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Title: Experimental Tests of the Question-Answering Model of the Mass Survey Response

Date: February 22, 1990

Dataset(s): 1989 Pilot Study

Abstract

Using data from the 1989 Pilot Study, Zaller investigates two theories concerning the effect of issue frames on public opinion. First, Zaller tests the hypothesis that changes in question frames can produce changes in the patterns of support for particular issues. This hypothesis is supported by tests in two of the four issue areas considered in the Pilot Study. Zaller also tests the hypothesis that questions which include issue frames enhance response stability. He finds only modest support for this postulate when comparing responses to "framed" items and items "stripped" of those frames. Zaller, however, finds that the use of framed questions decreases "no opinion" rates across all survey items. Furthermore, these higher response rates are achieved without any loss in response quality.