Collaboration between Academics and Election Officials and Scientific Musings on List Maintenance

Charles Stewart III
August 23, 2017

National Association of State Election Directors
Anaheim California
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*Title chosen by Judd
Two Topics of Substance

• Voter confidence
• List maintenance (or what we can learn from aggregate statistics)
Purpose

• Advance and disseminate scientific knowledge about the conduct of U.S. elections.

• Foster a community of scholars who are dedicated to rigorous and useful knowledge in this area.

• Be a convening place for scholars and practitioners.
Advisory Board

- **Lonna Rae Atkeson**, Political Science Department, University of New Mexico
- **Barry C. Burden**, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- **Lori Edwards**, Polk County, Florida Supervisor of Elections
- **Heather Gerken**, Yale Law School
- **Paul Gronke**, Political Science Department, Reed College
- **Kathleen Hale**, Department of Political Science, Auburn University
- **Kevin Kennedy**, State of Wisconsin, Retired
- **Jan Leighley**, Department of Government, American University
- **Dean C. Logan**, Los Angeles County, California Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
- **Christopher B. Mann**, Department of Political Science, Skidmore College
- **Amber McReynolds**, Director of Elections, Denver, Colorado
- **Don Palmer**, Bipartisan Policy Center
- **Tammy Patrick**, Democracy Fund
- **Peggy Reeves**, Office of Connecticut Secretary of the State
- **Daron R. Shaw**, Department of Government, The University of Texas at Austin
- **Christopher Thomas**, Michigan Bureau of Elections Director
Some Things We Will Be/Are Doing

• Research projects
  – Polling place/wait times
  – Voter confidence
  – List maintenance

• Small grant program

• Summer conference on election science

• Various convenings
  – AVR
  – Elections co-op
  – Cybersecurity
  – Post-election audits

• Elections Performance Index

• Identification of fellow-travelling institutions

• Identification of fellow-travelling scholars
Fellow travelers

• BYU, Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy
• New Mexico, Center for the Study of Voting, Elections, and Democracy
• Ohio State, Election Law @ Moritz
• Reed College, Early Voting Information Center
• Wisconsin, Elections Research Center
• Others?
CONFIDENCE

I Voted

Did It Count?
Voter Confidence as a Metric of Election Performance

Paul Gronke

From the Survey of the Performance of American Elections

How confident are you that your vote was counted as you intended?

• **Very confident**
• Somewhat confident
• Not too confident
• Not at all confident
How confident are you that your vote was counted as you intended?

Source: SPAE
How confident are you that your vote was counted as you intended?

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How confident are you that your vote was counted as you intended?

Source: SPAE
Confidence across Geography: 2012

Source: SPAE
Confidence across Geography: 2014

Source: SPAE
Confidence across Geography: 2016

Level of government:
- Nation
- State
- County
- Your vote

Source: SPAE
Nationwide confidence, pre/post-election

Source: CCES
Nationwide confidence, pre/post-election

Source: CCES
Nationwide confidence, pre/post-election

Source: CCES
Nationwide confidence, pre/post-election

Source: CCES
“Your vote” confidence

Source: CCES
“Your vote” confidence

Before election  | After election
---|---
Dem. 2012 | 60
Rep. 2016 | 50
All 2016 | 65

Source: CCES
Summary Thus Far

- Confidence that votes were counted accurately/as cast has been roughly constant across time
Summary Thus Far

• Confidence that votes were counted accurately/as cast has been roughly constant across time
• Partisanship is a powerful drug
Summary Thus Far

• Confidence that votes were counted accurately/as cast has been roughly constant across time
• Partisanship is a powerful drug
• Things look better the closer you are to them
Some Things that Matter beyond Party
Mode of voting

Confidence your vote will be counted as cast

Source: CCES
Role of poll worker performance

Source: CCES
Being a battleground state

![Graph showing the relationship between the percentage of respondents who feel very confident in their vote and the percentage margin of winning the presidential candidate. The graph compares Trump won state and Clinton won state.](image)
Some Things that Don’t Matter
Voting on Paper vs. Plastic

![Graph showing voting confidence by type of voting machine and jurisdiction level.]

- **Pct. very confident**
- **Scanned paper**
- **DRE**
- **Voting Machine Type**
- **Your vote**
- **County's vote**
- **State's vote**
- **Nation's vote**
Reg. rate as % of CVAP
Final Words on Confidence

• Confidence is moved by the most obvious things to voters
  – Partisanship
  – Personal experience

• Confidence is generally unaffected by changes to election administration
  – ...except it can be affected (a little bit) by partisanship
Good news, Dear! They've halted Voter ID laws and voter registration reforms! So, now you can keep on voting!

Voter list maintenance
The Elections Performance Index, or EPI, is the first comprehensive assessment of election administration in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Using data from 17 key indicators, the EPI makes it possible to compare election administration policy and performance across the states and from one election cycle to the next.

Are the registration rolls accurate?
How would we know?
Two Ways to Answer This Question

• Individual audits
• Aggregate statistics
Individual audits

Voter Registration List Quality Pilot Studies: Report on Detailed Results*

Stephen Ansolabehere
Eitan Hersh
Department of Government
Harvard University

Alan Gerber
David Doherty
Department of Political Science
Yale University

June 8, 2010
- Survey respondents identified discrepancies in their listed name, birthdate, address, and other details listed in registration records. Among Florida respondents, 12.0% found a discrepancy in their record. In L.A., 9.6% found a discrepancy.

- Registrants who recently registered or recently updated their registrations were more likely to report discrepancies on their voter records.

- Undeliverable mail and registrant-reported discrepancies are associated with the age of registrants, with the highest rates of invalid records occurring for registrants in their twenties and for registrants in their eighties and nineties. The large proportion of elderly residents in Florida contributes to a higher rate of undeliverable mail there.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:30 – 7:00 pm</td>
<td>Nixon Library Tour (drinks and snacks will be provided on the tour bus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 9:00 am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:30 am</td>
<td>Bi-Partisan Policy Center (BPC) Report on 2016 Election Lines: Don Palmer and Matt Weil, BPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:30 am</td>
<td>California County Innovations: Jana Lean, California, Chair; Dean Logan, L.A. County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk and Neil Kelley, Orange Co., Registrar of Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 – 11:00 am</td>
<td>Using a State’s Address Library to Improve List Maintenance: Michael McDonald, University of Florida</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aggregate Statistics
How many people “should” be on the voter rolls?
Registered voters in the U.S.: 201,377,938*

*Estimated from 2015-2016 EAC NVRA Report
Registered voters in the U.S.:
201,377,938*
(91% of CVAP)

*Estimated from 2015-2016 EAC NVRA Report
Eligible electorate
Eligible electorate

Unregistered eligible electorate

Registered eligible electorate
Eligible electorate

Unregistered eligible electorate

Registered eligible electorate
Eligible electorate

Unregistered eligible electorate

Registered eligible electorate
Eligible electorate

Unregistered eligible electorate

Registered eligible electorate

Deadwood
Eligible electorate

Unregistered eligible electorate

Deadwood

Registered eligible electorate

Registered ineligible electorate
Moving and ageing-in: the main sources of new registrants

23m interstate movers/4 yrs.
19m new 18-year-olds/4 yrs.
3m naturalized adults/4 yrs.
(45m total)
Moving and ageing-in: the main sources of new registrants

23m interstate movers/4 yrs.
19m new 18-year-olds/4 yrs.
3m naturalized adults/4 yrs.
(45m total)

New registrants: 45m*

Additions by State

![Graph showing the relationship between estimated voting population additions and total new registrations.](image-url)
Dying and moving out: the main sources of ineligibility (and deadwood)

11m deaths/4 yrs.
23m interstate movers/4 yrs.
(34m total)
Dying and moving out: the main sources of ineligibility (and deadwood)

11m deaths/4 yrs.
23m interstate movers/4 yrs.
(34m total)

Removals due to death: 6.2m
Removals due to moving: 9.8m
Removals due to conf. notice: 9.6m
All other reasons: 5.2m
(30.8m total)

Removals by State (thousands)
Removals due to death

![Graph showing the relationship between total deaths of adults and removals due to deaths. The x-axis represents total deaths of adults, and the y-axis represents total removals due to deaths. The graph includes a linear trend line and scattered data points.]

Total removals due to deaths

Total deaths of adults

- Removable columns:
- 1,000
- 10,000
- 100,000
- 1,000,000
Removals due to moving

![Graph showing the relationship between total out-of-state movers and total removals due to moving.](image-url)
Removals due to moving

Total removals due to moving

Total removals due to moving + list maintenance

Total out-of-state movers

Total out-of-state movers
Concluding Thoughts

• Assessments of election quality (e.g., EPI) need to measure quality of state list maintenance
  – This assessment must be based on observables (e.g., EAVS)
Concluding Thoughts

• I think we’re going to find it’s systematically easier to add to the rolls than remove from the rolls
  – Therefore, there appears to be a “natural accelerator” to the size of voter lists
Concluding Thoughts

• If more people like me are going to be paying closer attention to NVRA/EAVS reports, let’s work together to achieve uniform coverage and greater uniformity of reporting.
Concluding Thoughts

• If more people who are interested in litigation are going to be paying closer attention to NVRA/EAVS reports, let’s **really** work together to achieve uniform coverage and greater uniformity of reporting.
Charles Stewart III

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• @cstewartiii

• Election Updates
  – electionupdates.caltech.edu