

Does Mode Matter For Modeling Political Choice? Evidence From the 2005 British Election Study



by

Harold Clarke

David Sanders

Marianne Stewart

Paul Whiteley



Survey Modes For National Election Studies - Pros & Cons

- ***Traditional In-Person*** - VERY Expensive (Big Chunks of NSF & ESRC PSCI Budgets!), Very Slow
- ***RDD Telephone*** - Increasingly Expensive, Fast
- ***Self-Completion Mail Questionnaires*** - Inexpensive, Slow
- ***Internet*** - Inexpensive, ***VERY Fast***

The Rap on Internet Surveys: Limited Coverage and NonProbability Samples

- In-Person Surveys - The ANES Gold Standard
- RDD Surveys - The CES Gold Standard
- In-Person & RDD Surveys - Probability Samples, **but** Potential Respondents Select Out
- Unit Non-Response - Now Large in both In-Person and RDD, Sometimes Huge in RDD
- Internet Surveys - Non-Probability Samples (but KN), Potential Respondents Select In
- *All Modes Have Selection Biases*

The 2005 BES

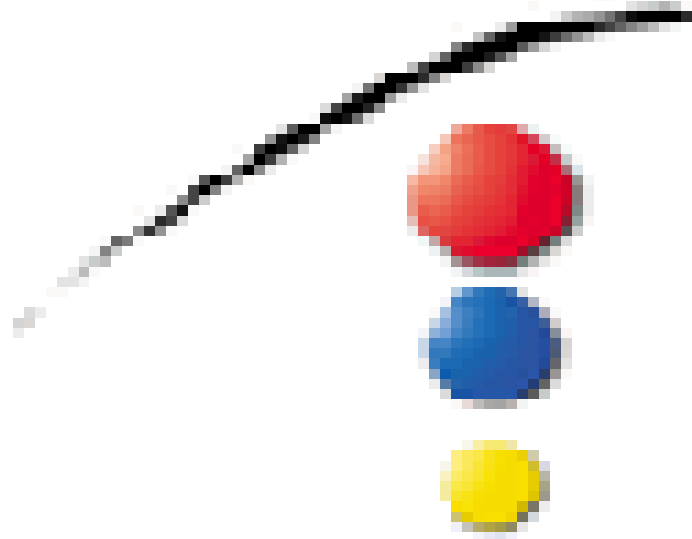


Figure 1: Probability and Internet Panel Survey Design in the 2005 British Election Study

BES 2005 CORE FACE-TO-FACE PANEL

Wave 1 Pre-election
Probability Sample,
Face-to-Face N=3589
128 PSUs



Wave 2 Post-election
Probability Sample,
Face-to-Face N=4161
Including top-up,
mail-back; 128 PSUs



Wave 3 One Year Out
Internet users from Wave
2 Probability Sample, Internet
Survey Method N=983



Face-to-face vs
Internet sampling
experiment (1)



Face-to-face vs
Internet sampling
experiment (2)



Probability Internet
sample versus traditional
Internet sample
Sampling
Experiment:

BES 2005 INTERNET CAMPAIGN PANEL SURVEY:

Wave 1
Pre-campaign
Baseline Survey
N=7793



Wave 2
Campaign survey
200 interviews per
Day for 30 days
N=6068



Wave 3
Post-election
Interview
N=5910



Wave 4
One Year Out
Interview
N=6186



Survey Houses

- **In-Person** -> National Center for Social Research 'Natcen' - conducted 1983 - 1997 BES
- **Internet** -> YouGov - also conducting NSF-sponsored 'Valence Politics and the Dynamics of Party Support' Project

Figure 2. Reported Vote In-Person and Internet Post-Election Surveys and Actual Vote in Britain, 2005 General Election

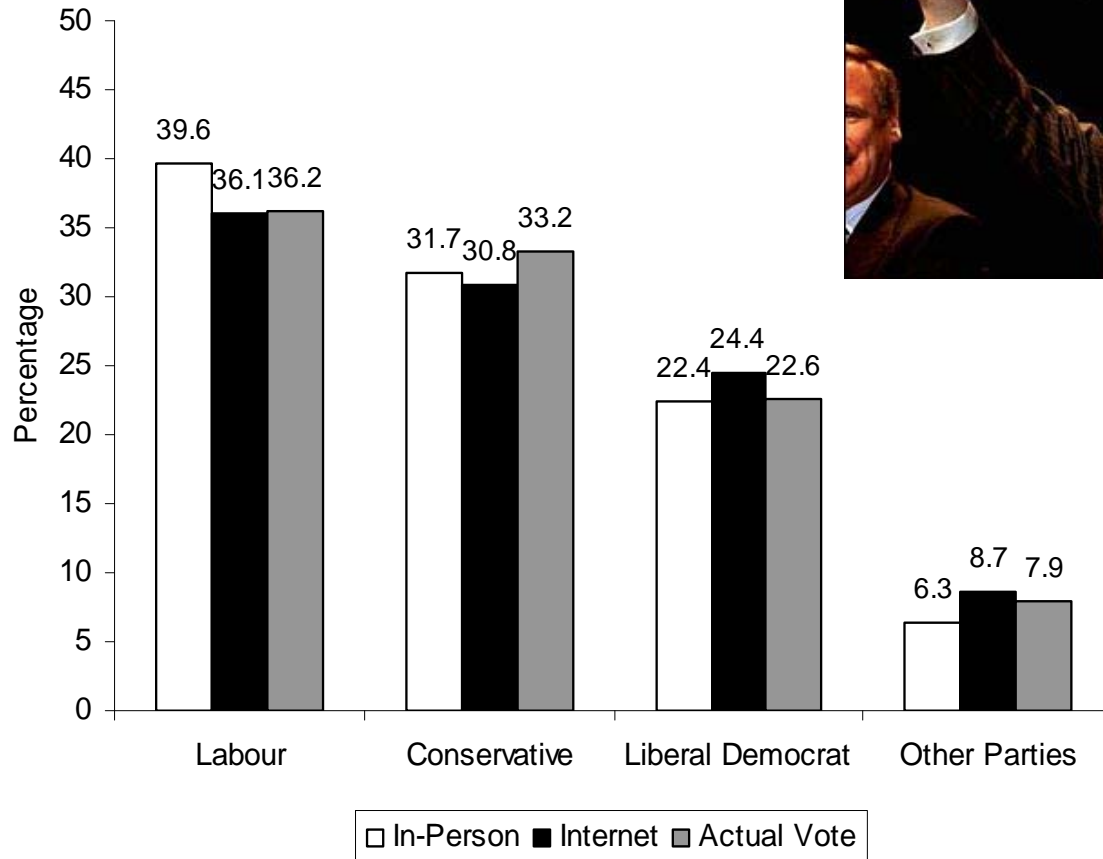


Figure 3. Party Identification in Pre- and Post-Election In-Person and Internet Surveys

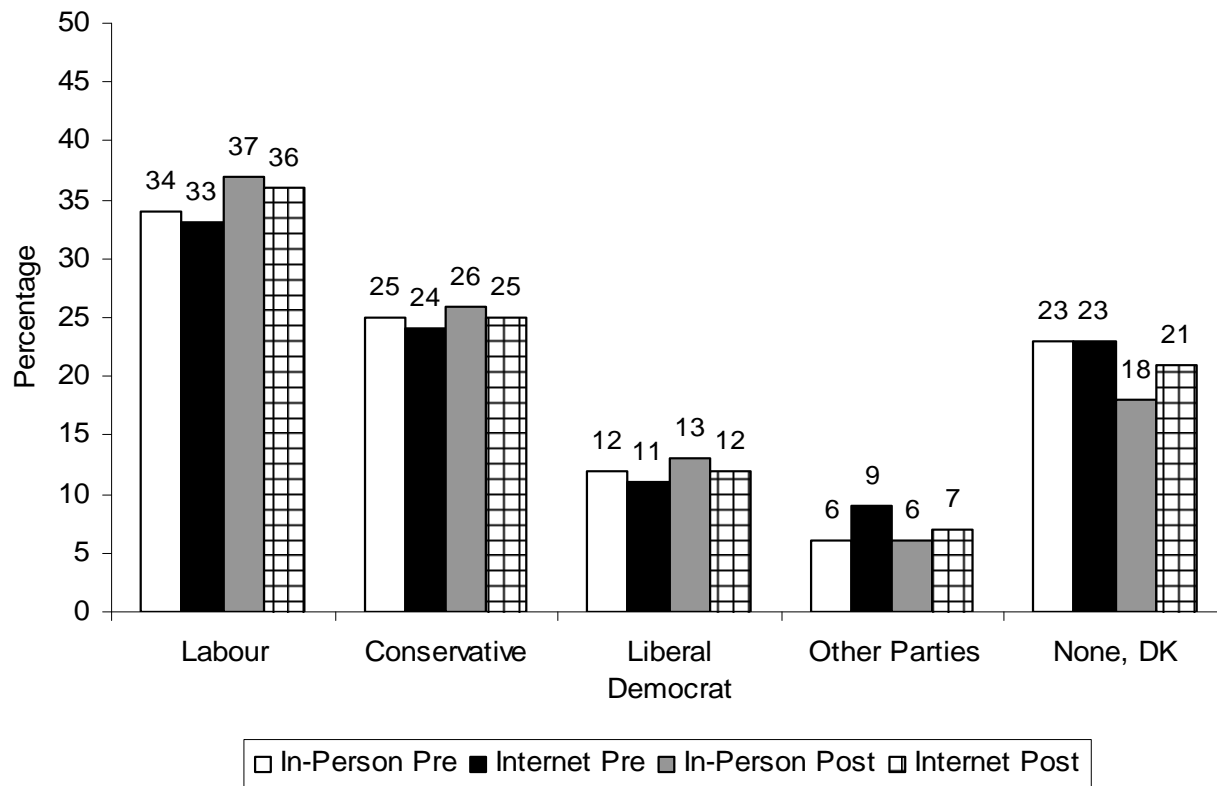
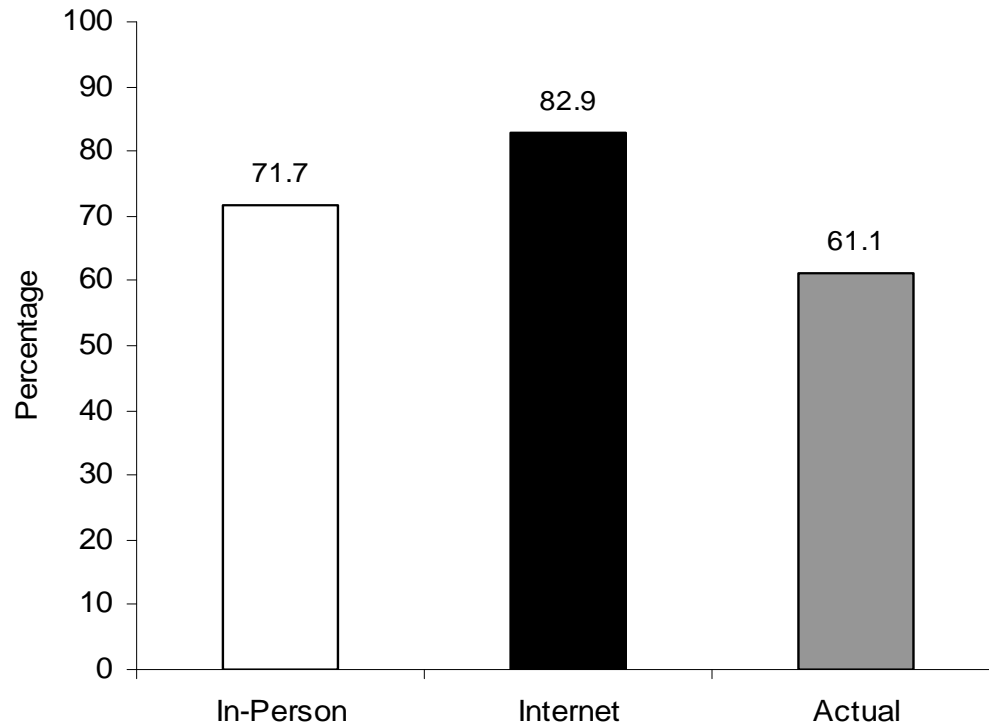
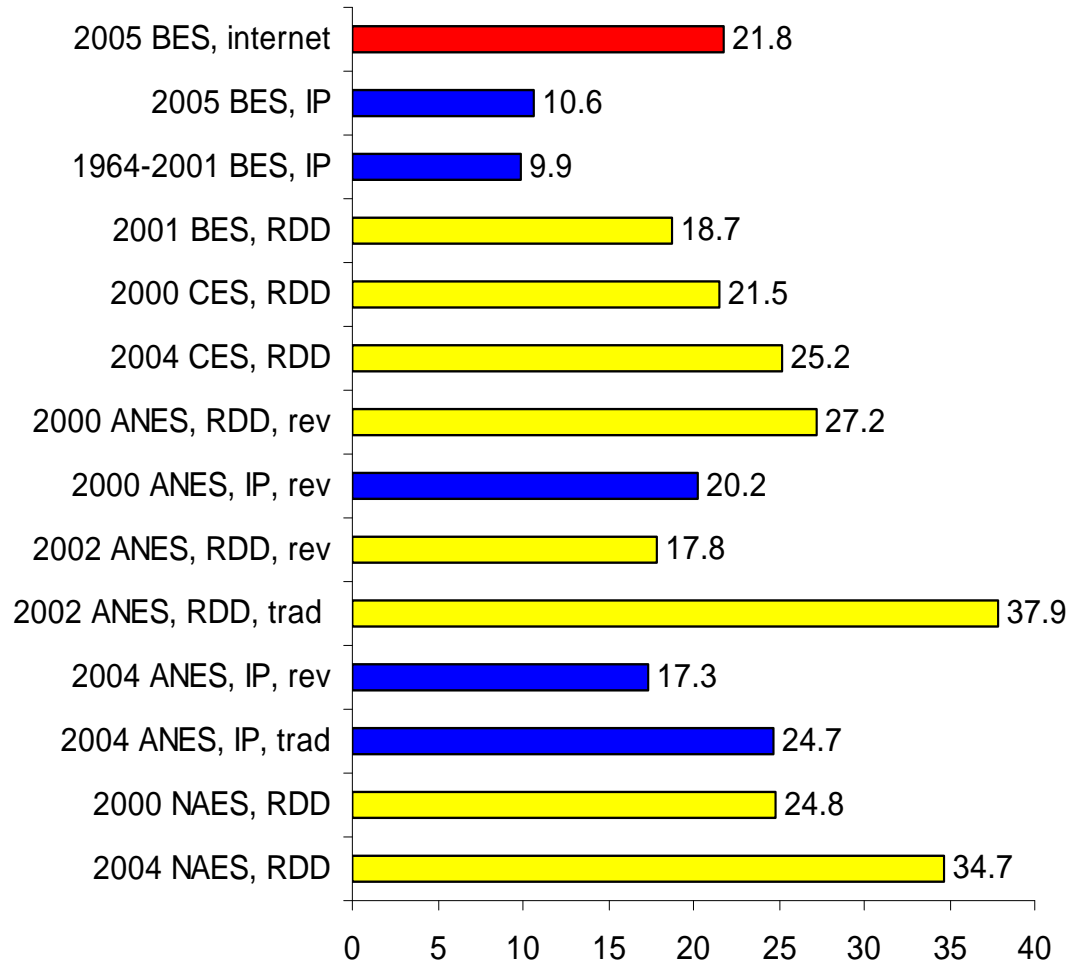


Figure 4. Reported Turnout in In-Person and Internet Surveys and Actual Turnout in 2005 British General Election



Data Quality? Comparative Overreports of Turnout in National Election Studies



Composite Labour Vote Model

- **Party Leader Images**
- **Party Best Most Important Issue**
- **Party Identification**
- **Party-Issue Proximities**
- **Economic Evaluations**
- **Opinions about Iraq War**
- **Tactical Voting**
- **Demographics**

Table 5. Comparative Performance of Rival Party Choice Models

McFadden R2 *McKelvey R2* *AIC* *BIC*

A. Models Estimated Using In-Person Survey Data

Social Class	.01	.02	2794.20	2805.51
All Demographics	.03.	.06	2753.54	2810.08
Economic Evaluations	.07	.13	2633.38	2644.69
Issue Proximities	.12	.22	2507.63	2530.25
Most Important Issue	.27	.40	2079.75	2108.02
Party Identification	.37	.48	1794.87	1823.14
Leader Images	.40	.65	1692.95	1715.56
Composite Model	.58	.76	1256.45	1414.76

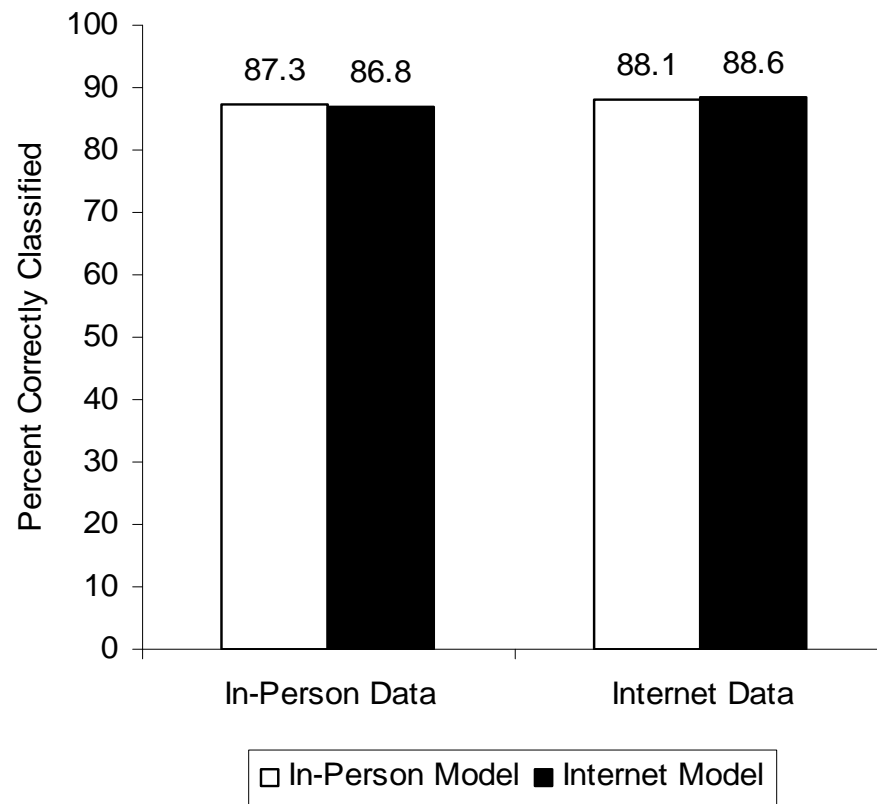
B. Models Estimated Using Internet Survey Data

Social Class	.01	.01	6409.16	6422.16
All Demographics	.02	.04	6328.65	6400.17
Economic Evaluations	.14	.24	5564.96	5577.97
Issue Proximities	.19	.34	5229.46	5255.52
Most Important Issue	.33	.48	4299.71	4332.29
Party Identification	.36	.50	4163.88	4196.45
Leader Images	.44	.64	3617.93	3643.94
Composite Model	.59	.76	2715.98	2898.40

Table 6. Rival Models of Labour Voting Comparative Predictive Power

<i>Models</i>	<i>In-Person Survey</i>		<i>Internet Survey</i>	
	<u>% Correctly Predicted</u>	<u>Lambda</u>	<u>% Correctly Predicted</u>	<u>Lambda</u>
Social Class	60.5	.00	63.9	.00
All Demographics	63.1	.07	64.3	.01
Economic Evaluations	65.3	.12	70.4	.18
Issue Proximities	67.9	.19	72.3	.23
Most Important Issue	78.3	.45	80.8	.47
Party Identification	83.5	.59	82.6	.52
Leader Images	82.0	.55	83.7	.55
Composite Model	87.3	.68	88.6	.68

Figure 5. Cross-Predicting Labour Voting in the In-Person and Internet Surveys



Conclusions

- Mode Doesn't Matter for *Modeling* Electoral Choice in Britain
- Internet Surveys – The Future?
- *Very* Cost Effective
- *Huge* N's - Study Election Outcomes
- *Super Fast*
- *Cool* Experiments – e.g., Feedback to Respondents
- Do British Findings Travel Well? How far is it from Wivenhoe Park to Ann Arbor? To Montreal? Encouraging Findings from our 2006 Congressional & 2006 Canadian election studies



The 2009/10 BES



- More **Mode** Comparisons
- Survey **Experiments**
- **Huge** Internet Campaign Survey
- Monthly **Continuous Monitoring Survey**, with Research Opportunities Like **TESS** – you can **send us your proposal!**
- Links to **CCAP**, and hopefully **ANES** and **PSNZ**