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Abstract

NES estimates of voting turnout have been consistently higher than rates reported in aggregate voting returns. Part of this discrepancy is probably due to respondent misreport, which can lead to biased statistical estimation results. NES has sought to correct this potential bias by independently validating voter turnout. This technique may, however, introduce new measurement biases because NES fails to locate a substantial number of respondents when drawing up vote validation lists. Mayer develops a model incorporating a selection equation to account for this censored sample problem. He then estimates this model, using 1988 National Election Study data, to produce a corrected validated model which seems to capture the causes of voting accurately. Specifically, the empirical results obtained by using the corrected validated model are consistent with theoretical expectations. A comparison of estimated turnout predicted by the corrected validated model to estimated self-reported turnout reveals generally small misreporting biases in the self-report measure. Mayer concludes that his model, which uses validation to address misreporting biases and a selection equation to address censored sample biases yield voting turnout estimates that are plausible and methodologically sound.