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Title: An Analysis of Some Measures of Partisanship Using the Pilot Study Data

Date: August 10, 1979

Dataset(s): 1979 Pilot Study

Abstract

This paper examines the utility of adopting the "supporter series" of partisan identification questions. Dennis finds that the traditional and supporter series approaches produce different marginal distributions of partisanship in the response sample. The supporter series also performs differently than the traditional questions in predicting to various criterion variables. The supporter "direction" item is better associated with certain criterion variables -- such as reported Presidential vote in 1976 -- than the traditional party identification question. On the other hand, the traditional "closeness" question is better correlated with other criterion variables -- such as evaluation of the party better able to deal with the country's most important problem -- than the corresponding supporter series variable. Dennis therefore recommends using both the traditional and supporter series question in the 1980 survey. Dennis also finds that a classification of respondents into groups, based on answers to party support and partisanship supporter questions, yields four distinct categories. Finally, Dennis finds that the party support/partisanship patterns derived from the supporter series are not well correlated with the seven point party identification scale, suggesting that the traditional self-classifications are not as firm as they are usually taken to be.