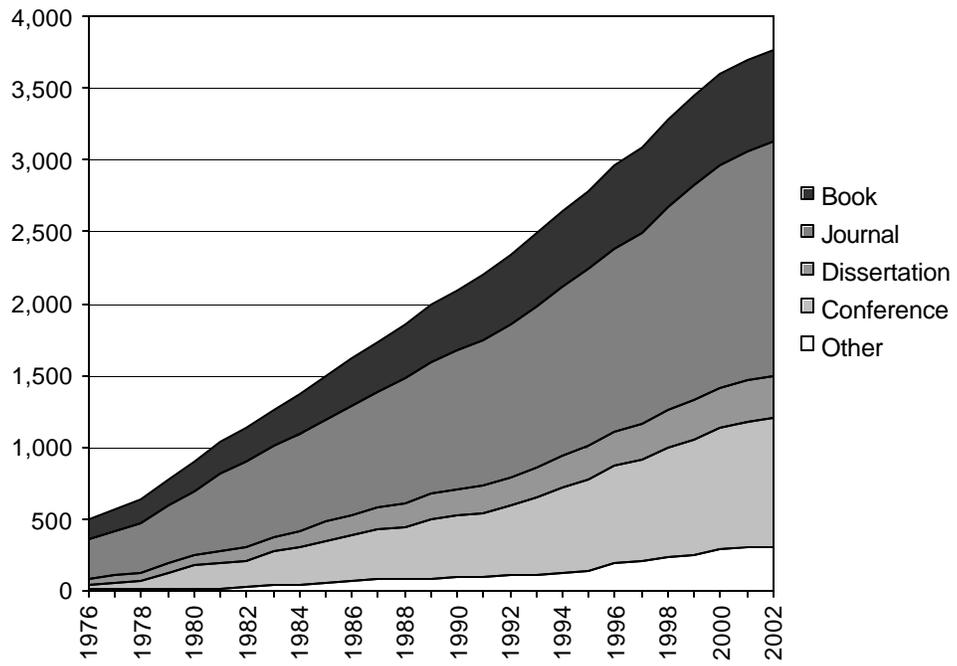
Implicit in these new lines of analysis and alternative design possibilities is the wish that the national election study of the future expand its search for new ideas, broaden its horizons. In its current form, NES is already used by scholars from a range of disciplines, and from time to time, psychologists and sociologists have served as members of the NES oversight board. But a more intensive effort of this sort – coupled with the outreach that would likely be required – could have exciting intellectual payoffs.

Earlier we said that it is impossible to specify exactly what form a national election study should take because we can't know at present what new ideas are going to come to prominence. This problem – if it is a problem – multiplies should the national election study become, as we hope it will, a more interdisciplinary venture. For this to happen, for the national election study of the future to be an effective site for the empirical examination of diverse theoretical perspectives, some vehicle for preliminary testing will be required. We believe that a new brand of modest-sized pilot studies could serve this purpose in the future. These small studies would provide the opportunity for new instrumentation to be tested, the measurement of core concepts to be improved, innovations in methods to be developed, and intellectual risks to be run. These studies would help make ideas from across the social sciences valuable and immediately relevant for progress in neighboring disciplines.

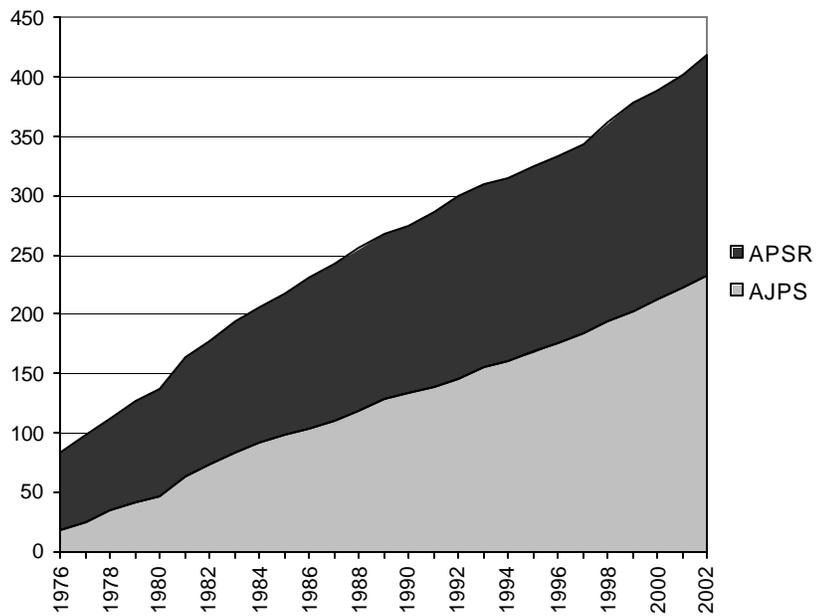
IV. Close

The study of elections, public opinion, and political participation inevitably raises deep questions about the performance and promise of democracy. Exactly how such studies should be carried out, by whom, under what auspices, are clearly open questions. But however these questions are resolved, the importance of such a study remains clear. We ask the Foundation to continue and strengthen its commitment to an American national election study, to insure that such serious topics are given the kind of careful and close scientific scrutiny that a democratic society deserves.

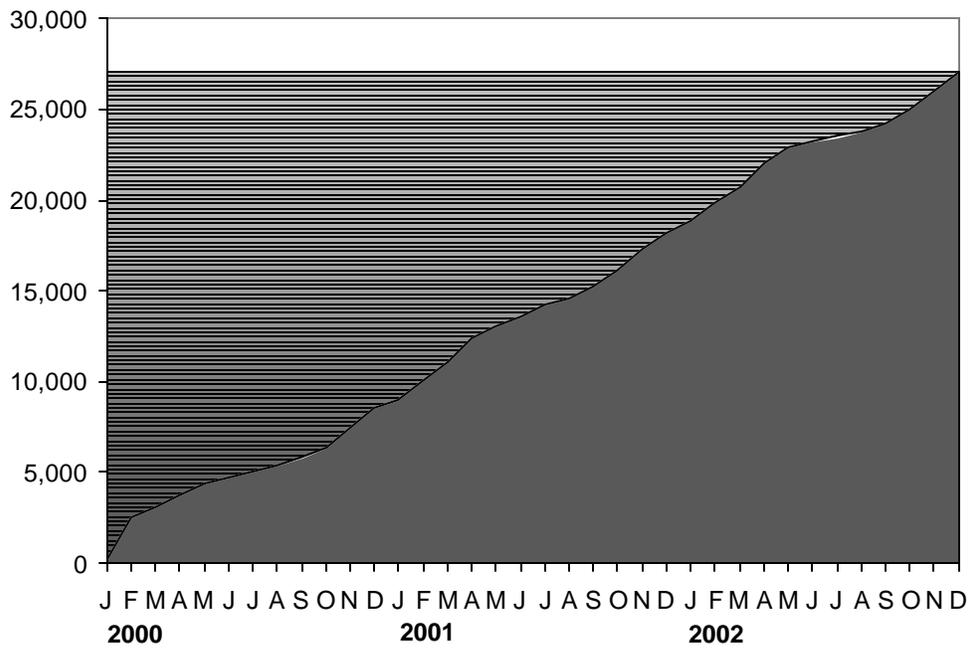
NES Bibliography (1976-), Cumulative Uses



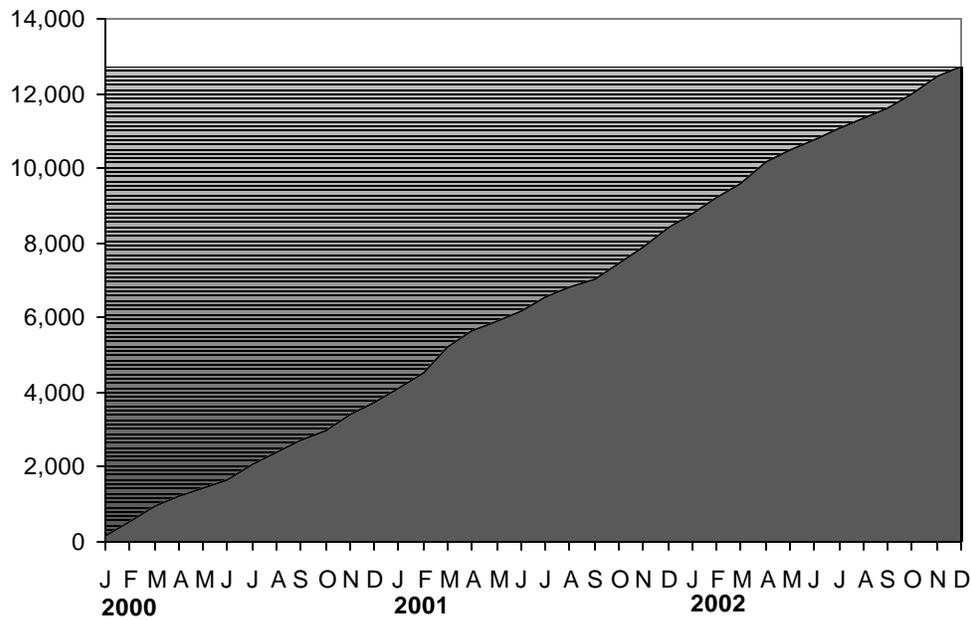
NES Bibliography (1976-), Cumulative Uses: APSR and AJPS



NES Datasets, Cumulative Downloads (2000-2002)

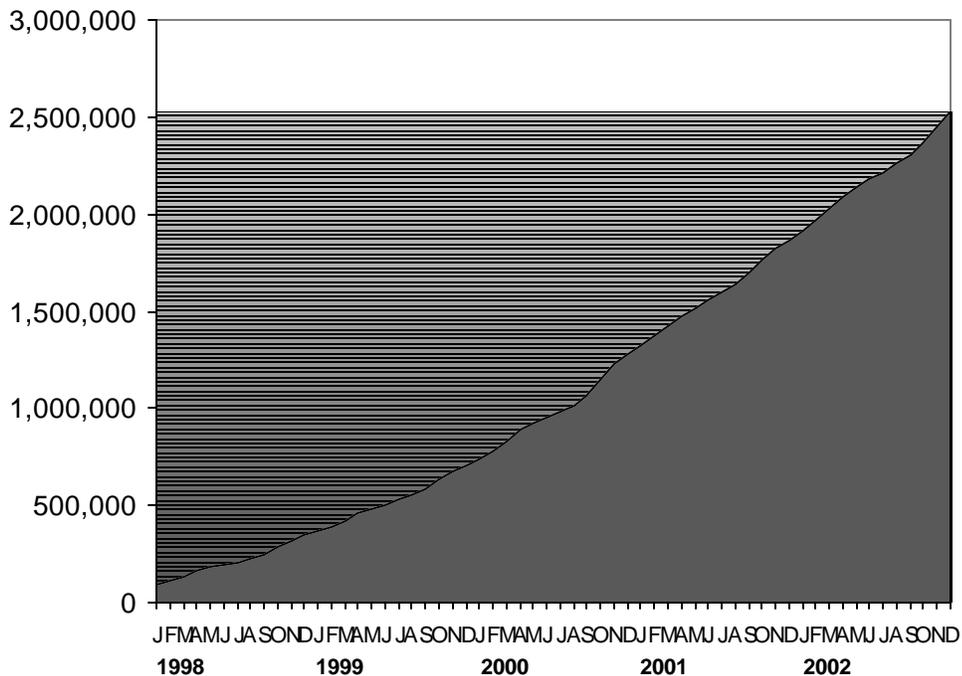


Pilot and Technical Reports, Cumulative Downloads (2000-2002)

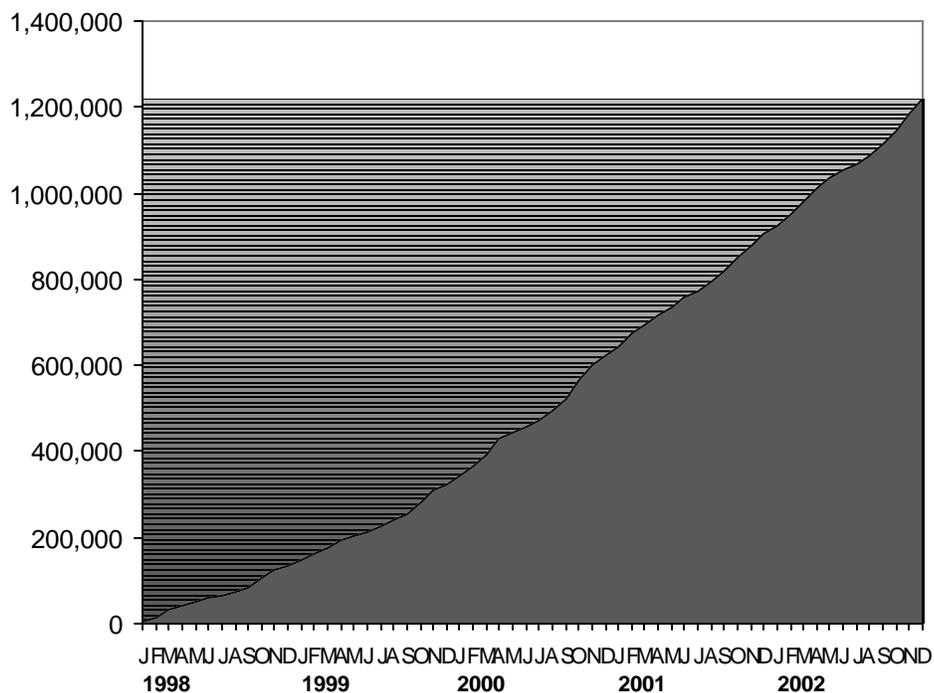


V. Appendix

NES Web Page, Cumulative Page Requests (1998-2002)



NES Web Page: Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior, Cumulative Page Requests (1998-2002)



Reverse Links

As of February 2003, the number of web sites that link to the NES Web Page total between 1500 and 2000, depending on the search engine used.

Breakdown of NES Web Site Visitors in 2002

Web Page Requests in 2002	Domain
297,059	Commercial(.com)
246,037	United States Educational (.edu)
227,048	Numerical Address
183,118	Network (.net)
22,376	Japan (.jp)
22,261	Taiwan (.tw)
11,456	United States (.us)
11,291	Canada (.ca)
9,964	United Kingdom (.uk)
8,656	Non-Profit Organization (.org)
7,044	Germany (.de)
4,060	Australia (.au)
3,976	France (.fr)
3,602	Netherlands (.nl)
3,158	Spain (.es)
2,941	United States Government (.gov)
2,533	United States Military (.mil)
2,446	Sweden (.se)
2,375	Mexico (.mx)
2,214	Italy (.it)
2,122	Denmark (.dk)
30,896	One of 119 other countries (with less than 2,000 page requests each)
1,004	Other extension (with less than 2,000 page requests each)
1,107,637	TOTAL

Scholars Associated with NES (1976-present) *

Scholars Associated with NES (1976-present)*

[Board Members, Conference Attendees, Fellows, Planning Committee Members, Principle Investigators, and Visiting Scholars]

Robert Abelson
Alan I. Abramowitz
Duncan Aldrich
John H. Aldrich
John Alford
R. Michael Alvarez
Kristen Andersen
Stephen Ansolabehere
Herbert B. Asher
Barbara Bardes
Charles Barrilleaux
Larry Bartels
Frank Baumgartner
Paul Allen Beck
Dave Bennett
Stephen Bennett
Adam J. Berinsky
Jake Bowers
Janet Box-Steffensmeier
Thomas Boyd
David W. Brady
Henry Brady
John Brehm
Richard A. Brody
Clem Brooks
Eric Bucy
Charles S. Bullock, III
Nancy Burns
Vallon Burris
Bruce Cain
James Campbell
Joseph Cappella
John S. Carroll
Steven Chaffee
Kathryn Cirksena
Jack Citrin
William Claggett
Peter Clarke
Jeffrey Cohen
Pamela Conover
Philip E. Converse
Margaret Conway
Gary Cox
Stephen Craig

Ann Crigler
Russell Dalton
Darren Davis
James Davis
Jack Dennis
Brian Duff
Euel Elliot
Michael J. Ensley
Lutz Erbing
Robert Erikson
Heinz Eulau
Stanley Feldman
Richard F. Fenno, Jr.
John Ferejohn
Ada Finifter
Morris P. Fiorina
Susan Fiske
William Flanigan
Linda L. Fowler
Charles H. Franklin
Kathleen Frankovic
Carolyn Funk
Edie Goldenberg
Kenneth Goldstein
Thomas Graham
Donald Green
Fred Greenstein
Bernard Grofman
Paul Gronke
Randall Guynes
Michael J. Hanmer
John Mark Hansen
John A. Herstein
John Hibbing
Kevin Hill
Barbara Hinckley
Melvin J. Hinich
Jennifer Hochschild
Thomas Holbrook
Barry Hollander
Barb Homburg
Robert Huckfeldt
Leonie Huddy
Patricia Hurley

Jon Hurwitz
Shanto Iyengar
Mary Jackman
Simon Jackman
John E. Jackson
Gary C. Jacobson
Harold Jacobson
William Jacoby
Kathleen Jamieson
Kenneth Janda
Ted Jelen
John B. Jemmott III
M. Kent Jennings
Malcolm Jewell
Joel Johnson
J. Paul Johnston
Richard Johnston
Marion Just
Kim Kahn
Cindy D. Kam
Elaine Kamarck
Elihu Katz
Jonathan Katz
Richard S. Katz
William R. Keetch
Stanley Kelley, Jr.
Henry C. Kenski
Samuel Kernell
John H. Kessel
Roderick Kiewiet
Donald R. Kinder
Gary King
Ethel Klein
Casey A. Klofstad
Stephen Knack
Kathleen Knight
David Knoke
Warren L. Kostroski
Jonathan Krasno
Michael Krassa
Jon A. Krosnick
James H. Kuklinski
Everett Ladd
Robert Lane

Richard Lau
David C. Leege
Peter H. Lemieux
Henry R. Lieberman
Milton Lodge
Arthur Lupia
John C. Macartney
Stuart Elaine MacDonald
Thomas E. Mann
George Marcus
Gregory B. Markus
Michael Martinez
David R. Mayhew
William T. McAllister
Harwood McClerking
John B. McConahay
James Meernik
Mark Mellman
Tali Mendelberg
Arthur Miller
Warren E. Miller
Warren Mitofsky
Jeffery Mondak
Giovanna Morchio
John Mueller
Diana Mutz
Robin Nabi
Candice J. Nelson
John Newhagen
David Newman
Richard G. Niemi
Richard E. Nisbett
Helmut Norpoth
Barbara Norrander
Bruce Oppenheimer
Benjamin I. Page
Zhongdang Pan
Won-ho Park
Glenn R. Parker
Samuel C. Patterson
Thomas Patterson
Jerry Perkins
Mark Pfeffley
Tasha Philpot
Nelson Polsby
Gerald M. Pomper
Samuel Popkin
Linda Powell
Vincent Price
George Rabinowitz

Lynn Ragsdale
Wendy H. Rahn
Austin Ranney
June Woong Rhee
Bradley Richardson
Douglas Rivers
David Rohde
Steven Rood
Steven J. Rosenstone
Marc Ross
Thomas J. Rudolph
Jerold Rusk
Arthur Sanders
Mitch Sanders
Virginia Sapiro
Frank Scala
Mildred A. Schwartz
David O. Sears
Gary Segura
Patrick Sellers
Byron E. Shafer
J. Merrill Shanks
Richard Shingles
W. Phillips Shively
Jonathan W. Siegel
Barbara Sinclair
Eric Smith
Mark Snyder
John Sprague
Peverill Squire
Charles Stewart
Marianne Stewart
Laura Stoker
Walter J. Stone
Mark Synder
Joseph Tanenhaus
Katherine Tate
Shelley Taylor
Ruth Tebbets
Elizabeth Theiss-Moore
Michael Traugott
Santa Traugott
Edward R. Tufte
Eric M. Uslaner
David Valentine
John R. Van Wingen
Lynn Vavreck
Kenneth Wald
Clyde Walkaways
Jack L. Walker

M. Stephen Weatherford
Herbert F. Weisberg
Robert Weissburg
Mark Westlye
Ismail K. White
Rick Wilson
Nicholas J.G. Winter
Christopher Wlezein
Raymond E. Wolfinger
Emory Woodard
Gerald C. Wright
John Zaller
Alan Zuckerman
Cliff Zukin

*** Note: list is not complete**

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THE BRITISH ELECTION STUDIES: 2001 AND BEFORE

Harold Clarke
University of Texas at Dallas and University of Essex
email: hclarke@utdallas.edu

website: www.essex.ac.uk/bes

A Very Brief History

The British Election Studies (BES) project is now four decades old. The first (1963) BES survey was carried out by David Butler (Nuffield College, Oxford) and Donald Stokes (University of Michigan) to provide a baseline for the 1964 post-election survey. BES surveys have been conducted after all subsequent general elections. There is now a series of 11 consecutive data collections. Unlike the ANES, the BES has been housed at two locations. The project moved from Nuffield to Essex in 1974, with the February 1974, October 1974 and 1979 studies being directed by Ivor Crewe and Bo Sarlvik. The BES returned to Nuffield in 1983. Under the direction of Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell and John Curtice, the study remained there through 1997. In 2001, Essex once more became the home of the BES. The Principal Investigators for the 2001 study are Harold Clarke, University of Texas at Dallas and University of Essex, David Sanders and Paul Whiteley, University of Essex, and Marianne Stewart, University of Texas at Dallas.

Funding

Major funding for the several BES has been provided by the Economics and Social Research Council (ESRC), the British equivalent of the American National Science Foundation (NSF). On occasion, additional financial support has been supplied by private foundations. Perhaps most notable is the 1983 study which, for a time, looked as if it would go unfunded. Publishing magnate, Robert Maxwell then offered to help, and the ESRC provided matching money.

Funding is *ad hoc*, i.e., there is no guarantee from one election to the next that the ESRC will provide money for a BES. Awards are made on a competitive basis — *re-competition is the norm*. The announcement of a competition and subsequent announcement of an award often come quite late in the life of a parliament. Requests have been made to the ESRC to move the process forward to facilitate project planning and execution.

The 2001 BES was funded by the ESRC. An ESRC grant was awarded after an open competition. The winning team was required to agree to a set of conditions including aspects of study design, and a willingness to entertain competitive bids to do the fieldwork. The ESRC award was 1.2 million \$ (U.S.), with approximately 85% of this amount going to survey organizations to conduct the fieldwork. Remaining funds were used for salaries for two research officers and a part-time secretary, as well as some travel money for the p.i.s and participants in two consultation exercises on the design of the survey instruments (see below). No funds were allocated for any or summer salaries for the p.i.s or for indirect costs to the University of Essex.

Key Design Features

Post-Election, In-Person Interviews: Since the 1960s, the principal BES surveys have used *in-person interviews* (now CAPI), with fieldwork beginning immediately after a general election. To maximize design

continuity, the ESRC mandated that the principal survey in the 2001 BES utilize post-election, in-person interviews. At present, it is unknown whether that mandate will obtain for a future election study.

Large N's: Compared to the ANES, the BES surveys have tended to have relatively large sample sizes. For example, the N's for the 1992, 1997, and 2001 post-election surveys were 3534, 3615 and 3219, respectively. Similar to the CNES (Canadian National Election Study), these large N's are motivated, in part, by a desire to analyze voting behavior on a regional basis (Scotland and Wales in the British case). In 2001, the ESRC mandated booster samples in Scotland and Wales. (The ESRC also subsequently requested a separate post-election telephone survey in Northern Ireland.) The large N's also are attractive to investigators because they facilitate multi-level modeling of local party activities and other contextual effects on voting.

Multi-Wave Panels: Although post-election cross-sectional surveys constitute the principal BES data sets, from the beginning BES surveys have had significant *panel* components. The panel design reflected Butler and Stokes' interest in studying *political change*, a theme that has motivated much subsequent research on electoral choice in Britain. Most BES panels involve re-interviews with respondents from previous BES post-election surveys, but there are inter-election panels as well (e.g., 1963-64-66-69-70; 1974 (February)-1974 (October)-75-79; 1983-86-87; pre- and post-election 2001 and 2002/03

In the 1990s, the amount of relevant data was significantly enhanced by the initiation of the British Election Panel Studies (BEPS) at Nuffield's Center for Research on Economic and Social Trends (CREST). The BEPS design involves yearly re-interviews with large national panels. The first BEPS panel covered the 1992-97 time period, and the second one, the 1997-2001 period. Since the BEPS surveys include a number of key questions from the BES, the BEPS data provide significant additional leverage for addressing important topics concerning the short- and long-run dynamics of party support.

Mail-Back Questionnaires: Like the CNES, recent BES have employed drop-off, mail-back questionnaires to enhance the range of topics considered in the data collection.

Articulation to Comparative Election Studies: Periodic attempts have been made to include the BES in coordinated, cross-national election studies. The 1997 BES participated in one such project, the Comparative Study of Election Systems (CSES).

Related Projects: In 1997 and 2001, BES p.i.s conducted content analysis projects to monitor media coverage of the election campaign. Media consumption experiments also were performed.

The 2001 BES

Research Questions: The 2001 BES focused on four major research questions: (a) Why do people decide to (not) vote? (b) Why do people make the electoral choices they do? (c) What factors explain the 2001 election outcome? (d) How does the 2001 election fit into the broader matrix of democratic politics in contemporary Britain?

Rival Theories of Electoral Choice: Rather than designing a study to test (demonstrate?) the power of a privileged theory, we endeavored to provide researchers with the range of variables needed to compare the performance of several major theories of turnout and electoral choice.

Rival Theories of Turnout: High levels of voter turnout long have been *assumed* by students of British voting behavior. For example, Butler and Stokes (1969) did not do a single individual-level analysis of turnout, although they recognized that differential voting rates could help to explain election outcomes. Going to the polls is no longer "a sure thing" in Britain, as witnessed by the 59.4% turnout in 2001 (and a general, if irregular, downward trend since

the 1950s). The 2001 BES contains a large set of questions designed to operationalize key variables in rival theories of voter turnout. (Several of these questions were developed by André Blais in his studies of factors affecting turnout in Canada and other countries).

Consultation Exercises: In developing the 2001 survey instruments, we conducted two consultation exercises with the research community. Anyone interested in making input was invited to participate in meetings held first at the University of Sheffield, and then at the University of Essex. The EPOP (Elections, Public Opinion and Parties) specialist group of the PSA (Political Studies Association) helped us to notify and mobilize interested researchers. The consultation exercises enabled the 2001 BES to facilitate interesting research on local elections and constituency-level effects on political choice.

Election study survey instruments run a real danger of becoming “granny’s attic” — a lot of “buggy whip” stuff can accumulate after several decades. In 2001, we “backed up the science truck” to that attic — questions had to demonstrate their theoretical and methodological promise to be included. Our decision rule was straightforward. Insofar as possible, we included existing questions (and crafted new ones) that were directly related to the four research questions motivating the study (see above). Pressures to include questions simply because they were “old favorites” that had been in the BES since the Beatles played Ed Sullivan carried no weight.

Surveys:

(a) Pre-Election Campaign Baseline Survey, Post-Election Survey and Pre-Post Panel: Although Butler and Stokes fielded a baseline survey as part of the very first BES, this survey was conducted in 1963, a year before the 1964 election. In the spirit of the ANES pre-election surveys, the 2001 BES included a pre-election (CAPI) survey (N = 3219) conducted in the two months before the official campaign began. A panel (N = 2315) of the pre-election survey respondents was re-interviewed after the election as part of the traditional post-election (CAPI) survey. With “top-up” interviews, the total N for the post-election survey was 3035. In sum, 3900 respondents were interviewed in either or both of the pre- and post-election surveys.

(b) Rolling Cross-Sectional Campaign Survey With Pre-Post Election Panel: Similar to the 1988-2000 CNES (and recent New Zealand NES), the 2001 BES included a rolling cross-sectional campaign survey. Over the course of the official campaign, interviews were conducted by telephone (CATI) with 4810 respondents (average daily N ~160). A panel of 3751 of these respondents was re-interviewed immediately after the election.

(c) Mid-Term Panel: Participants in the 2001 post-election (CAPI) survey currently are being re-interviewed. This survey will also include a “top-up” component to provide a representative mid-term portrait of the British electorate. This is the third-wave in an anticipated multi-wave panel.

(d) Internet Survey and Mode Effects: The post-election survey was administered free of charge by YouGov, a major British internet polling company. Taken together with the telephone surveys, the internet survey data enable us to study mode effects on responses to a variety of questions. (Yes, we are discounting “house” effects.)

Experiments?: A question-wording and question-ordering experiment on partisanship was included in the pre- and post-election CAPI surveys.

Vote Validation: Respondents’ reports of (not) voting were checked using official records. These records (for England and Wales) are available to the public at the Lord Chancellor’s Office in London and in local sheriffs’ offices in Scotland.

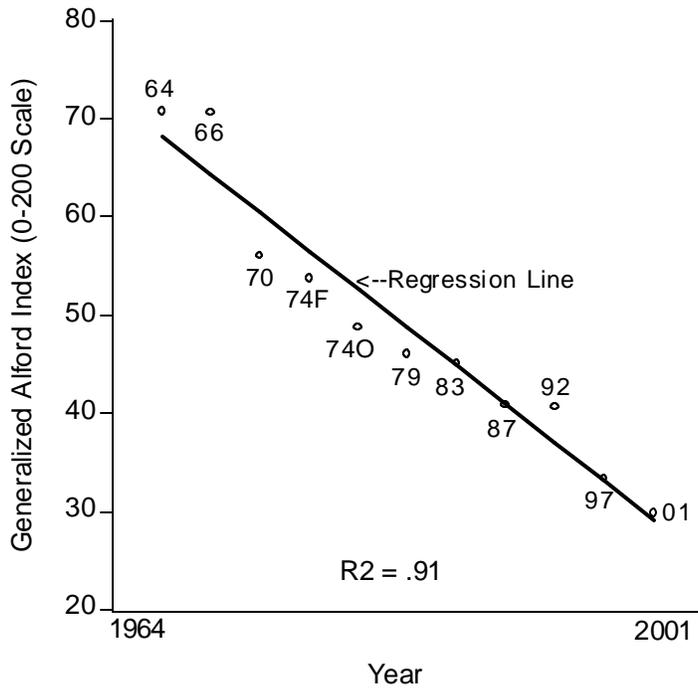
Articulation With Inter-Election Surveys: Key questions in the 2001 BES (e.g., party identification, economic evaluations, emotional reactions to economic conditions, party leader performance, likelihood of voting and engaging

in other forms of political activity) also are asked every month in CATI surveys conducted by the British Gallup organization on behalf of the p.i.s. Some of these questions have been asked since January 1992, others were added in 2000. These Gallup data (N = 127,500) provide us with the ability to study factors driving the aggregate dynamics of party support in far greater detail than is possible with the BES surveys (even in combination with the BEPS panels). (Note: the Gallup surveys have been funded by grants from the NSF and the ESRC. The University of Texas at Dallas also has provided helpful financial support.)

Dissemination of the Data and Findings: We believe that it is imperative to make data available *free of charge ASAP*. Every day during the election campaign, the latest results from the rolling cross-sectional survey were posted in graphic form on the 2001 BES website. In early September 2001 (less than three months after the election), usable versions of the several data sets were posted on the 2001 BES website. These data sets and accompanying documentation also were distributed on CDs to everyone attending the September 2001 EPOP meeting, and any other interested scholars. Updated versions of the data (as well as questionnaires and other documentation) continue to be available on the website and, as per ESRC mandate, “official versions” of the data, questionnaires and technical documentation were deposited with the Essex Data Archive in September 2002. To assist researchers, a special session of the September 2002 EPOP meeting was devoted to the study and major findings. Research papers have been presented at major scholarly meetings such as annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association, the American Political Science Association, and the ECPR Annual Joint Workshops.

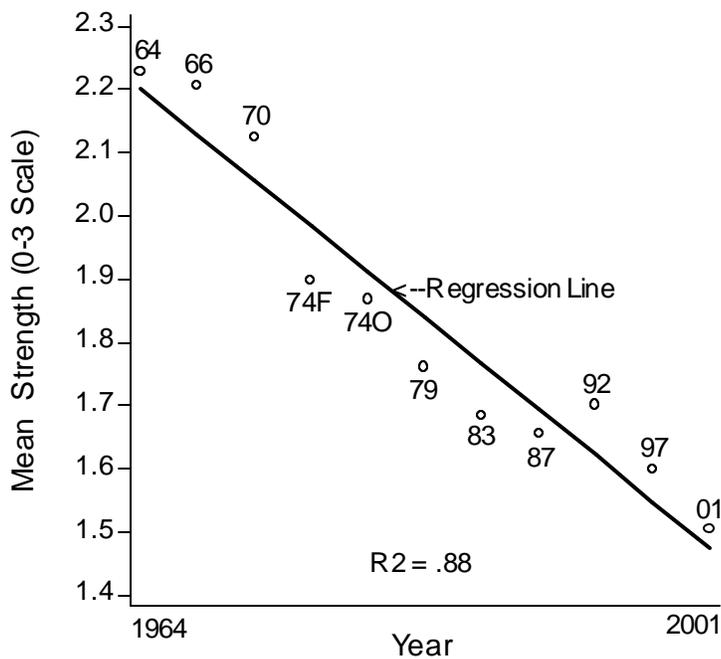
Substantive Contributions: The major publication by the 2001 BES team is *Political Choice in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, forthcoming). Some major findings are: **(a)** Crewe et al. and (now) Dalton and Wattenberg are right. Partisan dealignment is a powerful long-term trend in Britain (see Figures 1 and 2). But, a caveat! The correlation between social class and party identification was never as strong as many have assumed. Ditto for the strength of party identification. The “golden age” of “class tribalism” in British electoral politics (if it ever existed) predates the BES. **(b)** a version of the famous Riker-Ordeshook (1973) P*B - C + D model provides a parsimonious and relatively powerful explanation of turnout in 2001 and, not all of the story is in the D term. **(c)** Stokes was right, Downs less so - performance evaluations on valence issues do much more than issue proximities to drive electoral choice in Britain. However, contrary to what Stokes and many other students of party support in Britain have argued, party leader performance evaluations are very important. **(d)** for Britain, Miller, and now Bartels and Green et al. are wrong, and Fiorina, Franklin and Jackson are right. Mixed Markov latent class models provide strong evidence that, controlling for measurement error, partisan attachments manifest significant aggregate- and individual-level dynamics. Converse was (partially) right too — a mover-stayer model fits the BES and BEPS panel data very well, but, pace his famous conjecture, it is not a ‘black-white’ model. Also, as per Granger (1980), the long-memory (Clarke and Lebo, 2003) aggregate dynamics in the 1992-2002 Gallup data are consistent with the observed individual-level heterogeneity. Substantial dynamics in partisanship in Britain are not novel; rather, they obtained in Butler and Stokes’ first BES panel surveys conducted four decades ago. The latter finding demonstrates the importance of the BES long-term commitment to large-N, multi-wave panels.

Figure 1 Trend in Strength of Relationship Between Social Class and Party Identification



Source: 1964-2001 BES Post-Election Surveys

Figure 2 Trend in Strength of Party Identification



Source: BES 1964-2001 Post-Election Surveys

[7 Feb 2003]

The Australian Election Study: An Overview

Ian McAllister
Research School of Social Sciences
The Australian National University

Overview

The Australian Election Study (AES) surveys are designed to collect data during federal elections for academic research on Australian electoral behaviour and public opinion. In addition, the AES was a founder member of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) group. The AES commenced operation in 1987 (although three academic surveys of political behaviour were collected in 1967, 1969 and 1979, respectively, but they are not strictly speaking election surveys).

The AES routinely collects data among a nationally representative sample of voters and among major party candidates standing for election. Both the voter and candidate instruments combine a common set of questions. The AES is mounted as a collaborative exercise between several Australian universities. The first survey in 1987 was funded by a consortium of universities; all of the subsequent surveys have been funded on a competitive basis by the Australian Research Council, the main academic grant awarding body.

The governance of the AES is through the Principal Investigators who are awarded the grant. A wide range of political scientists and others in the academic community are consulted about the content and approach of the survey, but there is no formal advisory mechanism for the survey. Accountability is through the Principal Investigators to the Australian Research Council, who require a report on the running of the survey.

Each of the seven surveys conducted to date has had a central theme:

- 1987: The economy;
- 1990: The environment and environmentalism;
- 1993: Political culture;
- 1996: National identity and citizenship;
- 1998: Constitution, rights and minorities;
- 1999: Constitutional referendum; and
- 2001: Challenges to governance.

All of the data are publicly available from the Social Science Data Archives at the Australian National University (see <http://ssda.anu.edu.au/>). In the case of the release of the candidate data, prior to the public release demographic variables are removed so that individual respondents cannot be identified.

Methodology

Voters. All the studies are national, post-election self-completion surveys involving samples of between 1,788 and 3,341 respondents, drawn randomly from the electoral register. The 1993 AES oversampled in some of the smaller states and because of this the sample was weighted down to a national sample of 2,388 respondents. The 1999 Constitutional Referendum Study also oversampled in the smaller states, since it was thought that state variations might be important in shaping the result. The overall response rates have varied between 62.8 percent and 55.4 percent. As with most other national election surveys, there is a noticeable decline in the response rate overtime.

The 1987-2001 AES Voter Sample and Response Rates

	Total sample	Moved/ gone away	Refusals/ non- response	Valid responses	Effective response (%)
1987	3,061	156	1,080	1,825	62.8
1990	3,606	125	1,461	2,020	58.0
1993	4,950	137	1,790	3,023	62.8
1996	3,000	95	1,117	1,788	61.5
1998	3,502	136	1,469	1,867	56.4
1999	6,150	234	2,575	3,341	56.5
2001	4,000	369	1,621	2,010	55.4

Effective response rate estimated as: valid responses/(total sample—moved or gone away).

The sample is drawn by the Australian Electoral Commission from their computerised rolls (with the exception of one state, where the sample had to be manually drawn in 1987 and 1990). Respondents are then mailed on the Monday following the federal election (which is held on a Saturday). The envelopes contain an individually-addressed and signed letter explaining the purposes of the study and a guarantee of confidentiality, the questionnaire, and a return postage-paid envelope. One week later all respondents are mailed a thank you/reminder postcard; this postcard has a considerable impact on the response rate.

- Wave 1 Questionnaire, letter Week 1
- Wave 2 Thank you/reminder postcard Week 2
- Wave 3 Questionnaire, letter Week 5
- Wave 4 (1987 only) Final letter Week 7

About three weeks following Wave 2, a second follow-up of all respondents who had by that time not returned questionnaires or who had not indicated that they wished to be excluded from the study is mailed. The follow-up envelope consists, once again, of an individually-addressed and signed letter re-stating the purposes of the study and emphasising confidentiality, another questionnaire, and a return post-paid envelope. In the 1987 survey a fourth and final wave was used, consisting of a letter. However, this elicited comparatively few extra responses and was not considered cost-effective; it has not been used in the post-1987 surveys.

These extensive follow-ups, summarised below, account for the comparatively high response rates of the AES surveys, bearing in mind the self-completion methodology. The survey remains in the field for about 8 weeks; the bulk of the responses are received following waves 1 and 2.

Candidates. The candidates surveys are conducted in parallel with the surveys of voters; a survey was not conducted in 1998. In 1987 all candidates for the (lower) House of Representatives and (upper house) Senate were sampled. Since 1990 the surveys have been restricted to samples of all major party candidates, plus identifiable green and other environmental candidates. This restriction was designed to cut costs, since about half of the total number of candidates were minor party or independent candidates, almost all of whom lost their deposits.

The 1987-2001 AES Candidate Surveys

	<u>Election candidates</u>		<u>Candidate surveys</u>			
	House of Reps	Senate	Total	Total	Valid responses	Effective response (%)
1987	613	255	868	868	612	70.5
1990	782	223	1,005	631	410	65.0
1993	943	266	1,209	593	415	70.0
1996	908	255	1,163	672	427	63.5
2001	1,039	285	1,324	840	477	56.8

Effective response rate estimated as: valid responses/(total sample—moved or gone away).

The survey instruments are mailed to candidates about one week after the election. As in the voters’ survey, the envelopes contain an individually-addressed and signed letter explaining the purposes of the study and a guarantee of confidentiality, the questionnaire, and a return postage-paid envelope. In addition, a letter of introduction from the candidate’s political party is usually included. Approximately one week later a thank you/reminder postcard is mailed to all those included in the survey. A follow-up of all survey respondents who do not return questionnaires or who do not indicate that they wish to be excluded from the study is conducted about six weeks after the election.

The candidates surveys are concerned with political background such as electoral history, party political involvement and membership of community organisations; questions relating to the role of the elected representative, the conduct of the election campaign and the party selection process; the deciding factors that resulted in them standing for election, and the support they received from family, friends and various subgroups. A major component of the candidate survey is to replicate attitudinal questions asked of the voters. This enables us to bring a unique perspective to bear on the election, by examining not only how voters evaluated election issues, but the perspectives that party elites brought to bear on them and, most important of all for public policy outcomes, the views of federal elected representatives.

The 2001 Online Survey

An innovative component of the 2001 AES was the use of an online poll, conducted during the course of the election campaign and replicating many of the questions in the post-election self-completion survey. While the online respondents differed in expected ways from their offline counterparts in terms of their socioeconomic status (young,

better educated, and so on), the online survey proved to be the most reliable of all of the surveys conducted during the election campaign in predicting the result. This finding also confirms the experience of the online poll conducted by the British Election Study during the 2001 general election.

The 2001 Election Result and the AES Estimate

	Election result	AES offline	AES online
Liberal Party	37.4	42.3	44.0
National Party	5.6	4.1	2.2
(Total Coalition)	(43.0)	(46.4)	(46.2)
Australian Labor Party	37.8	37.2	36.0
Australian Democrats	5.4	5.5	9.3
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	4.3	3.6	2.8
Greens	4.4	5.3	3.1
Others	5.1	2.1	2.6
(N)		(1,856)	(1,696)

The election result is the first preference vote in the House of Representatives. Offline question: 'In the federal election for the House of Representatives on Saturday 10 November, which party did you vote for first in the House of Representatives?' Online estimates combine those who had decided and those who were inclined to vote for a party.

Analyses of the online and offline surveys showed that whether respondents were sampled online or offline was largely irrelevant in shaping their responses to questions concerning voting and partisanship (and, we would assume, in their responses to other political matters as well). What did shape the responses, to a degree, was the fact that respondents who were sampled online differed from respondents who did not have access to the internet. In other words, there appears to be no mode effect associated with sampling the respondents online.

Online, web-based surveys are probably some years away from being a viable method for the conduct of national election surveys; as such, they are similar to the position of telephone polling in the 1960s or early 1970s. When internet penetration rises to 80 percent or more, online polling will become a viable methodology. But online polling has immediate and important implications for campaign polling and rolling cross-sections, which are currently usually conducted by phone. The cost efficiency, speed, and large sample size that can be gained from internet polling makes it an ideal methodology for a rolling cross-section.

Summary

The major advantages of the AES methodology are threefold:

(1) *Cost efficiency.* The total cost of each of the surveys, including the voters and candidates components, is around \$US30k, or about \$US10 per completed interview. This includes all printing and postage costs, coding of occupation and other open-ended questions, data punching, cleaning and the preparation of documentation. The data collection is, therefore, highly cost effective, particularly when compared to telephone or personal interview surveys with a similar national coverage.

(2) *Comprehensive coverage.* The mail self-completion methodology obviates the problems of distance (and cost) in a country which has 11 million voters but is geographically larger than the United States. For example, Australia has the largest parliamentary constituency in the world: Kalgoorlie has 70,000 voters and is about the size of France. The mail methodology means that we can cover a representative sample of all voters, no matter where they reside across the continent, without any requirement for stratification. By comparison, cost considerations mean that few, if any, personal interview surveys sample much beyond the capital cities.

(3) *Reliability.* Because both electoral enrolment and voting are compulsory in Australia, the sampling frame is very reliable, and since turnout is usually in the region of 95 percent, there are few problems in estimating vote and other key political variables.

The perceived disadvantages of the methodology are twofold:

(1) *Response bias.* The presence of many immigrants in the population with poor English skills, and the possibility that individuals other than the nominated respondent will actually complete the questionnaire, mean that there is the risk of response bias. We have tested for this possibility but found little evidence of bias. The proportion of non-English speaking born immigrants in the sample corresponds closely to the proportions found within the electorate. Similarly, other studies have found that less than 10 percent of questionnaires in a mailed self-completion survey are completed by a person other than the nominated respondent.

(2) *Long fieldwork period.* The survey usually remains in the field for about two months. This is also the case with many personal interview post election surveys, but there is the fear that such prolonged periods of fieldwork can lead to bias, since voter recall may fade and other political events may contaminate the respondent's opinions. We have found little evidence that later responses are biased compared to those which are mailed back in the fortnight following the election. Overall, the recalled vote proportions in the survey are usually within ± 2 percent of the actual result.

American Electoral Behavior Workshop
National Science Foundation
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Comments by Kathleen M. McGraw
The Ohio State University

I start with a confession, and that is that I approach this workshop and the assigned discussion points as something of an outsider: I have never made use of NES data in my research. This is definitely not a reflection of my views about the validity, utility, or potential of the extraordinarily rich NES survey data, but rather a function of personal substantive interests that largely lay outside the purview of election studies and methodological preferences for investigating those interests. I have a healthy respect for the contributions the NES has made to political science scholarship, a respect substantially enhanced by poking around the NES website in preparation for thinking about the issue at hand, and formulating these brief comments.

Obviously, we are at a critical juncture in terms of the future of the election studies. Legitimate commitments to sustained continuity in the core need to be balanced with calls for greater innovation in instruments and design, and the challenges associated with survey non-response, mode effects, and sampling need to be resolved. To a large extent, it is premature to make prescriptive statements about the future substantive directions that the NES might take before these foundational issues are resolved. I fear that any specific recommendations will have the characteristics of a personal wish list rather than based on an impartial canvassing of unanswered scholarly questions.

My comments revolve around two issues listed in the suggested talking points for this section of the workshop. I steer clear of the fundamental design questions because other workshop attendants have addressed those concerns with more clarity and expertise that I can muster.

ANES and the Social (and Cognitive) Psychological Literature

There is little doubt that the field of public opinion has benefitted from a self-conscious borrowing from social psychology, particularly social cognitive psychology (which is more or less redundant). However, there are probably natural limits to the extent to which this explicit borrowing is viable or useful, and in fact we may be moving to a period of waning psychological influence, at least in terms of direct applications of social psychological theory to political questions. Note that I didn't allege a waning of political psychology per se, but rather am suggesting a decline in the direct and explicit application of psychological theory to the study of public opinion. This is a healthy development. It is probably no coincidence that some of the more provocative and important recent contributions to the public opinion literature (eg, Lacy's model of nonseparable preferences, Berinsky's work on silent voices, Alvarez & Brehm's work on ambivalence) are psychologically, politically, and statistically astute analyses that are not derived from the latest work published in JPSP. In fact, we may be moving into a new era of synergy, where political scientists working in the areas of public opinion and electoral behavior both draw on, and more importantly, contribute to basic psychological theory. In this new era, truly interdisciplinary theorizing and collaboration in the political psychology of public opinion and electoral behavior will be valued. There are increasing numbers of scholars in social psychology who are sincerely interested in moving outside the sterile confines of their laboratories to more realistic venues to test the implications and boundary conditions of their theories. The future NES should be poised to take advantage of these interdisciplinary opportunities.

Now for the wish list. Certainly there are major, important areas of emphasis in social cognitive psychology where survey-based instrumentation is unsuitable. I have in mind the developments in social cognitive neuroscience (in Dan Gilbert's terms, the study of "how brains make minds") and implicit cognition (the study of cognitive processes

outside of awareness and conscious control). However, there are a number of areas of mutual interest, where the interdisciplinary synergy could flourish. In no particular order of importance (and with a grain of salt):

- The social psychological study of groups and collectives has been recently re-invigorated (under the rather unfortunate conceptual label of entitativity), and clear links could be developed between these theoretical frameworks and the study of important political collectives like parties and institutions. The NES has made sporadic forays into investigating public opinion about political collectives, but only sporadic. There are important issues at stake here, involving representation and legitimacy, inter- and intra-institutional conflict, as well as implications for voting and turnout
- One of the critical theoretical contributions of the NES has been to further our understanding of the principled basis of public opinion and vote choice, through instrumentation aimed at tapping core American values. Evidence that political preferences are rooted in core values goes to the very heart of one of the central dilemmas in the study of public opinion, namely the Converse non-attitudes thesis. That is, if citizens have stable, deeply held values that guide their political thinking and choices (as the evidence suggests they do), then the non-attitudes thesis is problematic, as is the Zaller and Feldman revisionary model. We could do a better job of assessing a larger set of core values (and priorities amongst them), which would facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics between core values, political attitudes and electoral choices. Relevant to this point is a broadening of our understanding of core values to include self-interest. We have a tendency to differentiate between values and self-interest, but this is a false dichotomy, if we take values to mean (as they are consensually understood) conceptions of the desirable.
- Developing psychologically valid models of voting as choice. I am struck by the fact that most of the theoretical developments in “Explaining the Vote” (documented in the first section of impressive *NES Contributions to Scholarship*) adopt candidate-centered models, ie, models of the ingredients of judgments about candidates, taken one at a time. This is entirely consistent with the candidate-centered view of politics, and more relevant to this point, with social psychological models of *person* perception (with an emphasis on the singular person). But ultimately, most of the time political scientists are interested in political candidates when citizens have to choose between, or amongst, two or more, when they have to make comparisons across a candidate set. We haven’t gone very far in developing and testing theoretical models that specify when and how the elements of choice and comparison influence the voting calculus, and the processes that precede it. This is an area to which the behavioral decision making literature is more likely to speak than traditional areas of social psychology.
- Rather than re-iterating what Diana noted in her comments about the importance of social networks and communication, I will simply concur.

Adjudicating the Predictive Differences between Economics and Psychology

This is obviously a complex issue, and one that is really more a question of theory rather than substance. One of the notable strengths of the NES has been its theoretical flexibility, and subsequent hospitality to scholars approaching the study of electoral politics from a wide range of theoretical perspectives. The PI-s and Board of Overseers have been creative in drawing upon theoretical and conceptual developments throughout the social sciences in developing the instruments, and at the same time the resulting data have been crucial for developing and extending political theories of voters, elections, and public opinion. This theoretical flexibility is appropriate because the NES is a public good. However, theoretical flexibility comes with some costs, and one of them is a diminished ability to adjudicate among competing theoretical claims with any degree of precision. This is a cost that is augmented by the survey methodology itself, which does not lend itself to rigorous tests of causality or process mechanisms. Take, by way of example, the NES measures of emotional reactions to the candidates. Undoubtedly the addition of these indicators

has contributed to our understanding of ingredients of candidate evaluation, and has invigorated the discipline's interest in the emotional foundations of public opinion. But the NES design and instrumentation are unable to adjudicate among many competing theories of emotions (breaking down, essentially, into theories that argue that emotions are consequences of cognitive appraisals v. theories that argue that emotions are the casual antecedents of cognitive processes v. theories that argue that emotions and cognition are independent processes). To be clear the purpose of this example is not to criticize the NES emotion instruments but simply to argue that our ability to understand with how, when and why emotions matter will require additional investigations using different methodological techniques that build upon the basic relationships identified in the NES surveys.

All of this is by way of leading up to a question about the premise of this discussion point, namely why the NES should be charged with adjudicating between psychological and economic theories of judgment and choice. The NES faces substantial challenges in terms of balancing the desire to maintain a continued commitment to the core and the time series with a need to incorporate more systematically temporal (i.e, campaign) and spatial (i.e, contextual) parameters. Certainly, we should continue to expect the NES to be informed by psychological and economic theories, when relevant to key substantive concerns. And, we should continue to work towards using the substantive results and theoretical developments derived from the NES data to feedback and contribute to the parent disciplines. But it would be a mistake to deviate from the essential political concerns of the election studies, namely the scientific study of voters, elections, and public opinion, to enter into turf battles between psychologists and economists.

Let me try to address this point in a more positive and constructive fashion, and that is that it seems to me that we are moving beyond petty sniping between political economists and political psychologists to an era of convergence and common ground. The same convergence is occurring in the views of psychologists and experimental economists, more generally. To be sure, there are clear areas of difference: psychologists are more likely to be interested in the details and processes of individual decision making, while economists are more likely to be interested in how markets and strategic environments influence outcomes. Ultimately, these disciplinary foci are two sides of the same coin, and it is the two sides of the coin that political scientists really care about. Political scientists of various intellectual persuasions are increasingly cognizant of the need to integrate internalist accounts of individual cognitive processes with externalist accounts that take seriously the constraints imposed by the political context, including elite strategies such as campaigns and institutional mechanism (the internalist/externalist language is from Jackman and Sniderman, 2002; see also Jervis, 2002; Lupia, McCubbins, and Popkin, 2000; McGraw, 2003).

Understanding these dynamics (signaling and perception) goes to the heart of political campaigns and electoral politics, and it is in the convergence of disciplinary perspectives that these dynamics will eventually be understood.

Diana Mutz, Ohio State University

In some respects, the potential for innovative and groundbreaking research on American elections has never been greater. As a result of the 2000 election, the general public is convinced that voting can truly matter in determining political outcomes. At the same time, scholars' ability to execute complex and sophisticated analyses of election data has greatly increased since the early election studies of the 1940s. If scholars needed convincing that the topic was important, they do no longer. Moreover, the vacuum left by the failure of VNS to provide exit poll data after the most recent elections further highlighted the desire to understand more about election outcomes than margins of victory can provide. The fundamental importance of this topic, as well as the timing of these events, suggest an opportunity to rethink how the study of American national elections might be structured to ensure that potential is translated into concrete opportunities for researchers. Toward that end, I highlight several general themes that emerge in my thinking about the past and future of the American National Election Studies project, and in thinking about the purposes that social scientists would most like it to serve. I do this first, and then follow this by addressing issues related to the substance of election research, our original assignment.

General Issues

The need for innovation in election research. The National Election Studies have been of unquestionable importance in documenting trends over time. For over 50 years, it has offered scholars an unusually rich and consistent overtime record of American electoral behavior. And yet, precisely because of that strength in continuity, most scholars concur that the NES survey is not the place to try something completely new and innovative with respect to studying elections. For these purposes, another venue is required, not so much a different physical venue as a branch of the National Election Studies endeavor that has innovation as its explicit goal. Although the pilot studies were funded in part for those purposes, their goal was more narrow in its focus on innovation that might improve the time series. Finding a better way to institutionalize the encouragement of general innovation in this area would be high on my list of priorities for the future of the NES.

The need for greater methodological diversity. Most agree that scientific progress is best served by methodological pluralism. For this reason I think that we probably need to move away from the "one size fits all" model of electoral data collection. For many people, "voting studies" and research on American elections conjures up a very narrow, unnecessarily specific image. It has become closely associated in scholars' minds with a particular methodological approach to studying voting and public opinion—the large-scale, cross-sectional survey—rather than with the study of elections per se.

My hope is that an innovation-oriented component of the larger election research project could be self-consciously pluralist in methodology. Although a great deal of lip service is given to the value of methodological pluralism these days, election research has never been a strong candidate for achieving that goal. We teach our graduate students that the study design should be driven by the research question rather than the other way around. Designs are only "best" with respect to studying particular hypotheses. Yet this is obviously more difficult to accomplish with a study design when it is a collective good, to be used for many diverse purposes. Nonetheless, in reorganizing the NES I see opportunities for methodological diversification that should be taken advantage of.

For example, it has always seemed somewhat futile to me to try to study a long-term, overtime process such as political socialization or changes in party identification over time using cross-sectional data on adult citizens. There are a some data sets spanning longer periods of time produced by small groups of scholars that are better geared to accomplish this process, but such opportunities tend to be few and far between. "We do the best with what we have available," is a well-worn phrase on many journal pages. A long-term, panel design would be ideal for purposes of studying parent-child, and child to adult evolution of party. Thus an alternative that might better support our long-term understanding would be to piggyback relevant items onto the ongoing National Longitudinal Surveys. Because

this organization also has as a goal increasing the number of scholars who use their data, sharing resources is likely to serve both organizations' interests.

The need for greater disciplinary diversity. It is also important to widen the range of people who make input into thinking about elections. In most departments, the study of American voting behavior is seen as a subfield within the field of American politics, within the larger discipline of political science. It is not seen as an overarching or unifying topic that brings together people of different theoretical and methodological interests. And yet I think it could be. Especially given a topic of such broad significance to so many different branches of social science, historical, psychological, sociological, economic, and so forth, it is unfortunate that a greater diversity of perspectives has not been brought to bear on the study of elections.

The need for greater breadth in key outcomes of elections that are studied. As has been noted by scholars from time to time, there is a general dearth of interesting dependent variables outside of who votes for whom. And yet, the selection of a winner may be one of the least important outcomes of American elections. For understandable reasons, winners and losers have always been the primary focus of election research. To be clear, many other concepts have also served well as dependent variables over the years – efficacy, levels of information, participation and so forth. But to a large extent the interest in these variables has been as a result of their role in mediating a process leading to voting/non-voting, and/or voting for a particular candidate. The process of running campaigns and holding elections may have important costs and benefits even for those who never take part in them personally. Thus it may be beneficial for us to turn our attention to developing new dependent variables that can provide useful overtime information about the health of American democracy. Although elections are generally treated as short-term events by social scientists, more importantly elections are long-term experiments in the ongoing process of lending legitimacy to government. New dependent variables should be devised that focus on outcomes such as legitimacy, and how well elections function on an ongoing basis as a communication device between citizens and their political leaders. An overly narrow focus on what makes people vote the way they do may risk further criticism of the kind the first election studies faced – that they were essentially glorified market research. Through the NES, future scholars can and should play an important public role in shaping the interpretation of election outcomes.

The Substance of Election Research

First, I should probably state for the record that I do not think it is possible for any of us here today to do an especially good or even an adequate job of predicting what the most appropriate substantive content for the NES should be 10 to 15 years down the road. The theoretical frameworks we use to understand electoral behavior will inevitably change with time, as will the important substantive questions. With that caveat in mind, I will comment on a few of the broad areas that were outlined for discussion today.

Social networks and informal communication. Studies of social networks and social context have proliferated in recent years as scholars have come (back) to a more sociological perspective on voting decisions. Although I find this area of great interest personally, I think the traditional NES survey would be a difficult place in which to incorporate the routine collection of data on social networks. Identifying members of individuals' social networks requires a sizable list of questions for each respondent, and still more items must be included to ascertain key characteristics of respondents' network members. When this is accomplished through self-report, still more methodological issues arise that require interviewing network members and so forth.

At the same time, I think conceptualizations of the American voter have been under-socialized virtually ever since the original election studies. It is ironic that all these years later, we might long for data of the type that was collected in the 1940s and 50s, but the sociological branch of election-oriented research appeared to pass by the wayside along

with Paul Lazarsfeld and Bernard Berelson, and it has not been revisited in a major, systematic way. While I can't see social network measures being integrated with the NES on an ongoing biennial basis, regular periodic studies of social/political networks —perhaps at longer intervals — would go a long way toward improving our knowledge of sociological influences on elections.

In addition, the ongoing time series easily could be used to shed light on closely-related processes of contextual influence by facilitating the matching of context-specific information with individual voters in the surveys. This can be done in a variety of different ways these days, depending upon the source of contextual information (census, election returns, etc.), but to my knowledge it has not generally been part of the standard data released to scholars by the NES. It is worth noting that the general topic of social influences on voting would be a natural for attracting an interdisciplinary group of scholars. Social networks already are studied by mathematicians, philosophers, sociologists, and economists, as well as political scientists. But for the most part from the literature I have seen, sociologists and political scientists have been most concerned with networks per se, and other disciplines have leaned more toward contextual approaches in which aggregated data on the social environment is used as a basis from which to infer that social interaction has transpired and produced influence. Although there are obvious problems with such assumptions from a social-psychological standpoint, it is admittedly far more feasible on a large scale than the kind of social network research that involves extensive interviewing of respondents and their discussants.

Social psychology and rational choice in election research. As has been noted too many times to count, cross-sectional surveys are not the best way to study black box psychological processes. But political psychologists are nonetheless drawn to elections and election data because of their fundamental importance. To my mind, the most important substantive work using NES data to promote a social psychological understanding of elections has been the work focused broadly on the study of information processing and persuasion. Since information flow is of central importance to campaigns, I suspect this emphasis will continue, but it will get more difficult to study as the diversity of information sources available makes it difficult to sort out self-selection and impact from information.

I think we will continue moving away from a perspective on campaigns that emphasizes strictly what people learn and how it leads to particular opinions, toward a more affective emphasis. Much of psychology and neurology has moved toward acknowledging the intertwining of cognition and affect, yet our attempts to measure emotional reactions in the context of election campaigns have been feeble (and heavily cognitive) at best.

Another area in which I see increasing convergence is the study of campaigns designed for other purposes and political campaigns. Just as citizens must weigh risks and benefits in making other choices in daily life (e.g., health risks), they do so as well in making political decisions. Risk perception might be a highly appropriate interdisciplinary theme as it overlaps social psychology, economics, political science and communication. The literature on diffusion of innovations, which focuses on the spread of news ideas and behaviors, also provides extensive insights that may contribute to our social-psychological understanding of electoral behavior.

In my mind, elections are a heavily applied topic in political science. Because elections can be located in time as concrete events, they are and probably need to continue to be much more applied than studies of public opinion, for example, which has been more of a hypothetical construct from the start. From the perspective of someone who does political psychology, I don't think there would be much opposition to these types of approaches if (and only if) the modeling explains behavior in terms of rational choices that can, at least to an approximation, be carried out. There must be a plausible mechanism by which agents with realistic levels of information may carry out the strategies that are rationally indicated. If political scientists have a beef with rational choice scholars, I would say this is often at the heart of it. In order to make contributions to this heavily applied topic, formal modelers will probably need to move further in the direction of finding ways to incorporate more realistic assumptions about voting behavior in their models.

Improving the Study of Communication Processes During Elections. If one believes, as I do, that elections are at a fundamental level about communication processes, then we should be making a better effort to study those communication processes in a systematic way. This nagging substantive problem in the field of election research clearly has not gone away, even after 50 plus years of election research. In fact, I think it is fair to say that it has festered and become a far more pressing problem in the interim. Most scholars believe that communication, and mass communication in particular, is essential to understanding a range of election outcomes from information acquisition to persuasion. And yet I think it is fair to say that with a few exceptions, many of the most important breakthroughs in this area have not come from NES data. Moreover, the solution to this problem is not as easy as simply having NES add a few more questions to the national survey. Because of the tremendous difficulties with self-report data on mass media exposure, the most important strides in understanding political communication's effects on mass behavior often have come from experimental studies that were able to control who saw what so that reasonable causal arguments could be made. While I am all for laboratory experiments, and I use them quite a bit in my own work, I would never advocate relying exclusively on laboratory evidence to understand communication's effects on voting behavior.

For this reason I think it is essential that the NES incorporate the collection of mass media content during elections as part of its mission. I realize all too well the difficulty involved in content analyses on a large scale. But given the advances in data storage and retrieval systems over the past 10 years, it would not be beyond feasibility for collections of media content to be gathered and made available to social scientists on disk. The design of this collection effort would obviously need to be fleshed out – what kind of media and what kind of sample over what period of time, etc. But I think this would go a long way toward encouraging scholars to do work in this area by eliminating the major practical difficulty involved. I should be clear that I do not think NES should take responsibility for coding and analyzing huge amounts of media content so that actual data on media content can be made available to scholars. Coding schemes are so heavily dependent on the research question at hand that I think such efforts would be of limited use. Nonetheless, by making some raw materials easily available to those who want to pursue their own hypotheses, NES will be able to advance this area of study by providing opportunities to study theories that previously seemed insurmountable to many scholars.

Beyond helping us to understand the importance of media in the political process, studying media also seems essential to me for purposes of studying social influences on voting. For better or worse, today's mass media form a social environment that is one of the main ways people learn about what other people are thinking politically. Given that politics is not a major topic of face to face discussion in the US, media are of unquestionable importance in establishing a sense of one's social environment and in serving as a basis for social comparison.

Conclusion. What I advocate is, in most general terms, a call for greater breadth along a number of important dimensions. To summarize, this is an excellent time to revitalize the study of American elections through a reorganization that draws on the strength and continuity of the existing National Election Studies, but also broadens its mission to better represent the many scholars likely to be interested in this topic. At this point, I do not have a particular organizational structure in mind for the future of the NES, but it seems important that whatever structure is selected ideally be capable of accomplishing the following:

- I. Continue to extend the basics of the time series
- II. Establish organizational structure and funding to accommodate election research utilizing other kinds of data and designs, interdisciplinary input, and periodic emphasis on more sociological, psychological or economic perspectives.
- III. Structure the research process to take place on more of an ongoing rather than a cyclical basis. NES itself has always been an ongoing operation, but studying political choices should probably be an ongoing enterprise as well.
- IV. Incorporate linking of data corresponding to the interpersonal and mass communication environments people inhabit during elections

February 10, 2003
Future Design Recommendations for ANES
Robert Santos, NuStats

Henry Brady and I have been asked to lead a discussion on design recommendations for the ANES. In fact, the draft workshop agenda provides a listing of potential topics for discussion. These include:

- a. Order/Wording Effects
- b. Incorporating Cognitive Psychology/Economics Into Survey Design
- c. Time Series Studies
- d. Continuous Monitoring Studies
- e. State-based samples (mid-term)

Design recommendations in these areas may be useful at some point in our discussion. However, I believe that it is unwise to proffer any design recommendations without first considering the research questions or research objectives that will form the foundation of the American National Electorate Study over the next ten years. This seems to be the appropriate starting point and springboard for design innovations and enhancements.

At the time that this essay was prepared, I consulted the mission of the NES (I was unable to find one for the “American National Electorate Study” per se). I reproduce it here to provide context for later discussion:

Mission: The mission of the National Election Studies (NES) is to produce high quality data on voting, public opinion, and political participation that serve the research needs of social scientists, teachers, students, policy makers and journalists concerned with the theoretical and empirical foundations of mass politics in a democratic society. Central to this mission is the active involvement of the NES research community in all phases of the project from study planning through data analysis. The NES time-series now encompasses 23 biennial election studies spanning five decades. The longevity of the NES time-series greatly enhances the utility of the data, since measures can be pooled over time, and both long-term trends and the political impact of historical events can be identified.

The ANES should, at a minimum, carry on this mission. This would necessarily involve continuation of the NES series of data collections. The mission is sufficiently broad to allow ample flexibility so that the survey may address timely issues that arise as election years approach.

With regard to topical areas, the NES has historically focused on a standard set of issues. NES documentation states that the National Science Foundation (NSF) established the National Election Studies to extend the time-series collection of core data. NSF sought to continue the generation of data pertaining to citizen’s social background, political predispositions, underlying social and political values, contemporary perceptions and evaluations of relevant groups and would-be leaders, opinions on questions of public policy, and participation in political life. Finally, the ANES is relatively unique in that its specific research questions are determined through a process that seeks input from the research community. This includes identification of special topics for a given survey, the preservation of core content, and the conduct of pilot studies aimed at improving the measurement of public opinion and political participation.

Design Issues: With this context in mind, I offer a number of thoughts and recommendations related to ANES design, not all of which coincide with the items (a) - (e) listed at the beginning of this essay. The design recommendations appear in no particular order.

- (1) It is imperative to preserve the NES time series; any recommendation regarding design changes should ensure this design requirement is preserved.
- (2) It is recommended that NSF revisit the mission & research objectives of the ANES. Since funding is always limited, it is important to seek “value-added” design enhancements. Topical areas that could benefit from design enhancement are:
 - Priority of preserving the time series; this has generally been acknowledged as having paramount importance; should this continue to be the case?
 - Composition of the “core content”; should it be contracted? (Contraction would allow for more latitude in the investigation of “timely” issues)
 - Value and role of qualitative research to enhance the utility of the ANES (this includes one-on-one, in-depth interviews as well as focus groups); qualitative research can provide valuable, rich contextual information that can facilitate the development of theory (in a way that quantitative data alone cannot)
- (3) The ANES must adapt to the ever-changing demographics of the US. For instance, Hispanics are now the largest minority in the U.S. The nation is growing in cultural and linguistic diversity. Some research suggests that concepts, constructs, and question wording are sensitive to cultural and linguistic diversity. Past NES were conducted in English only (although this may have changed in more recent surveys). Attention should be given to language and cultural minorities and their role in the NES. Design implications include sampling, instrumentation, question wording, translations, data collection mode, field protocols, data processing (e.g., coding open ended responses), and possibly even the interpretation of analyses.
- (4) Consider the value-added of a concomitant survey of candidates at the federal and possibly state level (or some manner of systematic data collection from a representative sample that does not need to involve a survey where respondents undergo interviews, e.g., elicitation of information regarding candidate platforms).
- (5) If analyses of change over time are deemed important, the ANES design should incorporate a rotating panel design. This increases the precision of estimates of temporal change, but also allows a point-in-time analysis of a cross-section of the population (which is important because voting eligibility is dynamic over time, with new entrants as well as those who relinquish or lose voting rights).
- (6) The NES pilot studies should be continued as a mechanism for improving survey methodology of the NES. The pilot studies should incorporate experimentation and investigations that transcend sample surveys as a data collection methodology. The NES pilots should include cognitive interviewing, focus groups, and other qualitative methods as well as the usual split ballot sample surveys, follow-up studies, validation studies, etc.
- (7) NES should prepare for future technological innovations. There is no question that by the next generation, a sizeable and quite possibly a majority of the population will have access to the internet, to wireless communication, etc. Thus, the NES should explore and experiment with web-based data collection and other methods that exploit emerging technology.
- (8) NSF should consider the merits of establishing a longer research window — one that essentially tracks the formation and maturation of political preferences during election season. This would be a radical change. The NES might be composed of a six distinct one-month population surveys of 500 citizens, spanning (say) the months of June through November, inclusive. To enhance estimates of change over time, a portion of the sample (e.g., one fifth) could be part of a rotating panel.

These are the design issues that I offer for consideration. There are sure to be many others. It is important to assess design recommendations in relation to how they support the explicit research objectives of the NES as well as their budgetary implications (since funding is always an ever-present limitation).

**The American National Election Study:
the case for a comparative focus on turnout**

**Richard Sinnott
Department of Politics
and
Institute for the Study of Social Change
University College Dublin**

Introduction

This note takes a very selective interpretation of the guidelines and discussion points circulated to contributors. Ignoring all of the points except the reference to substantive themes, it focuses on the question of turnout and makes a plea for the inclusion of comparative, individual-level studies of turnout in the 10 year plan for the American

National Election Study. It also takes a convenient interpretation of the term “essay” as used in the guidelines, treating it as a licence to dispense with references, footnotes etc.

Why turnout? Turnout and abstention pose problems that are intellectually interesting, policy-relevant and particularly amenable to comparative analysis. For obvious reasons, however, the major focus of national election studies has been on the determinants of vote choice. Looked at from a comparative perspective, a focus on electoral choice as the dependent variable presents particularly knotty problems. This is because the dependent variable is radically different depending on whether the system is presidential or parliamentary, federal or unitary, and on a whether elections are conducted via first-past-the-post, majority, list-PR (in various guises) or PR-STV electoral systems. Other contributors to this session of the workshop will no doubt deal with these and other related issues. Moreover, the CSES enterprise has embarked on a systematic attempt to untangle these knots. But it ain't easy.

By contrast, turnout/abstention as a dependent variable presents itself (initially) as a simple and straightforward dichotomy, that, because it is marked by substantial cross-country variation, ought to lend itself readily to comparative analysis.

However, all things are relative and, having drawn attention to the simplicity of the turnout variable, it is immediately necessary to acknowledge that it is not a simple dichotomy and to proceed to make basic distinctions between different kinds of abstention. Following the presentation of two such sets of distinctions, this note will then turn to the problem of making distinctions between, or classifying, the independent variables that affect turnout. The note will conclude with an effort at some joined-up thinking, that is with an effort to specify the relationships between the various types of influences on turnout that might then be tested in a comparative research programme.

Circumstantial versus voluntary abstention

When abstainers are asked about the reasons for their abstention, particularly when they are asked via an open-ended question, they tend to come up with two broad types of reasons. Examples of the first type are: being away from home, being ill, having commitments at work, being too busy, having family obligations, etc. The other main kinds of reasons given typically refer to not being interested, knowing nothing about politics, cynicism about political parties and/or the system, feeling that one's vote does not make any difference etc. These two kinds of reasons point to two different kinds of abstention - circumstantial abstention and voluntary abstention. The distinction is a crucial one because, if the circumstantial reasons given are valid, circumstantial abstainers ought to be no different from voters (except with respect to the circumstances that gave rise to the abstention) and lumping them in with voluntary abstainers as part of the dependent variable muddies the water.

General versus arena-specific abstention

In thinking about abstention, we also need to distinguish between those who abstain in all elections and those whose abstention is specific to particular types of electoral contest or electoral arena. This distinction only arises in systems of multi-level governance but then most contemporary systems of democratic governance are multi-level. In order to handle this aspect of the disaggregation of abstention into its various subtypes, we need a classification of types of electoral contest. This can be derived by cross-classifying two distinctions: a distinction between levels of governance (sub-national, national and supranational) with a distinction between various decision-making arenas (see Figure 1). Without going into detail, it is evident that in studying abstention it is vital to distinguish between those who abstain in particular electoral arenas and not in others.

Classifying the independent variables

In a much-quoted dictum, Aldrich has suggested that “voting is a low-cost, low-benefit activity”. If this is true, it follows that a small cost or a small benefit can swing the decision to vote or not to vote one way or the other. Since there are potentially many small costs and potentially many small benefits, electoral participation and abstention are open to being affected by a host of factors. The problem then becomes: How does one make sense of all these particular influences?

An obvious first step would be to categorise the influences so that each particular effect is a recognizable instance of some class of effects. If one could go on specify how these categories of effects might be related to turnout and to one another, one would have taken a second significant step in tackling the problem of how to handle the proliferation of variables affecting turnout.

One possible basis on which the many variables affecting turnout might be classified is the costs versus benefits distinction. This has the advantage of implying a causal mechanism of the kind envisaged in step two in the previous paragraph (the mechanism in this case being that the balance of costs and benefits determines the decision). The problem is that this classification is all right as far as it goes but it lacks content. As such it pushes the real questions back a stage, the real questions being what are the costs and what are the benefits and what give rise to each.

Blondel, Sinnott and Svensson among others suggest that the factors affecting turnout can be thought of in terms of facilitation and mobilization. This distinction has the merit of being related to the behavioural distinction noted above — that between circumstantial and voluntary abstention. High facilitation lowers circumstantial abstention and low facilitation increases it. Likewise high mobilization lowers voluntary abstention and low mobilization increases it. There are also potential interaction effects — high mobilization may overcome low facilitation or low mobilization may be offset by high facilitation.

The problem with the facilitation-mobilization distinction is that because of the obvious reference to the influence of institutions, regulations, parties and campaigns, it does not, at first sight, seem to be broad enough to encompass the full range of individual characteristics that may affect turnout. This leads to the question whether the distinction between facilitation and mobilization could be elaborated in a way that would integrate the various political, sociological, psychological and institutional variables present in the literature? A possible key to such elaboration is to recognize that facilitation and mobilization operate at two levels — the system-level and the individual-level. Cross classifying these two dichotomies (facilitation versus mobilization and system-level versus individual-level) provides a fourfold classification of variables affecting turnout (see Figure 2 and, for detailed illustration, Figure 3).

Facilitation at the system-level consists of two sub-sets of variables that are not usually put in the same box. The first is the set of practical administrative arrangements that govern the way in which the actual election itself is conducted (e.g., the presence or absence of compulsory voting, the day of polling, the hours of polling, the accessibility of the

polling station, postal voting etc.). But there is a second set of system-level variables that also facilitate voter participation, namely the factors that affect political communication in a society, such as the nature of the educational system, the stock of social capital, campaign funding arrangements and limits, the extent and depth of media coverage of politics and of the election, free television air-time, etc. Variables of this sort fall under the heading of facilitation because they make it easier or more difficult not, as with the usual focus associated with the concept of facilitation, to actually cast a vote but to undertake the preparations that are necessary in order to do so.

The problem with facilitation is that, in and of itself, it will not produce a single vote. No matter how easy voting or the preparation for voting becomes, unless there is some mobilizing factor it will not occur. Mobilizing factors at the system level include a range of institutions, political structures and collective actions that provide (or fail to provide) citizens with incentives to vote (e.g., parliamentary vs. presidential government, proportionality of electoral system, depth of political cleavages, campaign appeals, actions and events, media partisanship, etc).

Because of their institutional, structural or collective connotations, it is frequently assumed that the concepts of facilitation and mobilization refer exclusively to system-level phenomena that influence individuals but that could not be considered to have any individual-level embodiment. But this is to impose an unnecessary constraint on the applicability of the concepts. A moment's reflection shows that electoral participation is *facilitated* by the attributes of the individual — for example, level of education, level of media consumption, disposable time, residential stability, proximity to polling station etc. Cell b in Figure 1 (facilitation effects originating at the level of the individual) captures these effects, and in the process places within a coherent schema a set of variables, namely 'resources', that figure prominently in the literature.

There are also individual-level attributes that have the effect of *mobilizing* participation. These include prior political interest, partisan political knowledge, preferences, interests, party identification, party and candidate differentials and a variety of expressive gratifications that may be derived from voting. At a minimum, these characteristics of individuals are buttons waiting to be pressed by the system-level mobilization variables already discussed. But they are more than that. In the absence of any system-level mobilization, these attributes would impel some people to vote and it seems reasonable to classify such sources of an impulse to vote under the heading of mobilization, especially as they are ultimately the products of some previous process of mobilization at the system-level.

The next step is to consider the ways in which each of the four classes of independent variables might be directly or indirectly related to turnout/abstention. Figure 4 provides a graphical overview of these relationships, the details of which will be presented orally at the ANES workshop.

Figure 1: A typology of electoral contests in systems of multi-level governance

Decision-making arena

**An indirectly
elected
executive**

**A directly
elected
executive**

**A legislative
assembly**

**The electorate
as a whole**

Level of governance

Supranational			European Parliament elections	Referendums on EU issues (9 states)
National	Parliamentary elections	Elections of executive heads of state	Congressional elections	Referendums on national issues
Subnational	Regional/local government elections	Elections of state governors and city mayors	Elections to regional/local assemblies	State and local referendums

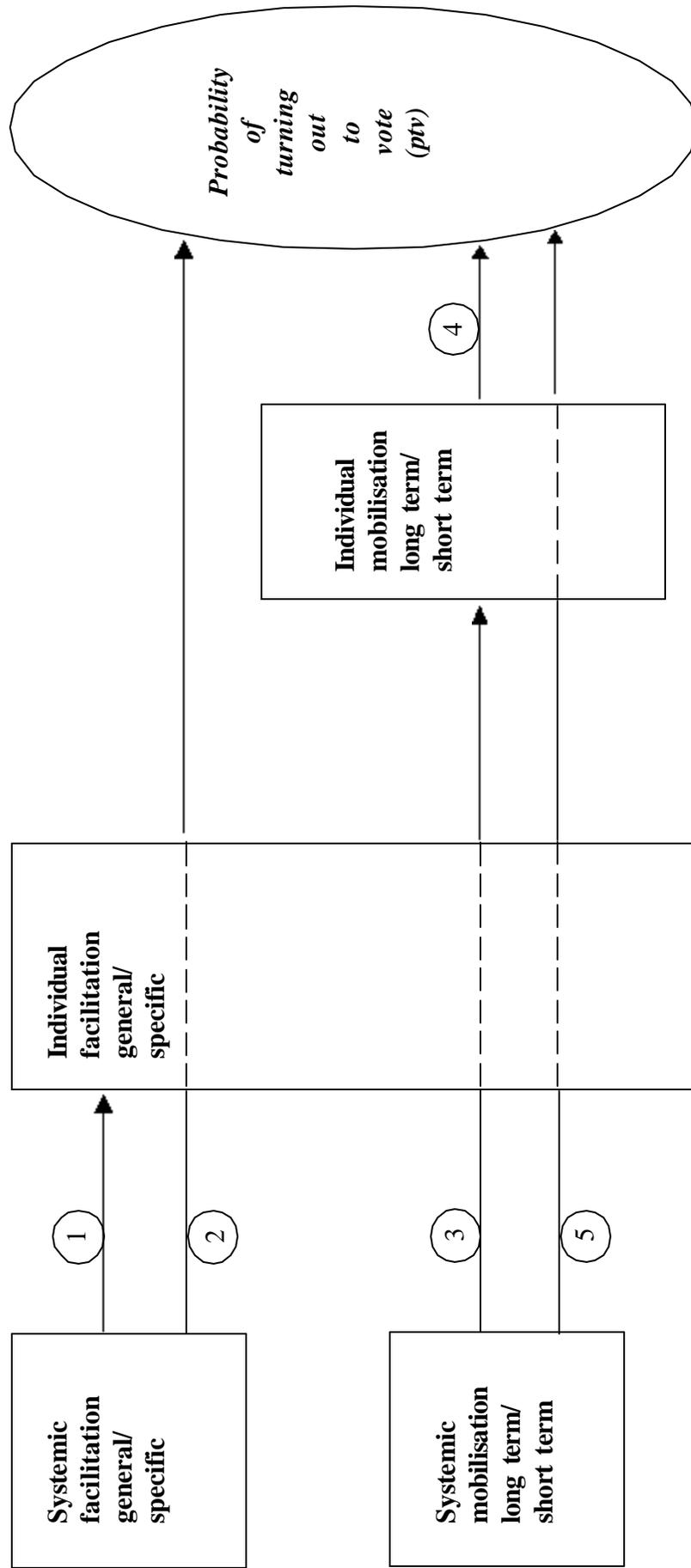
Figure 2: A typology of the variables affecting voter turnout

<i>Nature of the effect</i>	<i>Location of the variable</i>	
	Systemic	Individual
Facilitation	Systemic facilitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of prevailing social processes and of election administrative arrangements that make voting easier 	Individual facilitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of the characteristics of individual electors that make voting easier
Mobilisation	Systemic mobilisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections of state governors and city mayors 	Individual mobilisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and local referendums

Figure 3: A typology of the variables affecting voter turnout (with detail)

<i>Nature of the effect</i>	<i>Location of the variable</i>	
	Systemic	Individual
Facilitation	<p>Systemic facilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational capital • Social integration (capital) • Civiv education in schools • Funding of campaigns • Extent of media coverage • Ease of voter registration • Month of voting • Day of voting • Hours of polling • Density of polling stations • Ease of postal voting 	<p>Individual facilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of education • Social integration as communication • Media consumption • Political knowledge • Income • Age as life cycle effect • Occupation as resource • Occupation as time constraint • Residential stability • Ease of travel to polling station • Ease of access to polling station
Mobilisation	<p>Systemic mobilisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration/dispersal of power • Scope of governance • Electoral system effects • Electoral cycle effects • Referendums as issue-specific mobilisation • Party campaigns • Candidate campaigns • Group campaigns • Direction of media coverage of campaigns 	<p>Systemic mobilisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of power of gov • Perceptions of scope of gov • Age as political learning effect • Age as generational demobilisation effect • Occupation as stake in election • Sense of civic duty • Interest in politics • Trust in institutions • Social integration as mobilisation • Party attachment • Issue salience • Party differentials • Candidate differentials • Dissatisfaction with national government • Campaign exposure

Figure 4: A preliminary model of the influences affecting voter turnout



**American Electoral Behavior Workshop
Future Issues in Sampling: Methodological/Cost**

John Thompson²¹

Let me state up front how pleased I am to be a participant in this workshop. The NES program has a history of providing important information on American electoral behavior, and it has produced an outstanding collection of methodological research that goes well beyond the measurement of electoral behavior. This panel discussion is appropriately at the end of the workshop. Sampling designs should be developed to support the measurements and methodologies that are the basis for the conduct of a survey. Therefore it makes sense to discuss sampling issues after we have laid out the potential avenues for research in NES methodology. Preparing this essay in advance of viewing the many innovations that will be covered during the course of this workshop somewhat limits its direct applicability to support of the subject matter that will have been discussed prior to this panel. The scope of the panel discussion on future issues in sampling will certainly be expanded based on the results of the other methodological panels.

This document presents a general guide to future issues dealing with four areas of sampling for the NES – Clustering, RDD, probability sampling, and longitudinal panels. Implicit in considering any change to the NES sample must be the understanding that it represents a historical time series, and that any sampling design change must be considered in terms of potential impact on this understanding of electoral behavior.

Cluster Sampling

For the most part the NES has been based on a multi-stage area probability design drawn from the Survey Research Center national sample frame. The first stage primary sampling units (PSUs) are defined by SMSAs, counties or county groups. Several additional stages of sampling are conducted to ultimately select one respondent from a randomly selected housing unit. The interviews are then administered on a face-to-face basis. This kind of design is employed by other survey organizations including NORC and the U.S. Census Bureau. They are usually redesigned after each decennial census and put into use for the upcoming decade. An advantage of using this kind of “all purpose” sampling frame and selection methodology is that it is a cost effective way of maintaining and deploying a staff of interviewers to cover a wide array of surveys.

Concerns have been raised regarding the efficiency of this kind of design for measuring electoral behavior (Stoker and Bowers 2001). These authors discuss the advantages of using a sampling design based on a first stage selection of congressional districts stratified based on variables associated with the degree of uncertainty in the election

²¹ I would like to recognize the helpful discussions of these issues with the NORC staff including Rachel Harter, Colm O’Muircheartaigh, and Tom Smith.

outcome (e.g., incumbent member or whether the House race is competitive). They conclude that there are clear methodological advantages, particularly in studying Congressional elections, over the current NES design.

My own experiences at the Census Bureau generally support these conclusions²². Congressional districts are drawn as a result of political processes by experts in the understanding of local area voting behavior. In addition to assuring equal representation, considerations of forming homogeneous areas of voting behavior are also used. Congressional districts as well as precincts, where available, can serve as excellent candidates for first or second stage sampling units, respectively. Congressional districts are also redrawn for the most part every 10 years following the decennial census²³, and thus provide a level of stability.

However, Stoker and Bowers also recognize the cost and staffing inefficiencies that such designs would impose (Stoker and Bowers 2001). The NES, like many other surveys, must balance the potential gains in precision with the increase in costs from a more specialized sample design. More analysis of the potential gains from a congressional district sample would help inform any decision to change the definition of PSUs. (An analysis of the specific components of cost due to a less highly clustered design should also be considered.) Given the NES sample size and the costs of face-to-face interviewing, alternative data collection modes also should be considered in order to realize more of a cost benefit from any redefinition of PSUs. This leads to the next topic of telephone interviewing.

Telephone and RDD Sampling

Telephone interviewing based on either a list or RDD sample provides opportunities for designs less restricted by geographic clustering associated with face-to-face interviewing. For example, NORC has successfully used a combination of list and RDD sampling to provide community level estimates to support the evaluation of the effectiveness of selected health interventions sponsored by the Center for Disease Control²⁴. Applying these methodologies to a congressional district based design would be feasible and cost effective from an operational perspective²⁵.

It is clear that the NES recognizes the potential for cost savings that would result from the use of telephone interviewing. The NES has supported an extensive program of evaluation of telephone and RDD methodologies. Krosnick and Ellis 1999, Krosnick, Green, and Ellis 2002, Wessel, Rahn, and Rudolph 2000, and Holbrook, Green, and Krosnick 2002 are examples of this extensive research. Furthermore, the Board of Overseers of the National Election Study commissioned an outstanding panel of researchers to report in 1999 on the “State of Scientific Knowledge on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Telephone vs. Face-to-face Interviewing.” The 2000 NES included a large RDD component that should support continued analysis and quantification of telephone effects.

These studies provide results that describe important differences between the telephone and face-to-face modes of interviewing. The panel, “The Future of Information Collection (Mode Effects),” that will be lead by Roger Tourangeau, will have thoroughly covered these issues so they do not need to be repeated here. I would, however,

²² I was previously the Associate Director for Decennial Censuses. In this role, I worked closely with many Census 2000 stakeholders including those in the redistricting community. This resulted in some insights into the processes underlying the drawing of Congressional Districts.

²³ Occasionally a court challenge will result in a congressional district being redrawn during the period between censuses.

²⁴ The CDC Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH 2010) provides grants to agencies in specific communities aimed at eliminating health disparities among racial and ethnic groups. NORC is engaged in conducting surveys to measure the effectiveness of these programs. A dual frame methodology using both and RDD and list frame for telephone interviewing is used to provide community level estimates in a cost effective manner. These methodological topics will be presented at the upcoming Joint Statistical meetings in San Francisco, “Making Community Surveys Cost-Efficient,” organized by Rachel Harter of NORC.

²⁵ The combination of list and RDD can provide greater cost savings than a design solely based on RDD.

submit for consideration an approach based on a multi-frame methodology that would incorporate the following concepts:

- (1) Design and implement a face-to-face interviewing sample much like the current area probability design, however with a smaller sample size.
- (2) Design and implement a combination of list and RDD sampling methodology based on congressional districts (or some other geographic stratification directed specifically at measuring electoral behavior). This design would also overlap the face-to-face design.
- (3) Take advantage of the information in the overlapping portions of the telephone and face-to-face frames to produce estimates for the telephone design that are enhanced from information in the face-to-face frame.

This approach could yield improved estimates from the telephone design. In addition, cost savings from telephone use could be achieved while realizing some of the benefits from face-to-face interviewing.

Probability Sampling

Given my background and training at the U.S. Census Bureau, I cannot support sampling strategies that do not involve probability sampling. While there may be gains in cost and staff efficiencies, such designs would not be robust to unexpected events that have occurred throughout the history of elections²⁶. A viable alternative to a non-probability approach would be a stratified design concept, drawing more heavily on areas with greater perceived uncertainty.

Panel Designs

The choice of panel designs depends on the measurement goals of the survey. Panel designs certainly would provide for causal analysis of changes in voter behavior over time and could be very useful in studying surprising election phenomena.

There are several drawbacks to longitudinal panel sampling strategies. Longitudinal panel surveys have significant risks in providing adequate cross sectional analysis, particularly after they have been in the field for several rounds. In addition, longitudinal designs can become increasingly more expensive to implement as locating and gaining cooperation become more difficult over time.

Estimation problems can be avoided by inclusion of cross-sectional samples as has been done in previous NES rounds. However, costs will most likely be larger than for a design that is entirely cross-sectional. Costs considerations can be addressed by increasing the degree to which telephone interviewing is used.²⁷ However, this gives rise to the issues associated with telephone vs. face-to-face interviewing. The considerations center around whether the potential analyses made possible by the use of the panel methodology would outweigh the associated increase in costs and loss of precision in cross-sectional analyses.

²⁶ Tom Smith reminded me of the famous saying “As Maine goes, so goes the Nation” which was subsequently revised to “As Maine goes, so goes Vermont.”

²⁷ For example, the majority of interviews for the 1979 cohort of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth are now being conducted by telephone.

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**American Electoral Behavior Workshop
Mode Effects**

Roger Tourangeau

Joint Program in Survey Methodology, University of Maryland
Survey Research Center, University of Michigan

Different methods of data collection generally vary in terms of three major sources of error—coverage, nonresponse, and reporting error—and they can vary sharply in cost as well. (As John Thompson’s discussion points out, they can differ in their levels of sampling error, too. For example, given a fixed sample size, an area probability sample will generally yield higher levels of random sampling error than a random-digit dial (RDD) sample, because the area sample will be more highly clustered.) My brief discussion will focus on these three sources of error in survey estimates. Different methods of data collection represent complex packages of variables, and it’s sometimes difficult to say what features of a given method are inherent to it and which are incidental. A few years ago, most survey researchers probably would have said that telephone interviewers were a necessary feature of telephone surveys, but interactive voice response (IVR), in which a computer plays digitized recordings of the questions over the telephone (a method also called telephone audio computer-assisted self-interviewing, or T-ACASI) has eliminated the need for telephone interviewers, at least when respondents can dial into the system directly. It’s necessary, as a result, to be clear about what part of the package is responsible for the difference between methods of data collection.

Coverage

The biggest and most indisputable drawback to telephone surveys relative to face-to-face surveys is their exclusion of households without telephones. Estimates vary but roughly 5 or 6 percent of the U.S. household population has no access to a telephone (Brick, Waksberg, Kulp, and Starer, 1995; Thornberry and Massey, 1988), and it is probably the case that effective coverage is declining somewhat, as larger numbers of persons have access only to cell phones. (While such people can, in principle, be reached by telephone, as a practical matter, they would be excluded by design from almost all telephone surveys done in the United States.) The coverage error from the omission of households without telephones is compounded in two ways.

First, the most efficient method of drawing telephone samples is list-assisted sampling, which has gradually displaced earlier methods of RDD sampling. In a list-assisted sample of the household population, a sample of “banks” is selected from among the possible sets of active banks in the U.S. (A bank is the set of 100 potential telephone numbers that share an area code and a five-digit prefix; for example, the numbers from 301 314-7900 to 301 314-7999 make up one bank.) Typically, sampling is restricted to banks that include at least one residential listing. This method yields a simple random sample of households and sharply reduces the proportion of non-working and business numbers in the sample (from 75 or 80 percent to 40 or 45 percent; see Brick et al., 1995). At the same time, it excludes another 3 to 4 percent of the household population, whose telephone numbers fall in “zero” banks. These banks seem to be newly opened banks that do not yet include any listed residential telephone numbers; accordingly, they contain a high proportion of people who have moved recently. Brick and his colleagues demonstrate that the added exclusions don’t have much impact on most survey estimates (except on estimates of residential mobility).

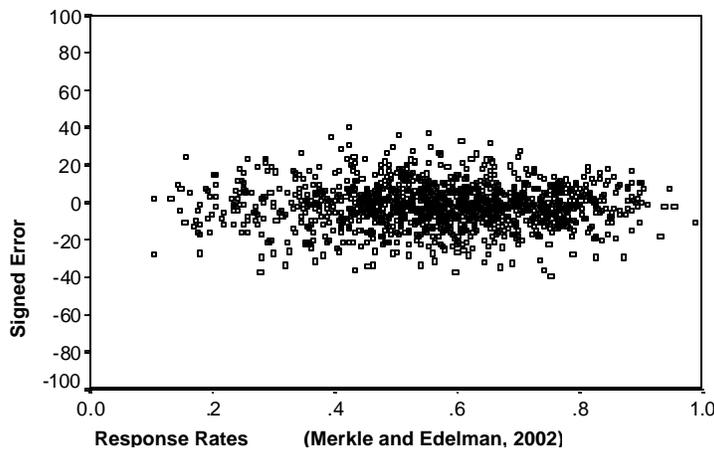
The other coverage problem involves missing persons within households that are reached. Within-household undercoverage is a problem for face-to-face surveys, too, but the problem is probably worse for telephone surveys (Maklan and Waksberg, 1988). Some telephone surveys use the same method for sampling within household as most face-to-face surveys do; they ask respondents to list everyone who lives at the sample residence and then randomly select someone from this roster of eligible persons. It is widely believed that the rosters are less accurate in telephone than in face-to-face surveys and that the need to enumerate the household can increase nonresponse

in telephone surveys. As a result, many telephone surveys use other, more error-prone methods to select a single respondent. (For example, the interviewer may ask to speak to the person with the most recent birthday.)

On the whole, then, coverage is likely to be considerably worse in telephone than in face-to-face surveys. This may seem like an inherent problem (How can one do telephone interviews with people who don't have telephones?), but at least one survey—the National Survey of American Families done by the Urban Institute—has provided cell phones to persons in nontelephone households to improve coverage. That survey focuses on the impact of welfare reform, and it wouldn't make sense to leave out nontelephone households; income is the major variable determining access to a telephone (Thornberry and Massey, 1988). Depending on the exact aims of the study, however, these

coverage problems may not introduce dramatic biases. For example, as a percentage of likely voters, the omissions from telephone surveys may be relatively small.

Signed Error by Response Rate for Sample Voting Site



Nonresponse

Nonresponse, especially nonresponse due to refusal to take part in surveys, seems to be rising for household surveys all over the developed world (Groves and Couper, 1998; de Leeuw and de Heer, 2001). With some Federal surveys in the United States, the problem of rising nonresponse rates is somewhat masked, since the surveys make an increased number of callbacks and, as a result, fewer sample cases are never contacted. Even in these surveys, though, the refusal rates appear to be rising (see, for example, Atrostic, Bates, Burt, and Silberstein,

2001). Moreover, to combat the trend, more surveys offer incentives for participation. (The one bright spot in this gloomy picture appears to be Census 2000, which achieved a higher-than-expected mail return rate and a lower-than-expected rate of undercoverage.)

These rising rates of nonresponse are affecting both telephone and in-person surveys, but the problem is worse for telephone surveys. Currently, few telephone surveys achieve response rates higher than 60 percent. Most researchers attribute this declining cooperation to the onslaught of telemarketing, but I'm unaware of any hard empirical evidence for this. Panel attrition—losses due to nonresponse in the second or later waves of a longitudinal surveys—compound the effects of nonresponse in the first wave, especially in surveys that make no attempt to include initial nonrespondents in later rounds.

The only good news is that several studies suggest that rising nonresponse rates don't necessarily imply increased nonresponse error. The magnitude of the nonresponse bias in a mean or proportion depends on both the rate of nonresponse and the difference between respondents and nonrespondents:

$$\text{Bias} = p_n(\bar{Y}_r - \bar{Y}_n)$$

in which p_n is the nonresponse rate, \bar{Y}_r is the mean for the respondents, and \bar{Y}_n , the mean for the nonrespondents. The bias formula is more complicated for analytic statistics, like subgroup differences or regression coefficients. Three recent studies, one with a randomized experimental design, show that sometimes there is little relationship

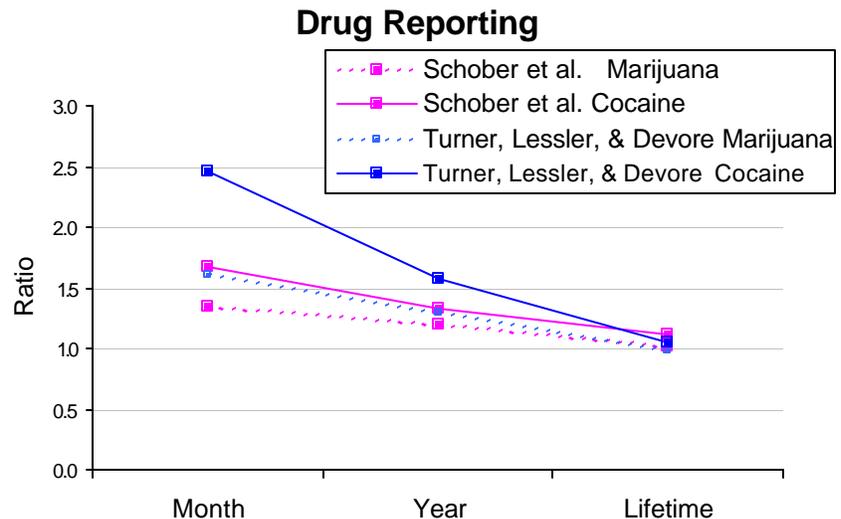
between nonresponse rates and nonresponse error (Curtin, Presser, and Singer, 2000; Keeter, Miller, Kohut, Groves, and Presser, 2000; Merkle and Edelman, 2002). Although each of these studies has its limitations, taken together, they present a strong case that larger nonresponse rates don't necessarily signal larger biases. The study by Keeter and his colleagues used a randomized experiment that varied the length of the field period and the number of callbacks in a telephone survey; the two experimental groups differed markedly in response rates (60.6 versus 36.0 percent), but only 14 of 91 variables showed significant substantive differences and most of these were quite small. Merkle and Edelman tracked response rates and overall error in exit polls at sample precincts across four elections. The results (displayed in the figure below) indicate virtually a zero correlation between the two. They argue that the factors that produce nonresponse in exit polls (e.g., the interviewers were not allowed near the entrance to the polls) are completely unrelated to the variables of interest.

Curtin and his colleagues looked at the Index of Consumer Sentiment from the University of Michigan's Survey of Consumer Attitudes, a national telephone study. Using detailed call record data, they were able to simulate the impact of ending efforts to interview sample cases after, say, 5 or 10 callbacks. Again, there were small effects from these large (simulated) changes in the data collection protocol on the index or in changes in the index from quarter to quarter. These results do not indicate that nonresponse is never a problem, but they do suggest that, when the variables of interest are unrelated to the factors that produce nonresponse (as in the exit polls), falling response rates may not be a major source of worry.

Reporting Differences

There are two classic studies that compare telephone and face-to-face interviews. The first, by Groves and Kahn (1979), compared responses to a set of items administered to national samples by both modes. Although there was a substantial difference in response rates (favoring the face-to-face sample), there were relatively few differences in the estimates from the surveys. The biggest difference involved the length of responses to open-ended questions—respondents to the face-to-face interview were likely to give longer answers than telephone respondents. This suggests that the face-to-face interviews may be conducted at a slower pace or foster greater motivation in the respondents. The second study (Groves, Miller, and Cannell, 1987) involved health questions and found somewhat greater reporting of health events (illnesses, hospitalizations, and doctor visits) in the telephone than in the face-to-face interviews. In general, the differences between telephone and face-to-face interviews were seen as small, and these two studies help legitimate telephone surveys in the United States. A subsequent meta-analysis by de Leeuw and van der Zouwen (1988) buttressed the claim that there were few major differences between the data collected under the two modes.

Subsequent mode research has focused on other issues, such as the gains in reporting from self-administration. These appear to be far more dramatic than the differences between telephone and face-to-face interviews. For example, the figure shows results from two similar studies that examined the impact of self-administration on reporting



of illicit drug use (Schober, Caces, Pergamit, and Branden, 1992, and Turner, Lessler, and Devore, 1992). The graph displays the ratio between the proportion of respondents admitting they used illicit drugs when the questions were self-administered and when they were administered by an interviewer. The dashed lines show the results for reported marijuana use; the solid lines show the results for cocaine use. For both drugs, self-administration increases reporting; the differences are quite dramatic—for example, as much as a two-fold increase—for recent time periods.

Given the levels of misreporting about voting among nonvoters (Belli, Traugott, and Beckman, 2001), some form of self-administration may be helpful in election studies. A number of national surveys have adopted audio computer-assisted self-interviewing (ACASI) to collect information on topics like abortion and illicit drug use. With ACASI, the interviewer turns the computer around and let's the respondent enter his or her answers. A recording of the question is played to the respondent over head phones. Several studies have shown this to be an effective method for eliciting sensitive information. Its telephone counterpart, IVR, also seems to produce improvements of the reporting of sensitive information (see, for example, Tourangeau, Miller, and Wilson, 2002).

Two more recent studies have called into question the conventional wisdom that telephone interviews don't produce markedly different results from face-to-face interviews. The first is a mode comparison involving the Eurobarometer, a general purpose attitude survey sponsored by the European Union. That study finds systematic differences in responses to scale items about a variety of political issues (Saris and Kaase, in press). In many cases, however, the differences involve relatively minor discrepancies in the use of the rating scales that could reflect differences between telephone and face-to-face interviews in response order effects (Krosnick, 1991). The second study by Green, Krosnick, and Holbrook (in press) finds reduced reporting of sensitive information over the telephone relative to face-to-face interviews and more evidence that respondents take various shortcuts to get through the interview with minimal effort (for example, by selecting the same response category over and over). As that paper concludes, "The book is far from closed on the relation of interview mode to data quality." A variety of evidence suggests that when the telephone produces data different from face-to-face interviews, the data are likely to be worse in various ways.

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APPENDIX B: 1999 Recompetition Notice

A Letter to Political Science Colleagues from The Political Science Program at the National Science Foundation, February 1, 2000

Dear Colleague:

This letter provides information about two opportunities in the Political Science Program at the National Science Foundation. These opportunities are a recompetition of The American National Election Studies (ANES) and continuing investment in Political Science research infrastructure.

A recompetition of The American National Election Studies

At its meeting on November 13, 1997, the National Science Board of the National Science Foundation approved a Resolution Concerning Competition, Recompetition and Renewal of NSF Awards (NSB 97-224). In the Resolution, the Board:

- “**(a)ffirms** its strong support for the principle that expiring awards are to be recompeted unless it is judged to be in the best interest of U.S. science and engineering not to do so. This position is based on the conviction that peer-reviewed competition and recompetition is the process most likely to assure the best use of NSF funds for supporting research and education.
- And **(r)equests** that the Director, NSF, take such steps necessary to ensure that NSF practices embody this principle.”

The NSB Resolution, together with the support provided to the ANES by the Political Science Program since 1977, the end of the current ANES award in FY2002, and the scientific and infrastructural progress and needs of Political Science, are the bases for conducting a recompetition of The American National Election Studies.

- The Political Science Program expects to make **one award** to the most meritorious proposal to conduct The American National Election Studies. The award will be used for primary data collection that will advance the quality of scientific inquiry and knowledge about election campaigns, electoral choice, election outcomes, and citizen engagement in the United States. The maximum amount of the award is \$2,000,000 to cover all or part of the costs of conducting the ANES. The annual amount of the award is expected to be \$500,000; the duration of the award will be four years. The expected start date and expiration date are January, 2002 and January, 2006.
- Scholar-investigators who possess the theoretical, methodological, measurement, and administrative skills, as well as the necessary resources, to undertake an important, large-scale, data-collection project on election campaigns, electoral choice, election outcomes, and citizen engagement in the United States are invited to submit proposals.
- The Project Description section of the recompetition proposal must not exceed NSF’s standard length of **15 pages**. In the Description, proposals must make the case for how their designs offer a judicious combination of **continuity** and **innovation** in theory, methodology, measurement, and administration. Proposals also must discuss how their designs and resulting data collection will enable the testing of alternative theoretical perspectives. Proposals further must include a significant role for the user community. **Appendices will not be authorized.** Proposals

may refer to supplementary materials, such as questions, competitive survey cost estimates, pretest and pilot survey results, and other directly relevant information, posted on investigators' publicly available websites. Reviewers will be asked to safeguard their anonymity when accessing these websites.

- ANES recompetition proposals also are expected to meet the relevant submission criteria and minimum budget request of \$500,000 per year of the **Enhancing Infrastructure for The Social and Behavioral Sciences Competition** in the Divisions of Social and Economic Sciences, and Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, at NSF. ANES recompetition proposals will be reviewed in the Program and in this Competition. An ANES recompetition proposal which receives the most favorable reviews in the Program is eligible for the Program support discussed above; if the same proposal contains significant innovations and receives highly favorable reviews in the Enhancing Infrastructure Competition, then it also is eligible for additional support from this Competition. Details about the Enhancing Infrastructure Competition will be posted on the NSF website.
- ANES recompetition proposals must be submitted through NSF's FastLane. The target date for submission of recompetition proposals is **August 1, 2000**. This date is two weeks earlier than the target date for proposals being submitted to the Political Science Program during its regular summer cycle. However, the ANES recompetition target date is synchronized with the Enhancing Infrastructure Competition target date.
- Contingent on the outcome of the ANES recompetition and the availability of funds, the Political Science Program will conduct another recompetition in four years.

Continuing investment in Political Science research infrastructure

NSF's long-standing commitment to building the country's scientific infrastructure, the Program's ongoing efforts at advancing basic scientific research in Political Science, and recent professional discussions about the state of science and the progress of research in the discipline are the bases for continuing Program investment in Political Science research infrastructure.

- The Political Science Program may make up to **three awards** to the three most meritorious proposals that promise to advance the basic research resources and knowledge-generating capacity for a widespread user community in Political Science. An award may be used for data collection costs; web-based archiving, library and dissemination facilities; collaborative investigations; methodological improvements; research and education centers; or a combination of all or some of these. The maximum amount of each one of the three awards is expected to be \$750,000; the annual amount of an award may vary; the duration of an award is one, two, three, or four years. The expected start date is January, 2002; the expected expiration date is not earlier than January, 2003 or later than January, 2006.
- Scholar-investigators who have the requisite skills and resources to conduct large-scale scientific projects are invited to submit proposals.
- The Project Description section of the Political Science research infrastructure proposal must not exceed NSF's standard length of *15 pages*. Proposals may involve any field, several fields, or the entire discipline of Political Science. They may focus on Political Science only or have an inter/multi-disciplinary component. They may be thematic in terms of an important development or problem. Proposals must make the case for how their projects will improve the basic research resources and knowledge-generating capacity for a widespread user community. In particular, proposals are expected to discuss how their projects will advance the analytical and methodological

skills of students or early, mid- or later-career scholars and, thus, assist them in meeting the research expectations and scientific demands of the future. **Appendices will not be authorized.** Proposals may refer to supplementary materials posted on investigators' publicly available websites. Reviewers will be asked to safeguard their anonymity when accessing these websites.

- Political Science research infrastructure proposals must be submitted through NSF's FastLane. The target date for submission of these proposals is **January 15, 2001**. This date is the same as that for other proposals being submitted to the Political Science Program during its regular winter cycle.
- Contingent on the outcome of the Political Science research infrastructure opportunity, and the availability of funds, the Political Science Program may offer another three-award opportunity in four years.

For Both Opportunities

- Proposals submitted to the ANES recompetition are not eligible for submission to the Political Science research infrastructure opportunity, and vice-versa.
- Site visits involving the most meritorious proposals may be conducted, as appropriate. These visits will be made by Political Science Program Directors and expert others prior to recommendations of awards.
- All proposals must describe the nature and scope of the user community, as well as how and when their project results will be distributed publicly. All data must be deposited in an accessible archive. Results are expected to be provided on a low- or no-cost basis and, in accordance with Division policy, not later than one year after award expiration. Investigators will not have first right of publication.
- All proposals must include a plan for efficient, effective, and responsible project management and for fair, inclusive, and open personnel selection.
- All proposals must document that their costs are commensurate with their activities and objectives. A proposal also must discuss how its project will continue, if appropriate, when Political Science Program support ends. Proposals may include a plan for the generation of other matching funds.

Questions should be addressed to Dr. Frank Scioli or Dr. Marianne Stewart, Political Science Program Directors, National Science Foundation. E-Mail: fscioli@nsf.gov; mstewart@nsf.gov. Phone: (703) 306-1761.

APPENDIX C: Workshop Discussion Points

I. Overview: The Current State of National Election Studies

Discussion Leader(s): Nancy Burns and Donald Kinder, John Mark Hansen

- a. The American National Election Studies
 - 1. Information Collection
 - 2. Sampling (methodological issues/cost)
 - 3. Substantive Contributions
 - 4. Governance and Accountability (including Program v. Process concern)
 - 5. Continuity v. Innovation

Discussion Leader(s): Andre Blais, Harold Clarke, Ian MacAllister, Richard Sinnott

- b. Cross National Comparisons
 - 1. Information Collection
 - 2. Sampling (methodological issues/cost)
 - 3. Substantive Contributions
 - 4. Governance and Accountability (including Program v. Process concern)
 - 5. Continuity v. Innovation

II. Future Substantive Concerns

Discussion Leader(s): Chris Achen, Kathleen McGraw, and Diana Mutz

- a. ANES and the Social (and Cognitive) Psychological Literature
- b. ANES and the Rational Choice and Behavioral Economic Literature (Bayesian/Spatial Modeling Inclusive)
- c. Adjudicating the predictive differences between Economics and Psychology
- d. Networks and Social Interaction

III. The Future of Information Collection (Mode Effects)

Discussion Leader(s): Roger Tourangeau

- a. Face to Face
- b. Telephone Interviewing

1. Effect of Cell Phones-Telemarketing
2. Callbacks
3. Comparability to Face to Face (“flashcards”)

c. Non-response Issues

1. Face to Face
2. Telephone Interviewing
3. Panel (i.e., PSID)
4. Census

IV. Future Design Recommendations

Discussion Leader(s): Henry Brady and Rob Santos

- a. Order/Wording Effects
- b. Incorporating Cognitive Psychology/Economics Into Survey Design
- c. Time Series Studies
- d. Continuous Monitoring Studies
- e. State-based samples (mid-term)

V. Future Issues in Sampling: Methodological/Cost

Discussion Leader(s): John Thompson

- a. “cluster”
- b. RDD
- c. Probability Sampling
- d. Panel (PSID-type)

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