Online Appendices

Extracting Wisdom from Experts and Small Crowds: Strategies for Improving Informant-based Measures of Political Concepts

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ABSTRACT: Social scientists have increasingly turned to expert judgments to generate data for difficult to measure concepts, but getting access to and response from highly expert informants can be costly and challenging. We examine how informant selection and post-survey response aggregation influence the validity and reliability of measures built from informant observations. First, drawing upon three surveys with parallel survey questions of US House candidate characteristics, we examine the tradeoff between expanding the size of local informant pool and the pool’s level of expertise. We find that a “wisdom-of-crowds” effect trumps the benefits associated with the expertise of individual informants when the size of the rater pool is modestly increased. Second, we demonstrate that the benefits of expertise are best realized by pre-screening potential informants for expertise rather than post-survey weighting by expertise.

Replication materials for this article are posted at:

1 Matthew Buttice began work on this project while at UC Davis and finished while at the California Research Bureau. The research results and conclusions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of the California Research Bureau or California State Library.
Appendix 1: Items Used to Construct CCES Expertise Measure

Table A1: Items Used to Construct Expertise Measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item ID</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cc309a</td>
<td>Party of Government Knowledge - House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc309b</td>
<td>Party of Government Knowledge - Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc309c</td>
<td>Party of Government Knowledge - State Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc309d</td>
<td>Party of Government Knowledge - State Lower Chamber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc310a</td>
<td>Party Recall and Name Recognition - Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc310b</td>
<td>Party Recall and Name Recognition - Senator 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc310c</td>
<td>Party Recall and Name Recognition - Senator 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc310d</td>
<td>Party Recall and Name Recognition - House Incumbent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc301_1</td>
<td>Media Use - Blog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc301_2</td>
<td>Media Use - TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc301_3</td>
<td>Media Use - Newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc301_4</td>
<td>Media Use - Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc417a_1</td>
<td>Political Activity - Attend Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc417a_2</td>
<td>Political Activity - Political Sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc417a_3</td>
<td>Political Activity - Work for Campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc417a_4</td>
<td>Political Activity - Donate Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v244</td>
<td>Interest in News and Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 2: Screening Procedures for YouGov Panelists

Following is the list of questions used to screen respondents. Approximately 5% of the YouGov sample was allowed to fail one or more of these conditions to make up for a low N in 13 districts.

Informed - dropped if > 1
How well informed would you say that you are about government and politics in your state?
<1> Extremely well informed
<2> Well informed
<3> About average
<4> Not so well informed
<5> Not well informed

Incumbent Name Recognition- dropped if !=3
What is the name of the current U.S. House incumbent in your district?
<1> $Senator1
<2> $Senator2
<3> $House Incumbent
<4> $Governor
<5> $Neighbor
<6> Not sure

Confidence - dropped if >3
How would you rate your confidence in your ability to answer questions about your congressional district?
<1> Extremely high confidence
<2> High confidence
<3> So-so confidence
<4> Low confidence
<5> Extremely low confidence

News Consumption - dropped if all three were < 4
How often do you watch TV news about politics and public affairs?
<1> Less than once a week
<2> About once a week
<3> Several times a week
<4> Every day

How often do you read a newspaper about politics and public affairs?
<1> Less than once a week
<2> About once a week
<3> Several times a week
<4> Every day

How often do you consult Internet sources about politics and public affairs?
<1> Less than once a week
<2> About once a week
<3> Several times a week
<4> Every day