The Analysis of Aggregate Survey and Electoral Data

This is a hands-on seminar on the use of survey and electoral data to explore and answer questions on long term trends in U.S. public opinion on diverse political phenomena (students may also use non-US data insofar as it is available). Students will learn how to find, acquire, download, analyze, and present results drawn from a selection of the thousands of surveys and multiple aggregate data sets now easily available for exploration and analysis. After some training exercises, then each student (or team of students—cooperative research is OK) will identify and address a set of tractable empirical questions that can be answered using currently available aggregate survey results and related data. The goal is to produce and report research findings of sufficient quality and interest to form the basis for a conference paper, journal publication, or the kernel of a dissertation. The analyses can be executed with relatively low-tech charts and graphs as well as high-tech econometrics, whatever is appropriate to the questions addressed, data examined, and proficiency of the student.

Students will need a UCSD email account (or at least an account that will allow library access to be able to download data from the Roper Center archive), a SPSS or STATA program that can handle relatively large data sets, and Microsoft Excel or the Apple equivalent. Access to Stat/Transfer may be necessary depending on what statistical software is used.

There is no formal reading list. Students should familiarize themselves with this kind of research by perusing a selection from the list of publications and similar work. A variety of examples of what can be done, drawn from my own work, will be presented in the initial session. Students will also examine the literature pertinent to their research topics.

Students should begin to familiarize themselves with the principle data sources, listed after the publication list.

Publications with examples of what can be done with aggregated survey data:


Selected Data Sources:

1. Roper Center (free access with UCSD email account; library has subscription)
http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/
Archives major media polls (Gallup, CBS/NYT, NBC/WSJ, ABC/ WP, LA Times, Fox News, Pew Center, Harris, etc.) and Exit polls.

**ipoll** application for selection of particular questions appearing in the entire archive; also indicates which surveys are available for downloading.

2. **ICPSR** [http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/access/index.html](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/access/index.html)

Archives ANES, CBS/NYT, ABC/ WP, and others).

Roper gets recent surveys earlier


Archives all of the ANES studies, available for downloading. Also lots of time series tables at [http://electionstudies.org/nesguide/gd-index.htm](http://electionstudies.org/nesguide/gd-index.htm).


Archives own surveys and allows downloads. Also has good research reports based on their surveys.


Archive of social survey data. From the GSS website: “The GSS is widely regarded as the single best source of data on societal trends. The 1972-2006 GSS has 5,137 variables, time-trends for 1,643 variables, and 269 trends having 20+ data points.”

6. **pollingreport.com**

Usually gives marginals only, but lets you know what is out there on a daily basis; includes time series on a large number of political questions. Covers all of the major media polls.

7. **pollster.com**

Election, presidential approval polls with some links. Updates daily. Shows some trends graphically.

8. **NOMINATE data**. At Keith Poole’s website: [http://voteview.com/dwnl.htm](http://voteview.com/dwnl.htm)


Archives presidential support scores and a variety of survey data, some not available at Roper.
10. **Media organization** websites contain recent survey results at their websites

CBS consistently gives full results broken down by party ID.


Described by itself as “a unique depository for job approval ratings obtained at the state level for state Governors, U.S. Senators and U.S. Presidents from the mid-1900s to today (short a few months for us to compile the data).”

13. **California Secretary of State**

Detailed data on party registration and voting; can get statewide vote (president, governor, senator, initiatives etc.) broken down by congressional and state assembly and senate districts.  Data in some cases go back 50 or more years.

14. **California survey Data:**

Field Poll  http://www.field.com/fieldpoll/
Public Policy Institute of California  http://www.ppic.org/main/home.asp

15. **Public Opinion Quarterly**, poll summary articles.

16. **Cooperative Congressional Election Studies.**

Election surveys taken in 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012; 2014; huge Ns (30-55,000). Department has proprietary modules from these studies as well.


18. **Jacobson** (House election data, 1946-2014, see me): hr4614.sav


20. **National Annenberg Election Survey** at

http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/political-communication/naes/