Non-Representative Surveys: Modes, Dynamics, Party, and Likely Voter Space

Tobias Konitzer, S. Corbett-Davies, David M. Rothschild • Published 2017 • Political Science

State-level forecasts of the popular vote in the 2016 presidential election experienced a large, correlated error in a number of ultimately pivotal states. These forecasts were created by interpreting and aggregating traditional, representative surveys by major news websites. At the same time, we collected responses in a very different kind of non-representative survey: weekly random draws from a non-representative mobile-only panel. Building on work by Wang et al. (2015), we used this mobile-phone-only data in combination with high end analytics to develop the first 51-state projection based on mobile-data only we are aware of. Specifically, we ran our repeated cross-section through dynamic MRP+ (Modeling and Poststratification). On the survey side, we model the probability that any random respondent, with any combination of specified demographics, would vote for Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, or other. On the projection side, we use a triangulation of a full updated voter file, Census data, and other historical snapshots of the electorate, to project those probabilities onto an estimated voter space for 2016. Our approach has significant advantages compared to previous MRP-based predictions of elections. We (1) develop a fully dynamic model to disentangle changes in sample composition over time from true swings and compensate for smaller sample sizes in some sub-groups, (2) expand on measures to correct for partisan response bias, (3) estimate the likely voter population directly, instead of relying on naive estimators of previous turnout through exit polls, general population through census data, or demonstrating ex-post predictions based on actual turnout. We show that (a) our forecasting model on a single poll is at least as accurate (if not more) as poll aggregations of public traditional polls, and (b) magnitudes cheaper to conduct. In closing, we discuss ways to quantify uncertainty in our methodology, and elaborate on the future of forecasts based on non-representative polls. Collapse

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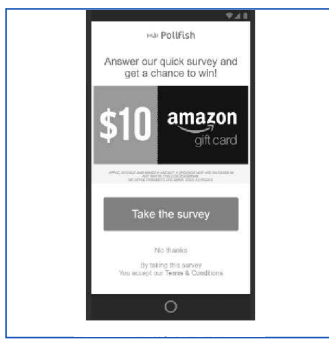
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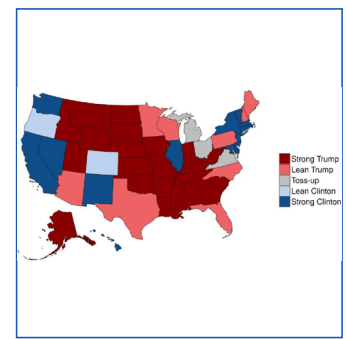

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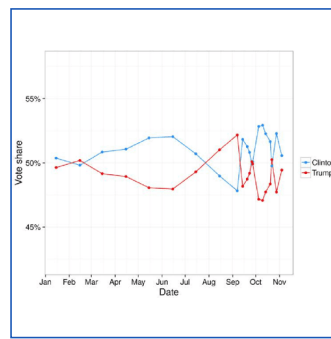
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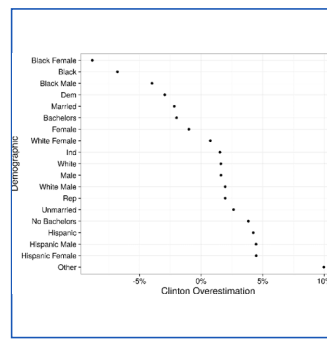
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B. Kaplan · Political Science · 2019

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A Digital Field Experiment Reveals Large Effects of Friend-to-Friend Texting on Voter Turnout

Aaron Schein | Keyon Vafa | +5 authors | D. Green · Political Science, Computer Science · Social Science Research Network · 2020

TLDR This paper evaluates a promising alternative to face-to-face get-out-the-vote tactics: mobile app technology that enables millions of people to message their friends to urge them to vote, and suggests that friend- to-friend texting is an effective alternative to conventional voter mobilization tactics.Expand

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Aaron Schein | Keyon Vafa | +5 authors | D. Green · Political Science, Computer Science · The Web Conference · 2021

TLDR This study identifies statistically significant treatment effects from friend-to-friend mobilization efforts that are among the largest reported in the get-out-the-vote (GOTV) literature and is among the first to assess these effects experimentally.
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Economics, Political Science · 2018

Gur Huberman   Tobias Konitzer   Masha Krupenkin   David M. Rothschild   Shawndra Hill

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David M. Rothschild   Sharad Goel   A. Gelman   D. Rivers   Political Science · arXiv.org · 2014

TLDR It is concluded that vote swings in 2012 were mostly sample artifacts and that real swings were quite small, which better corresponds with the understanding of partisan polarization in modern American politics. Expand

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D. S. Hillygus   S. Jackman   Political Science · 2003

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Houshmand Shirani-mehr   David M. Rothschild   Sharad Goel   A. Gelman   Political Science · 2018

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Tobias Konitzer   David M. Rothschild   Political Science · 2016

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Robert S. Erikson   Christopher Wlezien   Political Science · 2012

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Total Survey Error

P. Biemer   Business · International Encyclopedia of Statistical Science · 2011

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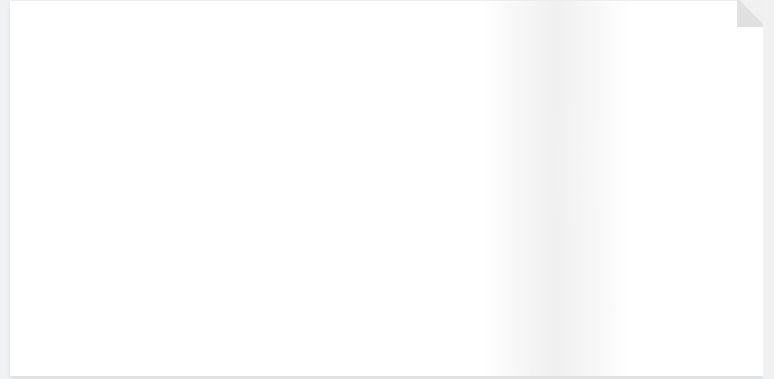
H. Norpoth · Political Science · 2014

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