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Title: Political Efficacy and Trust

Date: September 25, 1987

Dataset(s): 1986 National Election Study, 1987 Pilot Study

Abstract

Craig and Niemi discuss and rank the 1987 Pilot Study items relating to political efficacy and trust. They find that while the internal and external efficacy measures perform well, the other experimental measures are problematic. Craig and Niemi report that it is difficult to distinguish among regime-based efficacy, incumbent-based efficacy, regime-based trust, and incumbent-based trust. Specifically, they find that factor analysis does not discriminate between incumbent efficacy and trust. A response-set bias in these items, however, makes it difficult for the authors to reach a definitive conclusion on this point. In addition, the high correlation between the regime-based efficacy and incumbent-based efficacy items raises serious doubts about the public's ability to make the regime/incumbent distinction assumed in the survey. Craig and Niemi also find that both types of external efficacy are associated with the internal dimensions. Political trust, on the other hand, is not, confirming the author's expectations. Craig and Niemi conclude that the traditional trust items should be retained because the evidence does not support replacement with the Pilot Study items.