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### **Survey Methods of the *Berkeley IGS Poll***

The *Berkeley IGS Poll* is a regularly scheduled non-partisan survey of California public opinion conducted by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. A component of the University of California system's flagship Berkeley campus, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. Each poll is conducted to assess voter opinions on important public policy issues facing California on behalf of the University.

#### **Data collection**

The poll is administered online by distributing email and text message invitations to stratified random samples of registered voters across the state of California. The invitations ask voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the Institute and provides a link to the IGS website where the questionnaire is housed. The invitation describes the broad purposes of the poll, its sponsorship, how long the survey is likely to take, and the fact that all email addresses were obtained from publicly accessible information contained on the state's voter rolls and is signed by the Institute's co-directors, Professor Eric Schickler and Associate Professor G. Cristina Mora.

A consent form is also appended, which respondents are required to complete before beginning the survey. The consent form gives voters additional information about the survey explaining that their responses will remain anonymous and that all personally identifiable information about them will be purged from the data file and replaced with a unique identification number during data processing. Respondents are also provided with the contact information of the IGS co-directors, as well as that of the UC Berkeley

Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, should they have any questions or concerns about the poll.

To maximize survey participation, up to four email and text message invitations are distributed to voters at different intervals during the data collection period. An opt-out link is provided at the bottom of each invitation for voters not wishing to receive future emails from IGS about the survey. While participation is voluntary, to encourage participation voters are also told that by responding to the survey they will be entered into a drawing to win a gift card worth \$200.

The relatively low cost of sampling voters through the email and text message invitation method enables IGS to efficiently retrieve very large samples of the voter participants in its polls, typically on the order of 4,000 - 6,000. The large sample sizes enable the findings to be subdivided and reliably examined across major geographic subregions, as well as across a wide range of political and demographic subgroups of the registered voter population. Samples of this size also lend greater opportunities to align the sample to population characteristics of the registered voters under study through statistical weighting.

### **Questionnaire development**

The *Berkeley IGS Poll* director typically takes the lead in developing the survey questionnaire, working in consultation with the IGS co-directors, who serve as each study's principal investigators, and with reporters and editors of the *Los Angeles Times*, who serve as the poll's media partner. University faculty members, other campus institutes, as well as non-profit centers and foundations are given the option of adding questions to the polls to further their own research on public policy topics for separate publication.

Once the survey questionnaire has been finalized, it is forwarded to the University's Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS), which is responsible for reviewing all human subjects research on the Berkeley campus. Once approval from

CPHS has been received, the survey materials are then translated into Spanish and both the English and Spanish language versions of the survey questionnaire are programmed for online administration. Before launching the survey, the web-based programs are thoroughly tested on PC to ensure that the survey's logic and randomizations are working properly and to review their appearance to voters on the different mobile and computer devices.

### **Sampling**

The *Berkeley IGS Poll* employs a registration-based sampling approach by selecting voters through a stratified random sampling process from listings originating from the voter registration rolls, which is a public record. Sample listings are provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc. (PDI), a leading supplier of voter lists to the California research community, and which also assists IGS in distributing its SMS text message invitations to voters.

PDI's listings of the California registered voter population are regularly updated at the county level to ensure that the samples provided to IGS are current and reflect the state's ever-changing voter population. In addition, because the poll's sample listings originate from the voter rolls, all survey participants are known to registered voters, as is their party registration, which is not often the case for polls that employ other, alternate survey methods.

In addition, because IGS has found that response rates to email and text message invitations can vary in relation to a voter's age, gender, or other demographic factors, before drawing its samples IGS provides PDI with instructions for stratifying its overall statewide voter file into different strata and to then randomly select voters within each stratum. This is done so that proportionately greater numbers of registered voters can be drawn for the lower responding voter segments, while proportionately fewer listings are drawn for the higher responding segments. This procedure increases the survey's chances of retrieving a proper balance of respondents across each stratum.

To ensure a proper representation of the state's non-English-speaking Latino voter population, IGS also draws random samples of voters from the pool of registered voters who request having their voting materials sent to them in Spanish. These voters are sent their email and text message invitations in Spanish and given the opportunity to complete the survey in either Spanish or English.

IGS sometimes augments its samples with additional listings targeting voters who live within a particular geographic area of the state or within specific demographic or political voter subgroups. When sample augmentations of targeted subgroups are included, weights are developed to adjust the oversampled segments back to their actual shares of the registered voter population under examination during data processing.

### **Data processing**

The state's voter rolls contain a wealth of publicly available information, such as voters' age, gender, county and political jurisdiction of residence, party registration and history of voting in past elections. This information is merged into each respondent's survey record during the survey's data processing phase.

Survey responses from key demographic questions are then compared to the demographic data contained on the voter file to ensure that the information provided by the respondent is consistent with the information that resides on their voter registration record. Where obvious inconsistencies are found, these cases are deleted from the data file.

All other personally identifiable information about the voter derived from their voter record is then purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing to protect the anonymity of respondents in the final data file.

### **Weighting Procedures**

At the conclusion of data collection, sample adjustment weights are applied to bring the survey sample into alignment with known demographic and geographic characteristics of the registered voter population under examination. This is done using raking procedures, also referred to as sample balancing. Raking is an iterative process in which survey estimates are controlled to their marginal population distributions. The raking process can be thought of as a multidimensional poststratification procedure because the weights are post-stratified to one set (or dimension) of control totals, and these adjusted weights are post-stratified to another dimension. This process is iterated until the control totals for all dimensions are simultaneously satisfied, resulting in the production of a final single weighting assignment for each respondent. As a final step, the weighting assignments are trimmed so that no single respondent is assigned an abnormally large weight.

Weighting targets are derived from population estimates reported to IGS by PDI from its voter files, and when appropriate, from other sources, such as the California Secretary of State, Registrars of Voters, or the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The variables typically included in the development of the survey's weighting targets include age, gender, race/ethnicity, English language proficiency, tenure, educational attainment, party registration, voting participation in past elections, geographic region and urbanicity of their residence, or combinations of these variables. In designing the weights, targets incorporate important interactions to help address problems of differential non-response.

### **Tabulation of the results**

Detailed tabulations are then prepared that display the results to each survey question in total and across a wide range of geographic, political, and demographic subgroups of the registered voter sample. These tabulations also display the unweighted and weighted sample sizes of each segment to permit the calculation of sampling error estimates for each of the subgroups.

When polling on election contests, additional tabulations are prepared filtering the survey results among voters considered most likely to vote in an upcoming election. IGS typically defines likely voters from respondent testimony about their stated interest in or intention to vote in the upcoming election combined with their history of voting in recent past elections gathered from their voting record.

### **Reporting**

The study director typically takes the lead in analyzing the survey results and summarizing its main findings in press release-style reports for public release. These press releases are then posted onto the *Berkeley IGS Poll* website at <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>, where they can be downloaded via eScholarship, the University's open-access publication platform.

Each release includes a summary of the poll's main findings, accompanied by tables examining the survey results across key population subgroups or to past measures on the same topic. A fact sheet is also appended providing details about how the poll was conducted, the dates of data collection, and the wording and order in which the questions being reported were asked in the survey to conform with the guidelines of the American Association for Public Opinion Research's Transparency Initiative.

### **Data archiving**

Approximately one to two months after the completion of each poll, the source data file containing the results of each survey are archived and made accessible to students, faculty, and others for scholarly review and secondary analysis through the University's Dataverse platform.