

Public Opinion Research: Challenges of the '80s

Program and Abstracts

40th Annual Conference of the American
Association for Public Opinion Research

May 16-19, 1985
Americana Great Gorge Hotel
McAfee, New Jersey

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AAPOR AWARD

(to be announced at Banquet)

STUDENT PAPER AWARD WINNER

DONALD PHILIP GREEN, University of California, Berkeley

Honorable Mention

Gerald M. Kosicki and Gary R. Pettey
University of Wisconsin
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California, Berkeley

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40TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

Americana Great Gorge Hotel
McAfee, New Jersey
May 16 through May 19, 1985

THURSDAY

May 16

4:00-9:00
Hotel Lobby

REGISTRATION

3:00-6:00
Vernon Valley E

MEETING OF OLD AND NEW AAPOR EXECUTIVE COUNCILS

3:00-6:00
Vernon Valley C

DIDACTIC SESSION: SURVEY ANALYSIS WITH MICROCOMPUTERS
Organizer: David Morganstein, WESTAT

7:00-8:30
Vernon Valley A & B

DINNER

8:45
Vernon Valley C & D

FIRST PLENARY SESSION
SOCIAL FORECASTING: A CLOUDED CRYSTAL BALL?

In Memory of Joseph T. Klapper

Chair and Discussant: James R. Beniger, Princeton
University

Sam Stouffer as Gypsy: Cohort Analysis and
Forecasting in the GSS
James A. Davis, Harvard University

Forecasting Technological Change: New Products and
New Processes
Joseph P. Martino, University of Dayton

Using Demographic Forecasts to Predict Environmental
Issues
M. Rupert Cutler, Environmental Fund

Post-Plenary
Sidewalk Cafe

C.O.D. MIXER

FRIDAY AM

May 17

7:30-9:30

Living Room

BREAKFAST

10:00-5:00

Hallway

EXHIBIT I

Demonstrations of Microcomputers' Uses in Survey Research (See page 19 for detailed listing)

Organizer: Robert S. Lee, Pace University

10:00-5:00

Hallway

EXHIBIT II

Book Display: New and Recent Books in Public Opinion, Communication, Survey Research, and Related Fields

Organizer: Phyllis Endreny, Columbia University

9:00-10:30

VV A

PUBLIC OPINION AND PUBLIC POLICY

Chair: Bernard Roshco, U.S. Department of State

The Mass Media Do Affect Policy Preferences

Robert Y. Shapiro, Columbia University and NORC

Benjamin I. Page, University of Texas, Austin, and NORC

Glenn R. Dempsey, University of Chicago (Ph.D. student) and NORC

Opinion Polls and Public Policy: The Case of the 1977 Panama Canal Treaties

Ted J. Smith III and J. Michael Hogan

University of Virginia

The Attitudes of American Elites on Foreign Policy Issues

Barbara A. Bardes, Loyola University

Robert Oldendick, University of Cincinnati

Discussant: Alvin Richman, U.S. Department of State

FRIDAY AM

9:00-10:30

HOW ACCURATE ARE ELECTION POLLS?

VV B

Chair: Herbert H. Hyman, Wesleyan University

Why the Polls Differed in the '84 Election

Kenneth P. Adler, United States Information Agency

An Assessment of the Predictive Accuracy of Pre-
Election Polls

Irving Crespi, Irving Crespi and Associates

Discussant: Diane Colasanto, The Gallup Organization

9:00-10:30

MEASURING ATTITUDES

VV C

Chair: Howard Schuman, University of Michigan

Measuring the Effects of Attitude Crystallization on
Response Effects

Seymour Sudman and Knude Swensen

University of Illinois

The Middle Position in Survey Questions about Issues
of Public Policy

George F. Bishop, University of Cincinnati

(Continued on next page)

FRIDAY AM

Improving the Attitude-Behavior Fit through Post-Stratification of Opinion Responses

Robert G. Mason, Larry A. Boersma, G. David Faulkenberry, Oregon State University

Victimization, Fear of Crime, and Neighborhood Quality of Life: Question-Order Effects

McKee J. McClendon, David J. O'Brien, Kathie Heizer, University of Akron

Discussant: D. Garth Taylor, University of Chicago

10:45-12:15

VV A

THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME: PUBLIC OPINION AND NUCLEAR WAR

Chair: Sidney Hollander, Jr., Hollander, Cohen Associates

The Cambridge Nuclear Free Zone Campaign: Attitudes Leading to Action

Richard Schreuer, Northeastern University
James Ennis, Tufts University

ABM and Star Wars: Attitudes toward Active Defense Against Nuclear Weapons

Bernard M. Kramer, University of Massachusetts, Boston
Thomas Graham, MIT

Public Perceptions of the Arms Race

John Doble, Public Agenda Foundation

A Public-Opinion Based Strategy for Peace

Ralph K. White, George Washington University

FRIDAY AM

10:45-12:15
VV B

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE '84 ELECTION
Chair: Gladys Lang, University of Washington

Debate Viewing and Debate Discussion as Predictors of
Cognition in the '84 Campaign

J. David Kennamer, Virginia Commonwealth
University

The Effects of the First 1984 Presidential Debate on
Issue and Image Assessments

Donna Rouner and Richard M. Perloff
Cleveland State University

Gary Hart's Momentum: News Coverage of the Iowa
Caucuses and the New Hampshire Primary

David W. Moore, University of New Hampshire

Discussant: Kurt Lang

10:45-12:15
VV C

INCREASING RESPONSE RATES: METHODOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL
CONSIDERATIONS

Chair: Theresa F. Rogers, Columbia University

The Utility of Paying Respondents: Evidence from the
Residential Energy Consumption Surveys

Wendel Thompson, U.S. Department of Energy

An Experiment in the Timing of Payment: Physician
Response to a Mailed Survey

Sandra H. Berry, The Rand Corporation

(Continued on next page)

FRIDAY AM-PM

An Evaluation of Mode of Initial Contact for In-Person Interviews

Nancy A. Mathiowetz, Doris R. Northrup, Sandra Sperry, Deborah Bercini, WESTAT and National Center for Health Statistics

Discussant: Don A. Dillman, Washington State University

12:15-1:45

Trenton

LUNCH

2:00-3:45

ROUND TABLE SESSIONS

Organizer: G. Ray Funkhouser, Rutgers University

VV C

THE EXPANDING USE OF RESEARCH AND THE LAW

James H. Fouss, Response Analysis

Charles Winick, City College, CUNY

Stuart Herman, Technical Analysis and Communication

Jay Schulman, New York

Joseph Scott, Ohio State University

Dennis K. Benson, Appropriate Solutions, Inc.

VV A

AN EMERGING PARADIGM FOR COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTS RESEARCH

W. Russell Neuman, M I T

VV B

REPORTING SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN THE MEDIA

Michael W. Traugott and Stanley Presser

University of Michigan

Philip Meyer, University of North Carolina

FRIDAY PM

Lafayette

SUCCESSES AND FAILURES IN CONJOINT ANALYSIS

Joan Black, Joan Black & Associates

Subrata Sen, Yale University

VV E

THE NEW ELECTRONIC MEDIA: SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND

CULTURAL TRENDS

Melvin A. Goldberg, MAGI C

Mark R. Levy, University of Maryland

SPARTA

ARE NEW DEMOGRAPHIC MEASUREMENTS NEEDED FOR A POST-

INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY?

Robert Bezilla, The Gallup Organization

4:00-5:30

BACK IN THE OLDEN DAYS

VV C

Organizers: Burns W. Roper, The Roper Organization,

Sheldon R. Gawiser, Sheldon Gawiser & Associates

Four able octogenarians will be questioned by four able probationary members on what the pioneers of opinion research were **really** like (their manners, morals, personalities, biases, etc.), and what went on at the early AAPOR Conferences (from the Spanish-American War to World War I). Representing over 300 years of memories and experiences will be Dick Baxter, Don Cahalan, Harold Mendelsohn, and Paul Sheatsley. The kids who will question them will include Nancy Belden, Sheldon Gawiser, and Evans Witt. Herb Hyman will be the "discussant," and there will be plenty of time for questions and additional anecdotes from the audience.

FRIDAY PM

4:00-5:30

VV B

EMERGING SOCIAL ISSUES

Chair: J. Ronald Milavsky, NBC

Natural, Unnatural, and Invisible Hazards--What Do the
Media Report?

Phyllis Endreny and Eleanor Singer
Columbia University

The Distortion of Health Risks in the Media
Jonathan Cole, Columbia University

Suicide Attitudes in America
Darwin Sawyer and Jeffery Sobal
University of Maryland

Measuring Attitudes about Social Justice
Thomas L. Piazza, University of California,
Berkeley

Discussant: Donald R. DeLuca, Yale University

4:00-5:30

VV A

PUBLIC OPINION FORMATION AND CHANGE

Chair: David L. Sills, SSRC

Cycles of Reform: Trends since World War II
Tom W. Smith, NORC

Public Opinion about Public Opinion
Carroll J. Glynn, Cornell University
Jack M. McLeod, University of Wisconsin

(Continued on next page)

FRIDAY PM

Communicating Opinions about Social Problems

Alex S. Edelstein, University of Washington

Youichi Ito, Keio University, Japan

Toward a General Theory of Self-Interest Effects

Donald Philip Green, University of California,

Berkeley (AAPOR Student Paper Award)

Discussant: W.P. Davison, Columbia University

5:30-6:30

RECEPTION FOR NEW ATTENDERS

Pool

7:00-8:30

DINNER

Vernon Valley

8:45

SECOND PLENARY SESSION:

Trenton

IS THERE A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC OPINION
RESEARCH?

In Memory of George H. Gallup

Chair: Paul B. Sheatsley, NORC

Why American Public Opinion Research Is Doing the Best
It Has Ever Done

Everett C. Ladd, University of Connecticut

Rating the Polls: The Views of Media Elites and the
General Public

Andrew Kohut, The Gallup Organization

A Pollster Evaluates Polls with Poll Data: (Or,
Measuring a Gaseous Body with a Rubber Band)

Burns W. Roper, The Roper Organization

Discussants: Mervin D. Field, Field Research

Warren Mitofsky, CBS News

SATURDAY AM

May 18

7:30-9:30

Living Room

BREAKFAST

10:00-5:00

Hallway

Exhibit I

Demonstrations of Microcomputers' Uses in Survey Research (See page 19 for detailed listing)

Organizer: Robert S. Lee, Pace University

10:00-12:00

2:00-5:00

Hallway

Exhibit II

Book Display: New and Recent Books in Public Opinion, Communication, Survey Research and Related Fields

Organizer: Phyllis Endreny, Columbia University

9:00-10:30

VV A

MEASURING MENTAL HEALTH

Organized by the Shirley Star Memorial Committee

Chair: Jack Elinson, Columbia University

Toward a Valid and Easy Mental Health Survey--The Impossible Dream

Lee N. Robins, Washington University

Discussants:

Patrick Shrout, Columbia University School of Public Health, Division of Biostatistics

Elena Yu, University of Illinois, Chicago Circle

SATURDAY AM

9:00-10:30

VV B

POLLS AND EXIT POLLS IN THE '84 ELECTION

Chair: Herbert I. Abelson, Response Analysis

The Ferraro Candidacy and the Polls

Kathleen A. Frankovic, CBS News

Early TV Calls in 1984: How Western Voters Deployed
but Ignored Them

William C. Adams, George Washington University

Respondent Selection and Preelection Estimates of
Candidate Preference

Michael W. Traugott, University of Michigan

Discussant: Michael R. Kagay, Louis Harris

9:00-10:30

VV C

THE USE OF NONSURVEY METHODS IN PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

Chair: Doris R. Northrup, WESTAT

Measuring Public Opinion Through Unobtrusive

Methods: The Community Case Study Approach

Walter K. Lindenmann, Opinion Research Corporation

Whatever Happened to Deviant Case Analysis, and Should
It Be Revived?

Ann Pasanella, Columbia University

The Legacy of Uncle Tom's Cabin: A Case Study in Book
History

Susan B. Neuman, Eastern Connecticut State
University

(Continued on next page)

SATURDAY AM

Uncle Tom's Cabin: A Public Opinion Phenomenon

Robert L. Cohen, Yankelovich, Skelly, and White

Discussant: Fred H. Goldner, Queens College, CUNY

10:45-12:15

PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

VV A

Chair: Mark A. Schulman, Schulman, Ronca, and
Bucuvalas, Inc.

Laughing at the Polls: How the Comics and Cartoons
View Public Opinion Surveys

Tom W. Smith, NORC

Survey Research: Trends in Attitudes and Participation
Stephen Schleifer, Walker Research, Inc.

Surveys on Surveys: Limitations and Potentialities
John Goyder, University of Waterloo

The Values and Attitudes of Market and Survey
Researchers

Thomas Danbury, Survey Sampling, Inc.

Discussant: Janice M. Ballou, Louis Harris

10:45-12:15

THE FEDERAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

VV B

Chair: Laure Sharp, Bureau of Social Science Research

Federal Statistics: Preserving the Past, Planning the
Future

Katherine K. Wallman, COPAFS

(Continued on next page)

SATURDAY AM-PM

Federal Statistics: Emerging Values and Lifestyles
Deserving Recognition

Norman M. Bradburn, University of Chicago

Federal Statistics: An Agenda for Response to
Societal Trends

Sidney L. Jones, Under Secretary for Economic
Affairs, U.S. Department of Commerce

10:45-12:15

VV C

ATTITUDES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF YOUTH

Chair: Alida Brill, Russell Sage Foundation

Some Recent Trends in the Aspirations, Concerns, and
Behavior of American Young People

Jerald G. Bachman, Lloyd D. Johnston, Patrick M.
O'Malley, University of Michigan

Changes in the Structure of High School Achievement:
1972-1980

Tom Hoffer and Jim Wolf, NORC

Factors Associated with Changes in Youths' Attitudes
Toward Economic Issues

Stephen J. Ingels and Mary Utne O'Brien, NORC

Discussant: Dorothy Jones Jessop, Albert Einstein
College

12:30-1:45

Trenton

LUNCH

SATURDAY PM

- 2:00-3:45 ROUND TABLE SESSIONS
Organizer: G. Ray Funkhouser, Rutgers University
- Sparta REGULATION OF SURVEY RESEARCH
Harry W. O'Neill, Opinion Research Corporation
Diane Bowers, CASRO
- VV A INTERVIEWER CHEATING
Maria Sanchez, ISR
- VV E SURVEY RESPONDENTS: NEW AND OLD ISSUES
Elizabeth A. Martin and Naomi D. Rothwell
Bureau of Social Science Research
Diane O'Rourke and Johnny Blair
University of Illinois
Judith Fiedler, Group Health Cooperative
- VV B THE ROLE OF PAC'S IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS
Edward Handler, Babson College
Representatives from N.J. Common Cause and
Corporate PAC's
- VV C SOME FRESH IDEAS ABOUT VALUES RESEARCH
G. Ray Funkhouser, Rutgers University
Michael Hooper, Temple University
- Branchville RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RESEARCH USING OPTICAL SCANNER
TECHNIQUES
Judith Bayer, New York University
John Keon, New York University
- Lafayette TV RATINGS: THE NUMBERS, THEIR MEANING AND USES
Peter V. Miller, Northwestern University

SATURDAY PM-SUNDAY AM

3:45-5:30 AAPOR BUSINESS MEETING
VV C

6:30-7:30 PRE-BANQUET COCKTAIL PARTY
Pool

7:30 BANQUET
Vernon Valley Presiding: Howard Schuman, AAPOR President, 1985-86
Presentation of AAPOR Student Award
Presentation of AAPOR Award
Presidential Address: Albert E. Gollin, Newspaper
Advertising Bureau, Inc.

After Banquet: PRESIDENT'S DUTCH TREAT PARTY
Sidewalk Cafe

SUNDAY MAY 19

7:30-9:30 BREAKFAST
Steakhouse

9:00-11:00 DIDACTIC SESSION: HOW TO HANDLE MISSING DATA
VV A Organizer: Graham Kalton, University of Michigan

This session will review methods of handling unit and item nonresponse in surveys. It will consider alternative forms of weighting adjustments for unit nonresponse. It will also consider various forms of imputation for item nonresponse and examine their effects on different kinds of estimates.

SUNDAY AM

9:15-10:45
VV B

TELEVISION AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Chair: Horst H. Stipp, NBC

Media Events and Public Images: Television and the
1984 Olympics

Susan H. Evans, Melvin A. Goldberg, Peter Clarke
Annenberg School of Communications, University of
Southern California

Perceptions of Bias in Television News

Martin Collins, Social and Community Planning
Research and City University Business School
London

Television's Impact on High School Achievement

Gary D. Gaddy, University of Wisconsin

Discussant: Doris Graber, University of Illinois

9:15-10:45
VV E

REFLECTIONS ON THE '84 ELECTION

Chair: Harold Mendelsohn, University of Denver

The Blitz: The Use of Political Advertising During
the Final Days of the 1984 Election

Montague Kern, National Endowment for the
Humanities

Changes in Party Identification and Party Images in
the Reagan Years

Martin P. Wattenberg, University of California,
Irvine

(Continued on next page)

SUNDAY AM

The Minnesota Poll: Mondale's Appeal

Hazel H. Reinhardt, Minneapolis Star and Tribune

Winning Against the Tide: Democratic Congressional
Incumbents and the 1984 Election

Kurt C. Schlichting, Fairfield University

Peter S. Tuckel, Hunter College, CUNY

Discussant: Barry Sussman, Washington Post

11:00-12:30

VV A

SAMPLING, SIGNIFICANCE, AND ECOLOGICAL CORRELATION

Chair: Charles D. Cowan, Bureau of the Census

Multiplicity Samples of Organizational Hierarchies

Joe L. Spaeth, University of Illinois

What Is the Significance of 'Statistical Significance'?

Eli S. Marks

Where Have All the Men Gone: The Increasing Problem
of Male Underrepresentation in Surveys

James Dyer, David B. Hill, Arnold Vedlitz

Texas A & M University

Testing Surrogate Measures for Household Income in
Market Research

James A. Sharkey, Loya F. Metzger

Equitable Life Assurance Society

Discussant: Owen T. Thornberry, National Center for
Health Statistics

SUNDAY AM

11:00-12:30

THE FLOW OF NEWS AND INFORMATION IN SOCIETY

VV B

Chair: Charles R. Wright, University of Pennsylvania

Community Attachment, Newspaper Use and Knowledge of
Local Issues

Clarice N. Olien, Phillip J. Tichenor, George A.
Donohue, University of Minnesota

Testing Traditional Beliefs About Competition and
Diversity

Maxwell McCombs, Syracuse University

Interpersonal Communication and the Comprehension of
News

John P. Robinson, Mark R. Levy
University of Maryland

The Appetite Hypothesis: A Note on Agenda Setting
Richard Maisel, New York University

Discussant: Allen H. Barton, Columbia University

11:00-12:30

METHODOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH ON AIDS

VV E

Chair: Raymond Fink, New York Medical College

Methodological Issues in AIDS--Related Research

Karolynn Siegel and Laurie J. Bauman
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

Designing an Effective AIDS Prevention Campaign

Larry L. Bye and Rebecca C. Quarles
Research and Decisions Corporation

(Continued on next page)

SUNDAY AM

How Do You Screen for Sexual Preference?

Rebecca C. Quarles and Larry L. Bye

Research and Decisions Corporation

Discussant: Corinne Kirchner, American Foundation for
the Blind

12:30

LUNCH

VV C&D

MICROCOMPUTER EXHIBITORS

Anderson Bell
Computer Assisted Survey Systems
Creative Research Systems
Microtab, Inc.
Orchard Associates, Inc.

SPSS, Inc.
Space-Time Systems, Inc.
STSO, Inc.
SYSTA, Inc.
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Methuen (Tavistock), Inc.

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Sage Publications
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Seven Locks Press
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John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

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TO INSURE ITS FINANCIAL HEALTH BY GIVING CONTRIBUTIONS
OF \$50 OR MORE DURING THE PAST YEAR

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Corporation of Alaska
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Bureau of Social Science
Research, Inc.
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Center for Public and Urban Research
Georgia State University
Atlanta, Georgia

Center for Survey Research
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Las Vegas, Nevada

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Chicago, Illinois

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Northbrook, Illinois

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Optima Consultants in Applied
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Stanley Peterfreund Associates, Inc.
Closter, New Jersey

Public Policy Resources Laboratory
College Station, Texas

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ABSTRACTS

Abstracts are organized by session, following the order of the program, except for a few abstracts which arrived too late for regular inclusion and are listed at the end. Roundtable abstracts, when available, are listed after the session abstracts. Authors can also be located through the Index. Some abstracts have been edited by the Conference Chair to save space.

THURSDAY 8:45 - 10:30 PM

SOCIAL FORECASTING: A CLOUDED CRYSTAL BALL?

SAM STOFFER AS GYPSY: COHORT ANALYSIS AND FORECASTING IN THE GSS

James A. Davis, Harvard University

Thirty years ago, in 1955, Samuel A. Stouffer wrote: "This chapter disavows a flat prediction that the next generation will be more tolerant than the present one. If the Communist threat should become greater, pressures against tolerance might increase. ... Rather, this chapter seeks to weigh some of the underlying forces in American society making for or against a tendency toward growth of tolerance. On balance, the direction in which these underlying forces have been going should be encouraging to those who are concerned with preserving the American heritage of freedom."

By comparing NORC's General Social Survey data for 1972-1974 and 1982-1984 we can check the predictions that Stouffer almost made and almost confirm his impression that the underlying forces are moving in an encouraging direction.

FORECASTING TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE -- NEW PRODUCTS, NEW PROCESSES

Joseph P. Martino, University of Dayton

Technological change is a fact of modern life. Entire industries can be overturned by new technology. New technologies can alter people's lifestyles drastically, as the automobile and TV did for Americans. Planning for activities that can be affected by technological change requires forecasts that identify the characteristics of new technology: its performance and the extent of its adoption. This paper defines technological forecasting, describes its methods, and compares these with the methods used in other areas of forecasting. It also describes the technological forecasting "industry," and the market for technological forecasts.

HOW POPULATION PROJECTIONS ARE RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

M. Rupert Cutler, The Environmental Fund

The U.S. population is growing faster than that of any other industrialized nation. Natural increase (births minus deaths) added 1.6 million people to the U.S. population last year, and 600,000 legal immigrants and refugees and 1 million or more illegal immigrants who arrive annually also must be included in the total. At this rate--1.4 percent annually--the U.S. population could double in 50 years.

The history of U.S. population growth and distribution, and the probable impacts of future population growth on the nation's ability to clean up and protect its environment, have been captured by The Environmental Fund on a micro-computer-based program called QUIC DATA. QUIC DATA is a visual presentation device designed to fill the communication gap that exists between population and environmental experts and policymakers. It offers an opportunity for policymakers to see the consequences of their plans and decisions projected into the future. A simulated QUIC DATA presentation using color slides of computer screens will be made to show how population projections can be used to influence resource development decisions and affect the future quality of life.

FRIDAY 9:00 - 10:30 AM

PUBLIC OPINION AND PUBLIC POLICY

THE MASS MEDIA DO AFFECT POLICY PREFERENCES

Benjamin I. Page, University of Texas at Austin and NORC
Robert Y. Shapiro, Columbia University and NORC
Glenn R. Dempsey, University of Chicago (Ph.D. student) and NORC

In this paper we challenge past conclusions about the news media's "minimal effects" on public preferences concerning government policies. We maintain that previous studies have not comprehensively examined public opinion and media content over time in natural settings, and they have not distinguished the possible influences of different news sources. Our analysis of 80 two-point time series, most from two to six months long, indicates that television news directly or indirectly can have significant persuasive effects. There is evidence, for example, that the statements of news commentators and (alleged) experts, perhaps as they reflect elite opinion, and the actions and statements of popular presidents, as they are communicated through the media, affect the magnitude and direction of opinion change. Although these influences may be attributable to the unique impact of television, preliminary analysis of print journalism reveals comparable effects.

OPINION POLLS AND PUBLIC POLICY:
THE CASE OF THE 1977 PANAMA CANAL TREATY

Ted J. Smith III and J. Michael Hogan
University of Virginia

In April, 1978, after nine months of national debate, the Senate narrowly ratified new Panama Canal treaties. Voting was apparently influenced by numerous opinion polls, which were interpreted as showing increased support for the treaties. But several analysts have demonstrated that this interpretation was erroneous; public opinion consistently opposed the treaties. Thus it seems that the major outcome of extensive polling was production of misleading data, which were used to frustrate the public will. This study seeks to determine what went wrong. It is divided into three sections.

The first examines all poll results to establish a coherent picture of public opinion. The second analyzes polling procedures and news releases and reveals instances of ambiguous or erroneous questions and misinterpreted findings. The third section shows that poll coverage in the national print and broadcast media was highly selective, often incomplete, and sometimes erroneous. The study concludes with recommendations for alleviating these problems.

THE ATTITUDES OF AMERICAN ELITES ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES

Barbara A. Bardes, Loyola University
Robert Oldendick, University of Cincinnati

This paper extends our previous work on foreign policy attitudes and opinions by investigating the attitudes of American elites on foreign policy issues over an eight-year period. Using the elite data from the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations surveys of 1974, 1978, and 1982, we examine trends in elite opinions on such questions as international activism, military spending, and relations with other powers. We compare the opinions of the elites at these three time points with respect to underlying themes or dimensions structuring the data; the degree of stability in elite opinions; and the degree to which elite opinions differ for the groups represented--media, labor, religious, business, etc. Although the elite samples are not large (about 300 in each) and have some methodological problems, we feel that the opinions of these "influentials" are important guides to the views that shape U.S. foreign policy.

FRIDAY 9:00 - 10:30 AM

HOW ACCURATE ARE ELECTION POLLS?

WHY THE POLLS DIFFERED IN THE '84 ELECTION

Kenneth P. Adler, United States Information Agency

While all major polls in 1984 correctly predicted who would become President, some came closer to the actual vote than others. This paper examines methodological differences between the major national polls which may account for variations in their estimates. Different results seem to have been due primarily to differences in sampling, in estimating likelihood of voting, and

in weighting. The polls which came closest to predicting the actual percentage of votes cast for the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates generally used a multi-stage area probability approach, callbacks to reach the selected household, random selection within the household, and a battery of questions to estimate which respondents were likely to vote. And they weighted results at least by sex, age, race, and education.

(For Crespi abstract, see page 55)

FRIDAY 9:00 - 10:30 AM

MEASURING ATTITUDES

MEASURING THE EFFECTS OF ATTITUDE CRYSTALLIZATION
ON RESPONSE EFFECTS

Seymour Sudman and Knude Swensen
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

It has long been understood that not all attitudes are held with equal firmness, and that attitudes that are strongly crystallized will be much more resistant to response effects than weakly held attitudes are. Crystallization, however, has never been measured directly, but has depended on indirect outcome measures. In this study, four measures of crystallization are proposed and tested for validity: 1) Have you heard or read about this issue? 2) Have you talked about it with other people? 3) Had you made up your mind on this question before we talked about it today? and 4) How strongly do you feel about this?

A standard measure of response effect is proposed--the difference between response distributions for dichotomous questions when the response categories are reversed. Although this measure has limitations, it has the advantage of comparability over a broad range of questions. The results of a pilot study that related the attitude crystallization measures to outcome are encouraging and suggest future use of such measures in attitude surveys.

THE MIDDLE POSITION IN SURVEY QUESTIONS
ABOUT ISSUES OF PUBLIC POLICY

George F. Bishop, University of Cincinnati

This research demonstrates, as have previous studies, that the percentage of people who give a "middle" response to a question can be increased substantially by making such a response an explicit alternative that is read to the respondent. The data also show, however, that the middle response effect may depend, in part, on the order in which the response alternatives are read to respondents. On two of the three issues experimented with (defense spending, nuclear power plants), the middle response tends to be more pronounced when the middle alternative is read as the last choice in the sequence, which indicates that the effect is to some extent a recency phenomenon. Offering respondents an explicit middle alternative may thus affect the conclusions a pollster would draw about the nature and distribution of public opinion on an issue.

IMPROVING THE ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR FIT THROUGH
POST-STRATIFICATION OF OPINION RESPONSES

Robert G. Mason, Larry A. Boersma and G. David Faulkenberry
Oregon State University

Post-stratification of opinion responses into attitude and DK groups produced a statistically significant attitude-behavior (A-B) relationship only when responses to an open-ended 'thought' filter were employed as the basis for stratification. Improvement stems from systematically shifting respondents with low behavior scores from all opinion response groups to the DK group, thereby enhancing the fit between measures of attitude and behavior. Post-stratification of attitude/DK groups based on responses to a closed 'thought' filter did not result in a significant A-B relationship. A non-stratified condition that treated all opinion responses as an attitude gave the poorest results. Measures of education and knowledge as covariates in the statistical model did not affect the results.

VICTIMIZATION, FEAR OF CRIME, AND NEIGHBORHOOD
QUALITY OF LIFE: QUESTION-ORDER EFFECTS

McKee J. McClendon, David J. O'Brien, Kathie Heizer
University of Akron

A part-whole question-order experiment was conducted to investigate order effects on how individuals evaluate the quality of their neighborhoods. In one version of a telephone survey (the specific-general order) questions about crime victimization and perceived neighborhood safety were asked before questions on neighborhood satisfaction; in the second version (the general-specific order) the crime and safety questions followed the neighborhood satisfaction questions. It was hypothesized that victimization and fear of crime would have greater effects on neighborhood satisfaction in the specific-general order than in the general-specific order (a consistency order effect). Although no question-order effects were found for whites, neighborhood safety showed a strong consistency effect for blacks. The implications of these racial differences for understanding part-whole order effects are discussed.

FRIDAY 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME: PUBLIC OPINION AND
NUCLEAR WAR

THE CAMBRIDGE NUCLEAR FREE ZONE CAMPAIGN:
ATTITUDES LEADING TO ACTION

Richard Schreuer, Northeastern University
James Ennis, Tufts University

This paper explores attitudes underlying support for the disarmament movement. Data were collected during a local nuclear free zone (NFZ) initiative. Findings show that fear of nuclear war, belief in the effectiveness of the initiative, and costs associated with passing the NFZ, along with sex and education, predicted support for the legislation. Women and those with higher education were more supportive, as were those who feared war and believed that the legislation would be both effective and free of major costs. The "gender gap" disappeared when the latter variables were introduced, but the "education gap" seems due to a differential judgment about whether the public can understand the nuclear issue. Implications of these findings are generalized to other social movements.

ABM AND STAR WARS:
ATTITUDES TOWARD ACTIVE DEFENSE AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Bernard M. Kramer, University of Massachusetts-Boston
Thomas Graham, MIT

In a Washington Post column printed at the crest of the anti-nuclear movement in 1982, William Raspberry wrote, "No matter what the public opinion polls show, the experts always answer, in effect, 'it ain't that simple.'" The major point of this paper might best be expressed by turning that statement around: "No matter what the experts say, public opinion just ain't that simple."

This paper examines data assembled from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut, the Consortium for Political Research at the University of Michigan, and the Institute for Social Research at the University of North Carolina. A search of these archives was conducted to isolate questions concerning defense against nuclear weapons in polls carried out since 1945. The bulk of these questions center around Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABM) or, more recently, Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD); The Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT); and the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), more commonly referred to in the media as Star Wars.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ARMS RACE

John Doble, The Public Agenda Foundation

This paper presents the results of a study of public attitudes toward nuclear arms and national security. Public thinking about the issue can be divided into two broad areas of consensus and of conflict. "Consensus"--defined as when upwards of 75 percent agree with a statement--has been reached about the following: nuclear war is unwinnable, nuclear weapons can never be abolished, both the U.S. and the Soviets have an "overkill" capability, the U.S. does not have and can never regain nuclear superiority, and the Soviets are dangerous adversaries for both military and ideological reasons. Public opinion is in "conflict"--defined as when less than 75 percent agree with a statement or when attitudes differ depending on item wording--about the nature and extent of the Soviet threat, how the U.S. should defend itself in a nuclear age, the risks the U.S. should take to reduce the danger of war, and the prospects for peace in the long term. Two beliefs seem to underlie and shape public opinion about this issue: the nature of the nuclear threat, and the difficulty of reducing or eliminating it.

A PUBLIC-OPINION-BASED STRATEGY FOR PEACE

Ralph K. White, George Washington University

The excellent recent summary of relevant opinion data by Daniel Yankelovich and John Doble, in the fall 1984 number of Foreign Affairs, is full of information useful to the peace movement in the United States.

The good news for peace activists includes a new readiness, since 1980, for nuclear arms reduction; a nearly universal emotional awareness of the horrors of nuclear war; a general awareness of the amount of overkill on both sides; a four-out-of-five favoring of an explicit no-first-use policy; and--most astonishing--a four-out-of-five belief that the United States already has such a policy.

The bad news includes very great distrust of the Soviet government, especially its readiness to cheat. There is evidence that such distrust is exaggerated.

FRIDAY 10:45 AM - 12:15PM

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE '84 ELECTION

DEBATE VIEWING AND DEBATE DISCUSSION
AS PREDICTORS OF CAMPAIGN COGNITION

J. David Kennamer, Virginia Commonwealth University

This paper examines the relationship of discussion of the 1984 presidential campaign debates with measures of campaign cognition. Multiple regression analysis showed that for naming campaign issues and simple attitude holding, discussion of the debates was a far more important predictor than actually watching them. Debate viewing predicted little of the variance in these dependent variables, while debate discussion accounted for significant amounts of variance, even after such variables as education and general campaign attention had been included. One explanation may be that discussion is an active display of campaign interest whereas debate viewing is much more passive.

(For Rouner and Perloff abstract, see page 56)

GARY HART'S MOMENTUM: NEWS COVERAGE OF THE IOWA CAUCUSES AND
THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY

David W. Moore, University of New Hampshire

Gary Hart won a stunning victory in the New Hampshire Primary one week after he lost by 3-to-1 to Walter Mondale in Iowa. The change in voter sentiment in New Hampshire was accurately monitored by daily ABC polls leading to the election; and on the eve of the first primary, ABC announced a tie between Hart and Mondale. Yet, nationally, the latest poll of Democrats, taken at the same time and published in the New York Times the morning of the election, showed Mondale ahead of his closest challenger (not Gary Hart) by 50 - 11, a record for a nonincumbent candidate. Clearly, the momentum that had gripped New Hampshire had not been experienced nationwide.

What accounts for this dramatic difference between the voters in New Hampshire and the voters in the rest of the country? What was the nature and extent of national news coverage of the Iowa Caucuses and how did this coverage relate to the momentum in New Hampshire? And why did it have little or no effect in the rest of the country?

This paper reports on a systematic content analysis of the national coverage given to the Iowa Caucuses and New Hampshire Primary over the period concerned, comparing the content and extent of national television and newspaper coverage before Iowa, after Iowa and before New Hampshire, and after New Hampshire. The paper also examines the nature of local coverage during the same period, to ascertain the relative importance of national and local coverage on voters' opinions.

FRIDAY 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

INCREASING RESPONSE RATES: METHODOLOGICAL AND
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE UTILITY OF PAYING RESPONDENTS: EVIDENCE
FROM THE RESIDENTIAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION SURVEYS

Wendel Thompson, U.S. Department of Energy

A \$2 incentive was given to all persons contacted in randomly selected nonmetropolitan areas as part of the 1979 Residential Energy Consumption Survey (Screening Survey). Response rates were not significantly higher in the incentive treatment (87.3%) than the nonincentive group (86.7%). Extreme

efforts were made to contact households, and these efforts may have washed out the effects of the incentive on response rates. Further analysis of the data will test whether the use of an incentive was related to greater care of the interviewer in conducting the interview and to greater cooperativeness on the part of the respondent.

AN EXPERIMENT IN THE TIMING OF PAYMENT:
PHYSICIAN RESPONSE TO A MAILED SURVEY

Sandra H. Berry, The Rand Corporation

This paper reports the results of an experiment in obtaining physician response to a mailed questionnaire. It involved a national sample of 2147 physicians in nine medical specialties sampled from the AMA Masterfile. The survey was conducted as part of an evaluation of the NIH Consensus Development Program.

Each physician was eligible for a payment of \$20. A randomly selected half received the payment with their initial questionnaire and cover letter; half were told they would receive their payment after they completed and returned the questionnaire. The same mail and telephone followup procedures were used for both groups.

Overall, prepayment had significant positive effects on response rates. This paper examines these effects in terms of response rates for various specialties, field efficiencies, cost, and representativeness of the sample.

AN EVALUATION OF MODE OF INITIAL CONTACT
FOR IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

Nancy A. Mathiowetz, Doris Northrup, Sandra Sperry,
Deborah Bercini
Westat, Inc., and National Center for Health Statistics

Little research has been done to determine the effects of using a telephone for contacting respondents for face-to-face interviews. A telephone contact is a cost-effective means by which to determine whether the sample unit includes an eligible respondent, inform a respondent about the nature of a study, and make an appointment for an interview. However, a telephone contact may provide an easy means by which to refuse to participate.

This paper presents the results of a study comparing two groups of respondents--those initially contacted by telephone and those initially contacted in-person. The analysis includes a comparison of response rates, item nonresponse, level of interview effort, and costs for the two groups. Recommendations as to the optimal approach for contact are offered.

FRIDAY 4:00PM - 5:30PM

EMERGING SOCIAL ISSUES

NATURAL, UNNATURAL AND INVISIBLE HAZARDS--WHAT
DO THE MEDIA REPORT?

Phyllis Endreny and Eleanor Singer
Columbia University

Individuals confronted with risky choices do not behave in accordance with purely rational calculations of benefits and costs; social definitions of risk have a profound influence on such choices. These definitions, in turn, are shaped by one or more of three sources: personal experience; direct contact with other people; and indirect contact by way of the mass media. This study examines the presentation of risks in the nonfictional mass media in order to gain some insight into how they shape the individual's assessment of the risks present in the environment.

In this paper we summarize preliminary findings of distributions of types of risk stories among different media, and consider questions and issues raised by this initial look at the early study findings.

THE DISTORTION OF HEALTH RISKS IN THE MEDIA

Jonathan R. Cole, Columbia University

The United States is experiencing an epidemic: a national obsession with health risks. While not even the most ardent advocates of diet and fitness regimens hold out hope of challenging Adam's 930 years, many health enthusiasts think that they can give those Biblical fellows a run for their money by choosing the right yogurt; pushing away the next slab of chocolate; avoiding saccharin, red meat, salt, caffeine, cigarettes, among other lingering potential sources of risks. How do we make the decisions about which risks to take and which to avoid?

Most people obtain a significant portion of the information about risks from the media. But how good are the media at reporting on health risks, and what are the consequences of distortions of the scientific data about health risks? This paper examines the disjunction between producers and consumers of scientific information, and describes how the media often fail to close this gap. The paper also examines aspects of "tragic choices" that must be made between competing risks, and the role of ideology in the distortion of scientific data on health risks.

SUICIDE ATTITUDES IN AMERICA

Darwin Sawyer and Jeffery Sobal
University of Maryland

This paper examines the social meaning and sociodemographic correlates of public attitudes toward suicide. In spite of a rich tradition of sociological studies of suicide rates (not to mention an extensive psychiatric literature on suicidal behavior), surprisingly little is currently known about the way Americans view the act itself-- specifically, whether they feel the victim is justified in voluntarily ending his or her life. Even less is known about the reasons why individuals form the attitudes they do. To determine whether suicide attitudes vary in sociologically meaningful ways, national data were taken from NORC's 1982 General Social Survey and analyzed in terms of fifteen commonly studied background characteristics. Our findings reveal significant differences in public acceptance and strongly support the existence of a unidimensional orientation toward the act of suicide regardless of the circumstances surrounding the act. Attitudes were found to be explainable in terms of the relative values respondents place on human life and individual freedom. By contrast, suicide attitudes were found to be unaffected by the level of satisfaction respondents derive from their own lives.

MEASURING ATTITUDES ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE

Thomas L. Piazza, University of California, Berkeley

Public opinion polls do a reasonably good job in measuring the public's positions on specific policies, programs, or current issues. It is not so easy, however, to measure positions on the more abstract level of justice and fairness. Researchers have tried to achieve this objective in various ways, and this presentation reports on one approach my colleagues and I have found valuable.

What we do, basically, is explore the explanations people give for social problems. We present the fact of a social problem, provide the respondent with a series of explanations for this fact, and ask whether he or she agrees or disagrees with each explanation. This approach has been applied to several areas, including the problems of social inequality between blacks and whites, between men and women, and the issue of poverty in general. Questionnaire items actually used will be handed out to participants, and some results will be discussed.

FRIDAY 4:00PM - 5:30PM

PUBLIC OPINION FORMATION AND CHANGE

CYCLES OF REFORM: TRENDS SINCE WORLD WAR II

Tom W. Smith, National Opinion Research Center

A common interpretation touted by many journalists and politicians argues that a conservative tide swept America in the later seventies and early eighties. According to this school of thought, liberal institutions were uprooted and public opinion flowed to the right. In fact, significant changes occurred in public opinion, but Americans can better be described as atop a liberal plateau rather than bobbing on a conservative tide. While very few trends that had been moving in a liberal direction reversed direction, many liberal trends did slow or even leveled off. Reasons for this plateau are examined and a general theory that American history is shaped by cyclical ages of reform is investigated.

PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION

Carroll J. Glynn, Cornell University
Jack M. McLeod, University of Wisconsin

"Public opinion" is acknowledged as the concept most crucial to the legitimation of polling as a research activity. What the public thinks about public opinion and about polling provides important evidence in the evaluation of such legitimacy. The purpose of the present study is to investigate some of the ways in which the public views the abstract concept "public opinion."

The general public's acceptance of the "reality" of public opinion is examined along with two other facets of the public opinion process: speaking out about one's own opinions in the face of disagreement or disapproval by others; and the degree of influence of others' opinions on own opinions. Some possible antecedents of belief in the "reality" of public opinion are considered, along with an investigation into possible roles the media play in the formation of such beliefs.

COMMUNICATING OPINIONS ABOUT SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Alex S. Edelstein, University of Washington
Youichi Ito, Keio University

This paper proposes that public opinion about subjects or topics may be misleading from a communications perspective.

The assumption that is tested is that individuals hold opinions about one or more different aspects of the same problem. Thus one person may hold opinions about the causes of inflation, another about the consequences and yet another person about solving the problem of inflation.

The paper presents data obtained from university students in four countries--Germany, Hong Kong, Japan and the United States--and compares their perceptions of public opinion, their own opinions, and the opinions held by peers with whom they are interacting.

Comparative measures are obtained on perceived congruency of opinions focusing upon the causes, consequences, and solutions to a variety of national and world problems.

(For Green abstract, see page 56)

FRIDAY 8:45 - 10:30 PM

IS THERE A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH?

WHY AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH
IS DOING THE BEST IT HAS EVER DONE

Everett C. Ladd, University of Connecticut

When conducted at optimal levels of quality, survey research on public opinion yields a multitude of different askings on most subjects of consequence, such that response patterns can be seen. It is inherent in the nature of polling that patterns can be etched, not by the firmness of responses to individual items, but only by the recurrence of typically "soft" responses over many different polls. The pluralism of the contemporary polling business is, then, essential to its search for knowledge. The increased pluralism does mean, of course, that poll users are made more aware now than ever before of the "softness" of the public's answers on individual surveys, and this in turn may in the short run add to a "confidence problem." But the softness has always been there; only recently has the corrective been provided.

RATING THE POLLS: THE VIEWS OF MEDIA ELITES
AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Andrew Kohut, The Gallup Organization

Two recent Gallup surveys assessed reactions to the performance of the polls in the 1984 election. A poll of 246 publishers, editors, senior reporters, columnists and broadcasters was conducted in January of this year. In March, Gallup conducted a national opinion survey among 1,023 adults aged 18 and older. This survey also repeated questions that had originally been asked in a nationwide opinion poll 40 years ago, following the 1944 presidential election. While only a limited number of questions was repeated from the 1944 Goldman/Cantril survey, analysis suggests that opinion about the reliability of the polls today is not very different from what it was 40 years ago.

A POLLSTER EVALUATES POLLS WITH POLL DATA
(Or, Measuring a Gaseous Body With A Rubber Band)

Burns W. Roper, The Roper Organization

A nationwide Roper survey on beliefs about, and attitudes toward, polls and pollsters explores people's opinions on the value, influence, accuracy, and honesty of polls. The public's views on whether representative people or mostly oddballs cooperate, on whether or not people usually tell pollsters the truth, and whether people think it possible to reflect national opinion with a sample of 1500-2000 people were explored. The extent to which seven specific aspects of polls annoy or bother respondents was measured.

Since Roper is less than convinced of the validity of a poll on this subject, he will also offer some personal opinions in addition to the poll findings. Being polled has changed from agreeable novelty to commonplace intrusion, hence a public education program on the values of polls may be needed. In addition, pollsters (and marketing researchers) should curtail some of their practices that invite public criticism and annoyance.

SATURDAY 9:00 - 10:30 AM

MEASURING MENTAL HEALTH

TOWARD A VALID AND EASY MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY--
THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

Lee N. Robins, Washington University

Shirley Star was a leading figure in the development of mental health screening instruments. She was involved from the pretest phase on in developing the Neuropsychiatric Screening Adjunct (NSA) to detect psychoneurosis and added to it the "critical questions" to detect psychotherapy and psychosis (but also alcoholism, drug addiction, enuresis, ulcers, and epilepsy). She struggled with the problem that we are still stuck with--how to evaluate the instrument she produced when unreliability of the yardstick, clinical assessment, was what had created the need for such an instrument in the first place.

The NSA borrowed from the MMPI, and for the next 30 years, psychiatric epidemiology borrowed its questions from the NSA. In the last few years, stimulated by the publication of criteria for specific psychiatric diagnoses, psychiatric surveys have grown far more ambitious. Instruments have been developed that may not only save time of psychiatrists by identifying individuals meriting their attention, but actually achieve on their own the diagnosis a clinician would achieve if he applied criteria diligently and accurately. This has meant long and complex survey instruments which can rule out physical explanations, measure severity, ascertain concurrence of symptoms, and date their first and last appearances. These complexities have led to some innovations in training and survey design, and a greater impetus toward computer-prompted interviews to take some of the burden off the interviewer. At the same time, these developments open opportunities for psychiatric surveys not only to count disorders and describe their correlates, but also to contribute to the development of psychiatric nosology itself.

This interactive process is already underway as survey results are being used to critique DSM-III, the official nomenclature of the American Psychiatric Association, and to provide data for the Mental Disorders section of the next edition of the International Classification of Diseases.

SATURDAY 9:00 - 10:30 AM

POLLS AND EXIT POLLS IN THE '84 ELECTION

THE FERRARO CANDIDACY AND THE POLLS

Kathleen Frankovic, CBS News

Throughout 1984, public opinion polls attempted to measure the potential effect of the nomination by the Democratic Party of a woman for Vice President. Expectations for the Ferraro candidacy were high; but the final outcome suggests that a woman on the ticket meant relatively little to the decisive voters made. This paper examines polling on the Ferraro candidacy, with particular emphasis on the following four points: 1) the use of organizations; 2) the impact on expectations of the way polling organizations reported polls about a woman candidate; 3) the methodological difficulties of predicting public reaction to a hypothetical candidacy with the measures used in 1984; and 4) the historical impact of vice-presidential candidates on presidential elections and the impact of Ferraro in 1984.

EARLY TV CALLS IN 1984:
HOW WESTERN VOTERS DEPLORED BUT IGNORED THEM

William C. Adams, George Washington University

The largest election-day poll of non-voting registered voters ever conducted surveyed 638 non-voters between 8 and 10 P.M. PST on November 6, 1984. Telephone interviews were conducted with people in northwest Oregon who were verified as registered to vote but who had not voted (according to official poll books). Early TV verdicts of Reagan's victory did not depress turnout anywhere near the extent critics had predicted--only 2.6% of the non-voters blamed TV for their failure to vote. Most non-voters had not even heard about the TV projections. Political preferences of the tiny handful of TV-discouraged voters resembled the electorate at large, further minimizing the chances of early projections transforming the electorate enough to change election outcomes. Identical conclusions were reached in eastern Oregon, where a natural experiment allowed contrasting turnout and time of voting in Malheur County (MST) with that in Grant County (PST).

RESPONDENT SELECTION AND PRE-ELECTION ESTIMATES OF
CANDIDATE PREFERENCE

Michael W. Traugott, University of Michigan

During the course of the 1984 general election campaign, several sets of differences in the national measurement of candidate preference were observed, many of which seemed to be systematic. This paper focuses upon the effects of respondent selection on the distribution of candidate preference, using administrative data from a Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. Taking account of personal characteristics such as registration status and modeling such respondent selection techniques as quotas, number of calls, and substitution of new numbers results in different distributions of party identification, gender, and socioeconomic characteristics of respondents. Their effects on the distribution of candidate preferences are presented and discussed.

SATURDAY 9:00 - 10:30 AM

THE USE OF NONSURVEY METHODS IN PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

MEASURING PUBLIC OPINION THROUGH UNOBTUSIVE METHODS:
THE COMMUNITY CASE STUDY APPROACH

Walter K. Lindenmann, Opinion Research Corporation

One does not always have to conduct a poll to collect public opinion data. In fact, often much more reliable, valid, and far richer and meaningful data can be gathered utilizing other approaches, such as observation, participation, role-playing, and environmental scanning techniques. During the past five years, this reseracher has achieved considerable success in measuring public opinion through the use of an anthropological/sociological community case study research approach. In addition to describing the technique employed and explaining the types of studies that have been completed, this paper will also focus on some of the broader ethical questions that such methodological approaches raise for the serious researcher.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO DEVIANT CASE ANALYSIS,
AND SHOULD IT BE REVIVED?

Ann Pasanella, Columbia University

"Deviant case analysis" was the name Paul Lazarsfeld gave to the analytic process of examining individual cases that broke away from mainstream patterns. He maintained that a case-by-case analysis of these exceptional situations would increase the understanding of large-scale findings in survey research. By contrast, statisticians and natural scientists have tried hard to dispense with deviant cases through various statistical treatments. "Outliers," as they are called, are seen to muddy the waters of research.

A survey of the articles in Public Opinion Quarterly over the past four years finds that deviant case analysis has been neglected. The paper suggests that the technique should be reinstated and gives examples of its positive role in fact-finding research, trend analysis, and causal analysis.

THE LEGACY OF UNCLE TOM'S CABIN: A CASE STUDY IN BOOK HISTORY

Susan B. Neuman, Eastern Connecticut State University

Book history attempts to analyze the role of the book as a force in a changing dynamic culture. Using a case study method, this research concentrates on the publishing history of a major influential book in American history, Uncle Tom's Cabin. The study focuses on the social factors that contributed to its mass distribution in society and how this phenomenon dramatically affected the reading public. The book's influence was further strengthened by three important channels of diffusion: the reviews by the Northern and Southern press, the reaction novels, and the accumulated force of popular opinion. Through the public's interpretation of its message and through media attention, Uncle Tom's Cabin became more than a book; it emerged as a fundamental political symbol of its era.

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN: A PUBLIC OPINION PHENOMENON

Robert L. Cohen, Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc.

Uncle Tom's Cabin (UTC), a best-selling novel about slavery, is often identified as a major influence on public opinion leading up to the American Civil War. In an effort to explore the proposition that Harriet Beecher Stowe's treatment of religion in UTC was a significant factor contributing to the book's impact, I conducted a content analysis of a broad sample of

religious publications. I found that UTC received considerably more attention by free state publications, was noted earlier, and was evaluated more positively. In contrast, there appears to have been a deliberate effort by slave state publications to remain silent about UTC.

SATURDAY 10:45AM - 12:15PM

PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

LAUGHING AT THE POLLS: HOW THE COMICS AND CARTOONS
VIEW PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS

Tom W. Smith, National Opinion Research Center

Especially during a presidential election campaign, polls are popular targets for cartoonists and comic strip writers. When the theme of the pictorial is on the campaign or some other topic besides polls themselves, polls are treated quite benignly. In these instances they are usually accepted as an accurate source of information or merely used as a neutral prop. But when the comic or cartoon focuses on polls, the treatment is almost always negative. The main criticisms of polls are that they are (1) burdensome; (2) inaccurate; (3) confusing to respondents; (4) overshadowing the elections themselves; (5) trivial; and (6) addictive. A related analysis of how interviews and interviewers are portrayed reveals that cartoonists and comic strip writers have a highly distorted view of the details and mechanics of interviewing.

SURVEY RESEARCH: TRENDS IN ATTITUDES AND PARTICIPATION

Stephen Schleifer, Walker Research, Inc.

Since 1974, Walker Research has conducted a biennial Industry Image Study to measure the extent of participation in polls and surveys, and to assess the public's attitudes toward the survey/marketing research industry. The 1984 wave of this research program included 495 telephone interviews conducted among a national probability sample of U.S. households. Additional screening was carried out to produce a quota sample of 201 past-year survey participants. The methodology allows direct comparisons with prior years' studies.

The 1984 findings suggest that reported survey participation has leveled off since 1982. Telephone interviewing predominates. Multiple participation in surveys, and sales pitches conducted under the guise of surveys, are of concern. The survey/marketing research industry's image is positive, although a decline is noted from prior years. Suggestions are offered on what research organizations, survey sponsors, and associations might do to further enhance the industry's image.

SURVEYS ON SURVEYS: LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIALITIES

John Gyder, University of Waterloo

Most studies of survey nonresponse involve either social background variables derived from record linking studies or information from experiments on the optimum "inputs" for maximizing response. A survey on surveys, in which people are questioned about their reasons for responding or refusing on surveys, their past experiences with surveyors, and their general attitude toward the polling industry, helps in achieving a more sociologically rounded view of nonresponse. The paper reports on a 1982 survey on surveys conducted in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Questions about the perceived social pressure to respond, the criteria by which response decisions are formed, and the strength of belief that surveys invade privacy prove to correlate significantly with response history, even with a small case base. The limitation that a survey on surveys preselects a cooperative subset of the population is addressed by splicing the survey-on-survey data with a more conventional record-linking study.

(For Danbury abstract, see page 57)

SATURDAY 10:45AM-12:15PM

THE FEDERAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

FEDERAL STATISTICS: PRESERVING THE PAST, PLANNING THE FUTURE

Katherine K. Wallman, Council of Professional Associations
on Federal Statistics

This paper outlines some of the recent policies and practices that have affected the substance, quality, and accessibility of federal statistics; highlights some of the effects that such policies and practices have had on specific federal statistical programs and products; and points to some emerging developments and opportunities for participation and influence by users of federal statistics.

FEDERAL STATISTICS: EMERGING VALUES AND LIFESTYLES DESERVING RECOGNITION

Norman M. Bradburn, University of Chicago

This paper focuses on current and emerging societal trends that bring into question some of the concepts and definitions underlying the collection and analysis of federal statistics, and examines selected examples of present practice that illustrate the need to update concepts and definitions used in major national statistical programs.

FEDERAL STATISTICS: AN AGENDA FOR RESPONSE TO SOCIETAL TRENDS

Sidney L. Jones, Under Secretary for Economic Affairs,
U.S. Department of Commerce

This paper describes some recent efforts to improve federal statistical programs in light of current and anticipated societal changes, and discusses potential opportunities for further investigation and modification to present practice.

SATURDAY 10:45AM - 12:15 PM

MONITORING THE FUTURE: ATTITUDES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF YOUTH

SOME RECENT TRENDS IN THE ASPIRATIONS, CONCERNS,
AND BEHAVIORS OF AMERICAN YOUNG PEOPLE

Jerald G. Bachman, Lloyd D. Johnston,
Patrick M. O'Malley, University of Michigan

Based on large-scale national surveys of high school seniors and recent graduates in 1975 through 1984, this study presents a number of findings that have a bearing on the quality of life of young people. Most seniors plan and hope for marriage, children, and material well-being; however, the last few graduating classes evidence increased concern about attaining those goals, and thus place growing emphasis on job security, status, and income. At a global level, concerns about the threat of nuclear war have increased substantially from the mid-seventies to the early eighties, and the predominant view among young people is that world conditions will not improve during the next few years. Analyses of drug use showed growing use of marijuana from 1975 through 1979, followed by a decline during the past few years. The decline was accompanied by increasing proportions believing that the regular use of marijuana carried great risks of harm.

CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT: 1972-1980

Tom Hoffer and Jim Wolf, NORC

This paper focuses on the problem of achievement test score decline among American high school cohorts during the 1970s. Hypotheses about the causes of decline are addressed by analysis of comparable questionnaire and achievement test data collected on the senior classes of 1972 (National Longitudinal Survey) and 1980 (High School and Beyond Survey). The principal changes in students' family background were the increasing proportions of black and Hispanic students enrolled and the increasing shift of mothers into the labor force. Regression results indicate that the effects of race and Hispanic ethnicity declined while achievement differences among students whose mothers worked and those whose mothers did not work widened. The effects of academic coursework generally decreased, while the effects of homework increased. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings for issues of educational stratification and secondary school organization.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHANGES IN YOUTHS'
ATTITUDES TOWARD ECONOMIC ISSUES

Steven J. Ingels and Mary Utne O'Brien, NORC

This paper reports the results of the second phase of a two-part study of the economic values and attitudes of junior high school age youth. In the first part of the research, an original measure of economic attitudes was developed, in the form of eight moderately reliable multi-item scales. Subsequently, this measure was applied in a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design to three groups of ninth-graders: a group that had undergone instruction with a particular economics text, a group that had studied alternative materials, and a group that had undergone no economics instruction. This design measured the attitudinal impact of the economics curriculum for both instructional conditions and explored its relationship to such variables as students' socioeconomic background, race, sex, extent of economic knowledge, political beliefs, interest in public affairs, and valued and most-consulted sources of information (e.g., teachers vs. other opinion leaders).

SUNDAY 9:15AM - 10:45AM

TELEVISION AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

MEDIA EVENTS AND PUBLIC IMAGES:
TELEVISION AND THE 1984 OLYMPICS

Susan H. Evans, Melvin A. Goldberg, Peter Clarke
Annenberg School of Communications
University of Southern California

The Summer Olympics, 1984, provided a rare opportunity to put television's power of image-making to the test. How would the American public's conceptions of Olympics sports be shaped by this extraordinary event? And could the crystallization of images be traced to people's direct exposure to television broadcasts?

Our study examines changes in Olympics images, before to after the Games. We attribute shifts that took place to a variety of contributory factors. These include exposure to television's primary coverage, which we consider in light of people's disposition toward sports and the social context of Games viewing.

Evidence is drawn from two pre-post national, cross-sectional surveys, each representing a probability sample of 500 households. Contacts were also made with a national sample during the broadcasts.

Results illuminate television's role in creating media events that preempt the public's attention to other concerns.

PERCEPTIONS OF BIAS IN TELEVISION NEWS

Martin Collins, Social and Community Planning Research
and City University Business School, London

This paper reviews the results of a study of UK viewers' perceptions of bias in TV news coverage. The study examined a number of different aspects of "bias" in respect to three specific issues covered by the news. The results

show that, while people look to TV to provide accurate information, they do so in awareness of the limitations of the medium. Substantial numbers, especially of those with greater interest or involvement in the issue, feel that TV news could show more and that it tends to omit important facts. These criticisms are leveled not at particular channels but at the medium in general. They seem to reflect public recognition that TV cannot deal with such issues in anything more than a simple, and sometimes incomplete, way.

TELEVISION'S IMPACT ON HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

Gary D. Gaddy, University of Wisconsin

This study examines the reciprocal relationship between media use and academic achievement among American high school students. The major hypothesis of the study was that television influences achievement negatively as it displaces other, more beneficial activities. In contrast, it was proposed that reading would have a positive impact on achievement. It was also hypothesized that achievement negatively influences television use and positively influences reading. These hypotheses are evaluated using data from the first two waves of the High School and Beyond project and multiple regression in a cross-lagged model.

SUNDAY 9:15 - 10:45 AM

REFLECTIONS ON THE '84 ELECTION

THE BLITZ: THE USE OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING DURING THE FINAL DAYS OF THE 1984 ELECTION

Montague Kern, National Endowment for the Humanities

This study is based on tapes of all local and national news and political advertising which appeared between 6 and 9 PM in five markets during the final 10 days of the 1984 election. A typology has been developed which includes the emotions ads are targeting (self-worth, trust, intimacy, anger, fear, reassurance) and type of ad (image, preemptive, defensive response), and different types of contrast ads.

Frequency and types of ads are being studied for the various candidates on the congressional, senatorial, gubernatorial, and presidential levels; and in the paper presented here, of all ads aired within the North Carolina and Indiana markets.

This study is the first part of a broader study which moves from the ads themselves to perceptions on the part of campaign managers for both winners and losers of why their advertising was the way it way.

CHANGES IN PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND PARTY IMAGES IN THE REAGAN YEARS

Martin P. Wattenberg, University of California, Irvine

This paper assesses changes in party identification and party images during the 1984 election. During the period from 1952 to 1980 the ratio of Democrats to Republicans in the electorate remained incredibly stable, despite landslides for both parties, at approximately 1.7 to 1. In 1984 many claims were made for a significant increase in Republican identification for the first time since the New Deal. This paper evaluates this claim and investigates which, if any, groups are moving toward the Republicans and why. Crucial to the explanation for what changes are occurring are data on the images of both parties, based on open-ended survey questions.

WINNING AGAINST THE TIDE: DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL INCUMBENTS AND THE 1984 ELECTION

Kurt C. Schlichting, Fairfield University
Peter S. Tuckel, Hunter College, CUNY

While the 1984 general election resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Republican presidential candidate, the number of Democratic incumbent congressional candidates who suffered defeat was minimal. The most prominent explanation is that incumbent candidates win reelection because of their service to constituents.

Using six polls (each n=600) conducted prior to the 1984 election and a post-election survey in November, the present paper examines the factors that contributed to the reelection of a Democratic incumbent congressman in a midwestern state in 1984.

THE MINNESOTA POLL: MONDALE'S APPEAL

Hazel H. Reinhardt, Minneapolis Star and Tribune

Why did Mondale lack decisive appeal even in his home state? The Minnesota Poll probed this question along with the gender gap and political generation gap. Using discriminant and factor analysis over the course of six statewide polls, February - November 1984, Minnesotans' voting preferences were explored. Compared with the public's perception of candidates' leadership qualities, issues were minor. Strong leadership was attributed more to Reagan, compassionate leadership to Mondale. Of the two, strength predicted many more votes. The majority of Minnesotans felt satisfied with the nation's course and planned to vote accordingly. Women generally were less satisfied and responded directly to one issue--abortion. Voting preferences among young Minnesotans were found highly "particularistic," hinging on many issues and candidate attributes simultaneously. Mondale's greatest support came from a small group of Twin Citians over 55 years old. The poll predicted a very close result. On Election Day, Mondale carried the state by 3,721 votes--less than one per precinct.

SUNDAY 11:00AM - 12:30PM

SAMPLING, SIGNIFICANCE, AND ECOLOGICAL CORRELATION

MULTIPLICITY SAMPLES OF ORGANIZATIONAL HIERARCHIES

Joe L. Spaeth, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This paper discusses the sampling design and data collection procedures for a survey of persons with some administrative authority, ranging from first-line supervisors to CEOs of major corporations, heads of governmental agencies, or top administrators in universities and hospitals. The study asked respondents to a survey of employed persons in Illinois to nominate their supervisors, interviewed them by telephone, and then continued up the chain of command to the top. The data constitute a multiplicity sample, with the multiplicity being the number of people reporting, directly and indirectly, to a given position. Thus, both positions and organizations are sampled with probability proportional to "size." This paper reports the interview completion rate by level above original respondents and the procedures used for increasing response, including mail followups and skipping over respondents who refused or were unavailable.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF "STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE"?

Eli S. Marks

The term "significance" as used in statistics is an unfortunate one. The word "significance" carries the connotation of "important" or "meaningful"; and no amount of careful definition and explanation of "statistical significance" by professional statisticians seems sufficient to remove the impression among non-statisticians that "statistical significance" means "substantive significance" and that differences or correlations which are not statistically significant are unimportant and not worth investigating further. The meaningless conclusions generated by this fallacy have created so much confusion among survey researchers that many of us are strongly motivated to reject presentation of any statistical measures more complex than percentages or averages.

The paper presents examples of misinterpretations of so-called "statistical significance" based on actual survey research experiences. It also suggests statistically and substantively sound ways of dealing with the problems presented.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE MEN GONE: THE INCREASING PROBLEM OF MALE
UNDERREPRESENTATION IN SURVEYS

James Dyer, David B. Hill, and Arnold Vedlitz
Texas A&M University

This paper demonstrates the extent of the problem of underrepresentation of males in surveys of the general population, and the extent to which this problem has been increasing.

Using data collected in conjunction with the Texas Poll as well as secondary analysis of national polls, we explore several reasons for the underrepresentation of males and the consequences of it. Finally, we discuss alternatives for dealing with the problem.

TESTING SURROGATE MEASURES FOR HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN MARKET RESEARCH

James A. Sharkey and Loya F. Metzger
The Equitable Life Assurance Society

Recent changes in the financial services industry intensified Equitable's interest in targeting specific market segments, some of which are defined in terms of income. A logical first target for segmentation was current customers, but the corporation had no income data for its customers. Equitable traditionally used annualized premium as a surrogate for income, but the relationship between these variables was never tested. In 1983, the Equitable developed a file that includes information (e.g., median income) about the census tracts in which policyholders live. In late 1984 a survey was conducted to collect data on "true" (i.e., self-reported) Equitable household income. The main objective of the survey was to determine if either premium or the census tract demographics correlate with household income. The findings show a reasonable correlation between self-reported household income and census tract income. There is also a reasonable correlation between total annual life insurance expenditures and self-reported income, but customers typically have life insurance policies with more than one company. The correlation between self-reported income and premiums paid to Equitable is very weak.

SUNDAY 11:00AM - 12:30 PM

THE FLOW OF NEWS AND INFORMATION IN SOCIETY

(For Olien-Tichenor-Donohue abstract, see page 57)

TESTING TRADITIONAL BELIEFS ABOUT COMPETITION AND DIVERSITY

Maxwell McCombs, Syracuse University

Some critics contend that the marketplace of news, entertainment, and commentary in two major Canadian cities became less diverse when the Montreal Star and Winnipeg Tribune suspended publication in the late 1970s, leaving only a single daily in each of those cities.

To outline the empirical situations before and after the suspensions in Montreal and Winnipeg, an extensive content analysis was conducted of 8,788 news-editorial (non-advertising) items in the Montreal Star; its surviving competitor, the Montreal Gazette; the Winnipeg Tribune; and its surviving competitor, the Winnipeg Free Press.

Two competing hypotheses guided the comparisons of these newspapers. The first hypothesis, based on traditional assumptions of competition and diversity, predicts differences both between the competing newspapers and in the surviving newspapers before and after the end of competition. The opposing hypothesis, based on the sociology of news, predicts no significant differences between the newspapers on either comparison.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND THE COMPREHENSION OF NEWS

John Robinson and Mark R. Levy
University of Maryland

Based on separate national samples in the United States and Great Britain, this paper demonstrates the heretofore overlooked importance of interpersonal communication as a major predictor of news awareness and comprehension. Implications of these replicated findings are discussed for the "two-step flow" hypothesis and for the continuing debate over the comparative importance of news/information channels.

THE APPETITE HYPOTHESIS: A NOTE ON AGENDA SETTING

Richard Maisel, New York University

This paper suggests that the mixed results obtained to date in testing the agenda setting function of mass media may be due to the failure to take the subjective state of the public into account. The public may, under certain conditions, be predisposed to react, while under other conditions it may be resistant to the media.

We might, for example, assume an equilibrium level for the public's interest in issues and events. Given such an equilibrium, the degree to which the media can set an agenda at any one point in time is inversely related to the degree to which they have set agenda in the preceding period. In a sense, this hypothesis views opinion formation as an appetite which declines as it is fed and increases as it is starved. Some implications of this appetite hypothesis are examined and some data from the 1969 presidential election are presented to illustrate it.

SUNDAY 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

METHODOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH ON AIDS

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN AIDS-RELATED RESEARCH

Karolynn Siegel and Laurie J. Bauman
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

The AIDS epidemic raises complex and tragic issues, which social researchers have begun to address. However, this phenomenon presents formidable challenges to the design and conduct of scientific studies. The unique social and psychological implications of the illness, the socially marginal populations at risk for the disease, and the extraordinary ethical considerations create special methodological difficulties.

In this paper, we discuss design issues in studies of AIDS patients and those at risk for AIDS, including subject recruitment and sampling, defining subject eligibility, socially acceptable response bias, collecting sensitive data, interviewer bias, and protection of human subjects. Alternative strategies for addressing these problems are discussed, each involving its own inevitable trade-offs. Points of continuity and discontinuity between AIDS-related research and the study of other threatening and sensitive topics are examined.

DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE AIDS-PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

Larry L. Bye and Rebecca C. Quarles
Research Decisions Corporation

This paper, based on a two-wave longitudinal study conducted in San Francisco, California, suggests that the AIDS epidemic has deeply affected both the sexual behavior and lifestyles of homosexual men. Two-thirds report that they are now either celibate, monogamous, or practicing "safe sex" only as a result of the epidemic. The baseline study suggested that AIDS-prevention educational messages will be most persuasive if they emphasize the social acceptability of safe sexual practices rather than the risks attached to unsafe behavior. Longitudinal data bear on how effective the campaign has been over time in effecting behavioral change.

HOW DO YOU SCREEN FOR SEXUAL PREFERENCE?
SAMPLING AND INTERVIEWING GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN

Rebecca C. Quarles and Larry L. Bye
Research & Decisions Corporation

In 1984, Research & Decisions Corporation conducted a study to aid in the design of an effective public information campaign to persuade gay and bisexual men to adopt safer sex practices. The study involved 500 telephone interviews with self-identified gay and bisexual men living in San Francisco. Although the subject matter was extremely sensitive, and the interview asked respondents to disclose the most intimate details of their sexual lives, just 3% of contacts either refused to disclose their sexual preference, or, having identified themselves as gay or bisexual, refused to continue with the interview. This presentation discusses the methodological issues involved in surveying a hard-to-reach population about an emotionally charged subject. The success of the project is due both to the high level of concern about AIDS among San Francisco gays and to interviewing techniques for winning respondent trust and building rapport.

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PREDICTIVE ACCURACY OF PRE-ELECTION POLLS

Irving Crespi, Irving Crespi and Associates

A comprehensive compilation of final pre-election poll results for media-sponsored polls during the last four years was conducted in order to evaluate the accuracy of pre-election polls and to lay the groundwork for identifying the methodological and contextual correlates of accuracy. In light of the proliferation of polling with respect to state and local offices, this compilation was not restricted to national polls. This study differs from the SSRC study of the 1948 elections in that it does not seek to evaluate the sources of error of particular polls in a single election. Instead, it compares the aggregate accuracy of pre-election and pre-primary polls conducted at the national, state, and local levels.

THE EFFECTS OF THE FIRST 1984 PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE
ON ISSUE AND IMAGE ASSESSMENTS

Donna Rouner and Richard M. Perloff
Cleveland State University

This study examines how functional the United States presidential debates are for individual members of the political system. Over 200 residents of greater Cleveland, selected through random digit dialing procedures, were interviewed prior to the first 1984 presidential debate, and 138 were re-interviewed after the debate. The results indicated that debate exposure exerted a significant impact on assessments of Walter Mondale's image, while exerting comparatively less effect on Ronald Reagan's image or on voters' issue proximity to Mondale or Reagan.

The influences of several contingent conditions on image and issue assessments were also explored. These findings suggested that ideological constraint and campaign interest interacted to affect assessments of Mondale's image while economic self-interest and active use of political media exerted somewhat different effects. The relationship between these findings and recent studies of selective political perception is also discussed.

TOWARD A GENERAL THEORY OF SELF-INTEREST EFFECTS

Donald Philip Green, University of California, Berkeley
(AAPOR Student Paper Award)

Public opinion research has consistently found a weak relationship between material interests and attitudes toward policy issues. The persistent failure of self-interest explanations is not well understood. This paper examines some of the factors governing the influence of material self-interest. Analysis of three women's issues from the 1976 and 1980 National Election Studies and an incomes policy issue from the 1983 General Social Survey supports the following conclusions:

1. The influence of self-interest varies from issue to issue, depending on the size and clarity of the stakes involved.
2. Self-interest is more influential among the areligious, among those who view others as predatory and untrustworthy, and among those who reject norms of self-reliance.

We then analyze previous research in light of these findings and comment on the utility of the self-interest explanation.

THE VALUES AND ATTITUDES OF MARKET AND SURVEY RESEARCHERS

Thomas Danbury, Survey Sampling, Inc.

What attitudes exist among survey and market researchers toward their field? To study the professional concerns of researchers, nondirective interviews were conducted with 110 persons selected to balance age, sex, geography, job level and type of organization. Over 4,000 attitudinal statements were extracted and then reduced by judgment and pre-testing to 101 items,

The items were administered as Q-sorts to 126 researchers, including most original respondents. Using persons as variables, a factor analysis produced six "ideal types": the Midwestern Corporate Researcher, the Surveyer, the Ad Agency Researcher, the Eastern Researcher, the Analyst and the Marketing Fan.

The characteristics of these types will be reviewed, with special emphasis on the Analyst (who identifies most strongly with social science). The typology provides insight into the complex interrelationships that exist in this dynamic and changing field.

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT, NEWSPAPER USE, AND KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL ISSUES

Clarice N. Olien, Phillip J. Tichenor, and George A. Donohue
University of Minnesota

This paper is an exploration of some of the origins of citizen attachment to the community and the contribution which such attachment makes to knowledge about local issues. Data from ten Minnesota communities indicate that the more homogeneous the community, the higher the attachment among citizens. Data do not support the hypothesis that the more homogeneous the community, the greater the strength of the association between use of the community newspaper and attachment. In fact, the strongest links between local reading and attachment are in the suburbs, which contradicts the hypothesis. Also, the suburbs are the only area in which both local newspaper reading and community attachment make separate contributions to knowledge of local issues. These findings suggest the need for some revisions in interpretation of the role of the press in different kinds of communities.

ROUNDTABLES

INTERACTION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OPINION IN ATTITUDES TOWARD A
PUBLICIZED MURDER CASE

Stuart Herman, Technical Analysis and Communication
Charles Winick, City College, CUNY
Jay Schulman, New York, NY

A controversial murder case in Scranton, Pennsylvania is discussed in terms of the interaction between privately held opinions and opinions voiced to survey interviewers and during jury selection. The victim, a prominent local official, had been identified with irregular sexual behavior, which had led to substantial sympathy for the man accused of killing him. The prosecution, seeking to determine community attitudes toward the murder, commissioned a survey, the results of which are discussed in terms of latent and manifest dimensions of public opinion and the unexpected outcome of the case.

OBSCENITY RESEARCH: TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

Joseph Scott, Ohio State University
Dennis K. Benson, Appropriate Solutions, Inc.

In 1973, the United States Supreme Court, in Miller v. California, outlined a new test to determine whether material was obscene or not. One of the three key elements of this new test is: ". . . whether the material taken as a whole, applying contemporary community standards, appeals to the prurient interest."

This paper addresses the problems encountered in determining community standards in a manner acceptable for use in the courtroom. In addition, the paper addresses problems of working with attorneys and experts, briefing interviewers, and dealing with respondents. The paper is based on actual studies and courtroom experiences in communities and states across the country.

REPORTING SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN THE MEDIA

Michael W. Traugott and Stanley Presser, University of Michigan
Philip Meyer, University of North Carolina

This roundtable will focus on the quality of the reporting of social science research in the media and alternative means for improving it. In addition to discussion of the conflicting values of news practice as they affect reporting the complexities of social science phenomena, attention will be devoted to a review of programs designed to increase the familiarity of reporters and editors with the scientific process and its outputs and how to cover them. Participation in this roundtable session is encouraged for practicing journalists as well as social scientists who conduct research on reporting or who conduct training programs or seminars for editors and reporters.

AN ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENT TASKS DURING SCREENING
FOR THE NATIONAL CRIME SURVEY

Elizabeth A. Martin and Naomi D. Rothwell
Bureau of Social Science Research

Many surveys rely on respondents' ability to recall and willingness to report past events. For example, victimization rates are based on reports from the National Crime Survey and estimates of health conditions are derived from the National Health Interview Survey. Such surveys employ a procedure called "screening," in which a series of detailed questions is asked to stimulate memories and elicit reports of specific incidents and conditions. After screening is completed, more detailed questions are asked about each event reported.

The cognitive and conceptual demands which screening places on respondents in the National Crime Survey are described. Following that are some of the approaches to questionnaire design which were introduced to enhance respondents' performance of the tasks demanded of them.

THE HISPANIC RESPONDENT

Diane O'Rourke and Johnny Blair
Survey Research Laboratory, University of Illinois

Almost all methodological research relating to surveys is conducted on samples of the "general public"--that heterogeneous group that includes all types of people, roughly in proportion to their prevalence in the population. Consequently, the research results are based on data from the white majority. The purpose of this research is to compare Hispanic respondents to non-Hispanic respondents, noting the similarities and differences in contact patterns, to assess whether general survey response patterns derived from samples of the general public are generalizable to minority populations.

In comparing Hispanics and non-Hispanics as telephone respondents, we looked at how easy the household was to reach and what times were more productive. We also compared household characteristics. Many of the results showed clear differences not only by Hispanic-non-Hispanic, but further, by language and race. Consequently, the results are broken down by white, black, English-speaking Hispanic (interview conducted in English), and Spanish-speaking Hispanic (interview conducted in Spanish). These differences indicate that research on general survey response patterns derived from samples of the general public may not be generalizable to minority populations.

MAILED QUESTIONNAIRES AND TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS IN HEALTH SURVEYS

Judith Fiedler, Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound

An ongoing program of Consumer Opinion Surveys conducted by a 350,000-member HMO provided an opportunity to compare responses under differing methodologies in the same population. In the third year of the survey program, data collection shifted from mailed questionnaires to telephone interviews. An effect of this change was the anticipated increase in response rate, from approximately 55% to 93%. As was expected, this increase in response produced a more representative group of respondents, with age, sex, and experience much more closely matched to the actual population.

Comparisons of results across the program years permit us to draw some conclusions about the effects of self-selection and refusal on survey findings. Willingness to respond appeared related to utilization, with high utilizers more likely to participate. Reported levels of satisfaction, however, did not appear to be affected by the change in method or increased representation.

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cover design: Emily Singer