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Title: Vote "Over" Reporting in Surveys: The Records or the Respondents
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Abstract

The accuracy of respondents reports of behavior is a common problem of survey research. The NES has investigated one aspect of this problem -- accuracy of reporting of whether the respondent voted or not. The vote validation procedure, of going to local offices and looking up records of respondents who report voting to see whether the report can be validated, has consistently shown two kinds of misreporters: those for whom a record cannot be found, and those for whom a record can be found but voting is not confirmed. Do these errors have the same antecedents? Are these errors attributable to the respondents alone or to errors in the records or errors in the matching process? The results suggest that the magnitude of the over-reporting problem may be overstated. When administrative records and respondent reports are seen as incorporating different kinds of errors, the question becomes one of mismatches. And mismatches are related to record quality. Relationships between respondents respondent characteristics and "inaccuracy" reported in prior studies may be overstated.