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Authors' Abstract:

Although scholars increasingly recognize that people often possess multiple and even conflicting attitudes about a given topic, our understanding of the nature, causes, and consequences of such attitudinal ambivalence is limited by a lack of consensus as to how the concept should be operationalized. In this paper, we examine three separate measures (one subjective, two operative) of ambivalence regarding "the federal government in Washington" that were asked in the 2006 ANES Pilot Study. Our findings indicate that while the operative measures are less susceptible to question-order and response-order effects, none of the three indicators fares particularly well in various other tests of construct validity.