

Design and Analysis of Sample Surveys

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Class 9b: Public opinion

U.S. public opinion surveys

- ▶ American National Election Study (since 1948)
- ▶ General Social Survey (since 1972)
- ▶ Pew Research surveys (raw data available since 1997)
- ▶ Annenberg (2000, 2004, 2008)
- ▶ Commercial polls
- ▶ Exit polls
- ▶ State polls
- ▶ Data that are not random samples

- ▶ Come up with some interesting social science questions that can be addressed using NES or GSS
- ▶ Mass-media opinion polls
- ▶ Other surveys

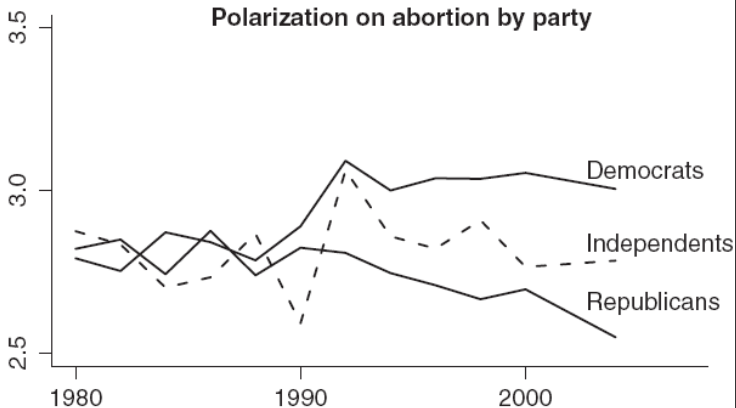
Survey questions: demographics

- ▶ Sex
- ▶ Age
- ▶ Race/ethnicity
- ▶ Marital status and family characteristics
- ▶ Religion and religious attendance
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Income
- ▶ Wealth

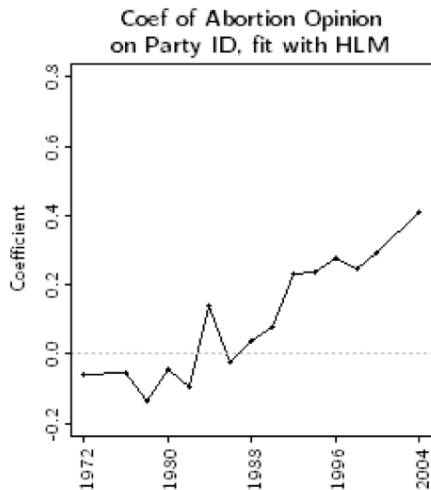
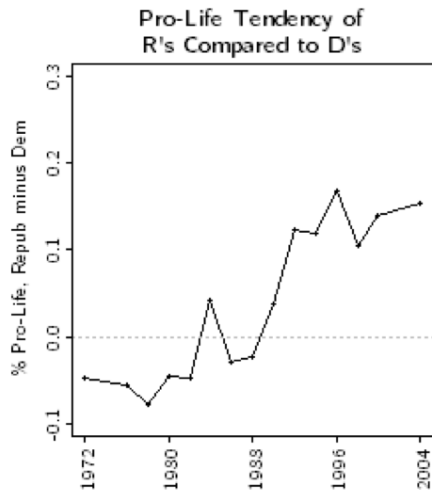
Survey questions: political affiliation

- ▶ From most stable to least stable:
 - ▶ Party identification
 - ▶ Liberal-conservative ideology
 - ▶ Vote intention
 - ▶ Presidential approval
- ▶ Issue attitudes?

Political polarization since 1990

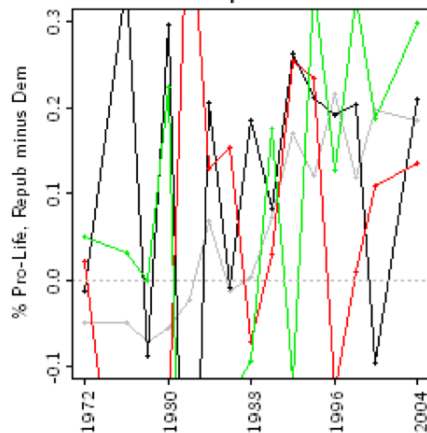


Abortion!

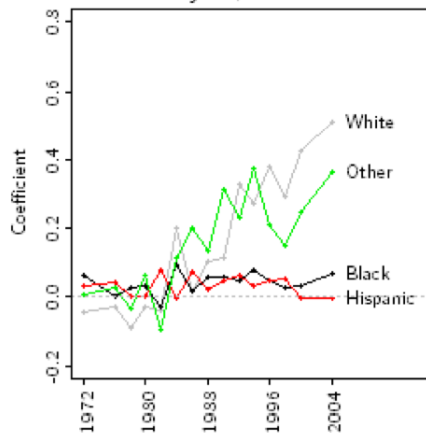


More abortion!

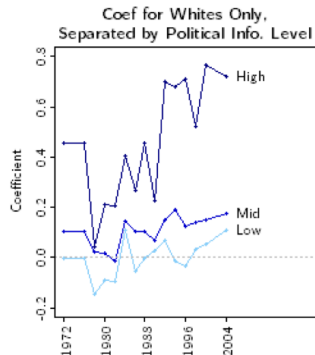
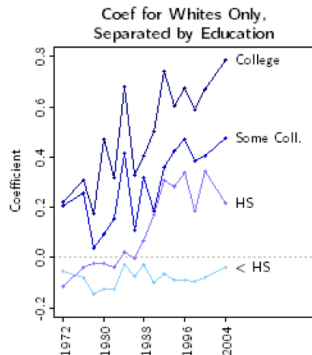
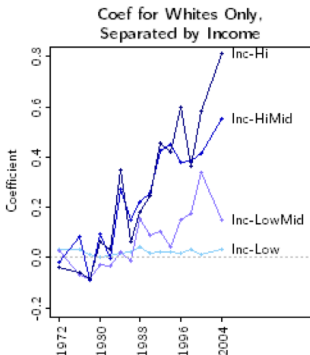
Pro-Life Tendency of
R's Compared to D's



Coef of Abortion Opinion
on Party ID, fit with HLM



Still more ...



Survey questions: partisan polarization in issue attitudes

- ▶ Views of the parties
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ Social issues
- ▶ Foreign policy
- ▶ Different measures of polarization

Polarized perceptions of politicians

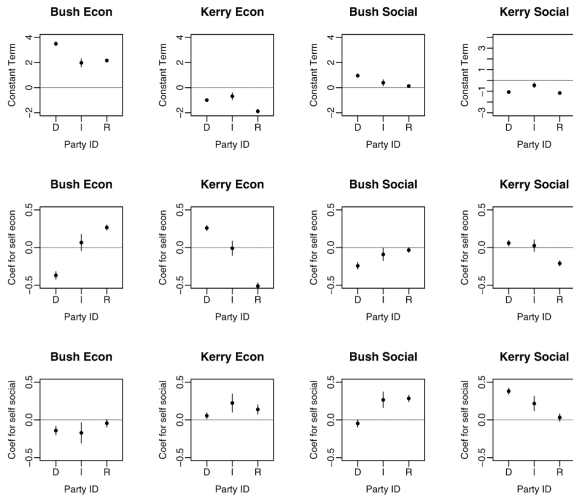


FIG. 5. *Estimated coefficients for the regressions of perceptions of Bush and Kerry on economic and social issues. The four columns of the display represent these four outcomes. For each, the top,*

Survey questions: elite and mass attitudes

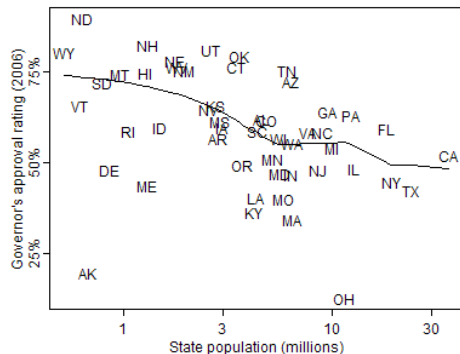
- ▶ Partisanship and liberal-conservative ideology
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ Social issues
- ▶ Foreign policy
- ▶ Non-attitudes

Some topics

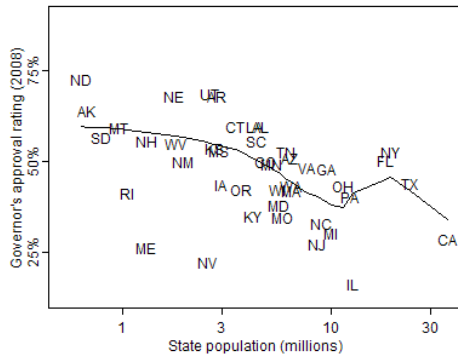
- ▶ Uniform national swing in opinions
- ▶ Comparing health care attitudes in 1994 and 2009
- ▶ News media and public opinion

Popularity of governors

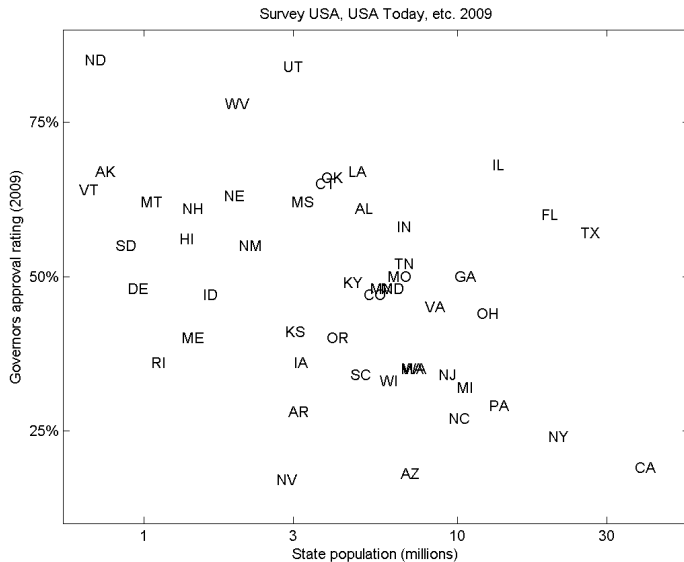
Survey USA polls, 2006



Rasmussen polls, 2008



Popular governor, small state



Governor popularity, state size, and the economy

We fit a linear regression ($n = 50$):

```
lm (popularity ~ c.log.statepop + c.income.change)
```

	coef.est	coef.se
(Intercept)	48.6	2.2
c.log.statepop	-6.1	2.3
c.income.change	2.4	1.7

What aspects of public opinion have we missed?

- ▶ Local politics
- ▶ Other countries
- ▶ Non-political issues
- ▶ ?