

Representative Surveys


POLSCI 4SS3

Winter 2023


Announcements

- Class will now start at 9 AM instead of 8:30 AM
- I received accommodation letters. Schedule a meeting if you need anything beyond extra time for completing assignments
- Response paper template coming soon!
- Sign-up for final project groups will start at 5 PM on Friday, January 20. Check course website for link. First come first served!

Last week


- Overview of course topic, goals, evaluation, expectations
- We installed R and RStudio and explored them a bit
- Cloud option always available if all else fails
- More details in the [course website](#) 

Today

- Overview of the MIDA research design workflow
- Start the topic of public opinion
- Representative surveys as the standard design
- **Takeaway:** Complete random sampling is the gold standard but too hard to apply in realistic settings
- **Discussion:** Getting surveys right
-  **Lab:** Intro to R + Sampling from populations

Research Design


What is a research design?

-  RD: A procedure for generating answers to questions
- **More generally:** Thinking about how research is (was, will be) conducted
- **Emphasis:** We can **program** and **interrogate** elements of a research design

Elements of research design


1. Model (M)
2. Inquiry (I)
3. Data strategy (D)
4. Answer strategy (A)

Model

- : A set of speculations about what causes what and how
- **Set:** We consider many models because we are uncertain of how the world works
- **Speculation:** All models are wrong, some models are useful
- **What causes what:** Informs the *event generating process* (e.g. distributions, correlations)
- **How:** An explanation of why things are connected or correlated

Examples of models?

Inquiry


- : A research question stated in terms of the model
- In this course, we will talk about **quantities of interest** or **estimands**¹
- Some questions will lend themselves to multiple inquiries. We will tend to focus on those with one or a handful

1. Estimands, estimators, and estimates are different things with annoyingly similar names. We will return to this in a few weeks.

Examples of inquiries


1. What is the proportion of unemployed people in the country?
2. What is the effect of immigration on economic development?
3. Do people support funding private clinics to mitigate surgery backlogs?
4. Will the stock market crash this year?
5. Individual causal effect $\tau_i = Y_i(1) - Y_i(0)$

Data strategy

- : Set of **procedures** used to **gather information** from the world
- Three features:
 1. How *units* are selected
 2. How *conditions* are assigned¹
 3. How *outcomes* are measured

1. This will make more sense as we start thinking about cause and effect.

Answer strategy

- : How we summarize the data produced by the data strategy
- Data *is too complicated* to speak for itself
- Needs summary and explanation
- Most **research methods** qualify as **answer strategies**
(Examples?)

Parallels

Theory	Empirics
Model	Data strategy
Inquiry	Answer strategy

Representative Surveys

public opinion

 Add to list

 Share

The way most ordinary people feel about something, or the thing they mainly believe, is *public opinion*. If *public opinion* supports a no smoking policy, you better put down that cigar.

Politicians care a lot about public opinion — it's what gets them elected, or ultimately leads to their losing their jobs. Brave legislators and public figures will say what they really believe, rather than what they think will please public opinion, but that's rare. The term was coined by John Locke in a 1600s essay he wrote about politics and human understanding, inspired by the French *l'opinion*, "opinion."

Public opinion

- The study of self-reported **attitudes** and **behaviors**
- Primarily **among general public**
- **Goal:** Mapping **self-reports** to **actual** attitudes and behaviors

Two challenges

1. Asking the right **questions**
2. Asking the right **people**

Asking the right questions

Table 1

Reported Daily TV Consumption as a Function of Response Alternatives

Low-frequency alternatives	Daily consumption	High-frequency alternatives	Daily consumption
Up to ½ hour	7.4%	Up to 2½ hours	62.5%
½ hour to 1 hour	17.7%	2½ hours to 3 hours	23.4%
1 hour to 1½ hours	26.5%	3 hours to 3½ hours	7.8%
1½ hours to 2 hours	14.7%	3½ hours to 4 hours	4.7%
2 hours to 2½ hours	17.7%	4 hours to 4½ hours	1.6%
More than 2½ hours	16.2%	More than 4½ hours	0.0%

Note. $N = 132$. From "Response Categories: Effects on Behavioral Reports and Comparative Judgments," by N. Schwarz, H. J. Hippler, B. Deutsch, & F. Strack, 1985, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 49, p. 391. Copyright 1985 by The University of Chicago Press. Adapted with permission.


Asking the right people

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RESEARCH NOTE/NOTE DE RECHERCHE

Measuring Preferences and Behaviours in the 2019 Canadian Election Study

Laura B. Stephenson^{1*} , Allison Harell² , Daniel Rubenson³  and Peter John Loewen⁴ 

What is this?

The online study survey was programmed by the CES team and associates and hosted by the University of Western Ontario through its licensed Qualtrics platform. Qualtrics also recruited respondents, aiming for three-day samples that were stratified by region (Ontario, Quebec, West, East and North)¹ and balanced on gender and age within each region. Regions were sampled according to their approximate demographic weight. We also aimed for a language distribution of 80 per cent French and 20 per cent English within Quebec, 10 per cent French within the Atlantic region and 10 per cent French nationally. Respondents needed to be aged 18 or over and Canadian citizens or permanent residents in order to participate. The weights provided in the dataset are based upon age, gender, education and province census distributions. Traditional response rates cannot be calculated for online samples, but the re-interview rate for the PES was 27.3 per cent. The datasets were pre-processed by cleaning out any respondents who provided incomplete responses to initial demographics or the core survey, took the survey twice,

Some key sampling decisions

- Mode (in-person, lab, phone, mail, internet)
- Sampling frame
- Sample size
- Sampling procedure (completely random, stratified, quotas)
- Oversampling

Next Week

Panel Surveys



Focus on: Worth having multiple survey waves?

Break time!





Tip before you start 💡

- Make a project for this course!
- From , go to: **File > New Project**
- Select New or Existing Directory (**Whichever works for you**)
- Save the lab **.Rmd** file in the same directory
-  will automatically recognize all files within the project directory
- Continue using the same project for all lab assignments

