Call for Questionnaire Ideas for the 2019 ANES Pilot Survey

The American National Election Studies (ANES) invites ideas for questionnaire content to be included in an upcoming pilot survey. The survey will collect data on a national sample in the weeks following the 2019 midterm elections.

The purpose of the pilot survey is to test the measurement qualities and scientific value of questions for possible inclusion in the 2020 ANES Time Series Survey. By allowing tests of the effectiveness of new questions and formats well in advance of the next presidential election, the pilot survey is a critical resource for the ANES principal investigators as they make difficult decisions about questionnaire content and design. At this time, we invite you to help shape the 2019 pilot survey by sending us your ideas for questionnaire innovations.

Request for Community Input

The PIs and staff of the ANES are already working to identify new questions on an array of topics. Prior to every survey, we seek input from our national advisory board and, through invitations such as this, from the community of interested researchers at large. We see this process as a form of collective brainstorming, ensuring that a wider range of ideas are considered and ultimately yielding a better questionnaire. Hundreds of people have submitted ideas to the ANES over the past twelve years and collectively have had a significant impact on the content of ANES surveys. Anyone interested in using or improving ANES data is encouraged to provide input regardless of rank, discipline, profession, or place of employment.

What Kinds of Input are Most Valuable?

We invite two types of input. First, we welcome general suggestions about the topics or types of questions that ought to be included in the survey, especially if you believe they might otherwise be overlooked. You are not required to recommend specific survey items. Second, we particularly welcome suggestions of specific survey questions (or revisions of older questions)—complete with full question wording and response options—whether you wrote the items or came across them elsewhere.

For both types of input, please describe briefly the rationale for inclusion of these topics or questions, in particular how their addition to ANES surveys may improve the ability of researchers to explain voting behavior and public opinion in the 2020 presidential election. Inspiration for innovations may come from theoretical advances or debates in the scholarly literature, methodological insights in survey measurement, or new developments in American politics. In addition, when recommending specific questions, please summarize any available evidence about the explanatory power and measurement qualities (e.g., validity, reliability, etc.) of the items. Concise tables and brief textual summaries of testing procedures are welcome.

Keep in mind that the goal is to improve the overall content and design of ANES surveys. The ANES is a public good, intended to advance the study of voting behavior and public opinion as a field and thus to be broadly useful to researchers, students, and analysts of American politics. For that reason, we do not seek "proposals" to advance the research agenda of specific individuals or teams by placing measures from their projects "on the ANES." To the extent we adopt measures from specific projects, it will be because we judge that inclusion of those items benefits the survey and its users broadly.

With these caveats in mind, we will also consider experimental interventions for the pilot survey. This is most useful where one has reason to expect that how or when a question is asked may substantially affect its quality and value. In such cases, it may be useful to assign respondents randomly to distinct variants of the question wording, response options, or question order. Experiments will be included primarily to assess measurement implications and improve quality, not to test substantive hypotheses.

Format and Deadline

Please submit your ideas in a Microsoft Word document, if possible. Suggestions of any level of detail are welcome, but please limit your submission, including supporting evidence (where relevant), to no more than five pages (11- or 12-point font, 1.5 or double spacing, one-inch margins). We will not have time to read longer documents.

For full consideration, ideas should be submitted to ANES by 2:00 pm Eastern Time on Friday, August 23, 2019. Earlier submissions are encouraged. To submit your ideas, please email your file to the following address: anes-pilot-ideas@umich.edu

What to Expect

We will be working to finalize the pilot questionnaire rapidly in September and October. As always, the ANES will make the final questionnaire public. It is likely this will be available by December 2019. As this is not a competition, we will not be designating winners or losers, nor issuing acceptances or rejections. We regard all input as valuable regardless of the final decisions about what we have space to include on the pilot questionnaire. We regret that we will not have time to provide feedback on, or reactions to, specific suggestions. However, we may follow-up in some cases if we have further questions about the ideas or evidence sent to us.

More about the ANES 2019 Pilot Survey

The pilot survey is currently expected to be in the field in December 2019. A national sample will be drawn from the fifty states and the District of Columbia. Interviews will be self-completed on the web and run 25 to 30 minutes in duration (on average). The target sample size has not been finalized but will be greater than 1,000 respondents; you should not assume sufficient cases to analyze data at the level of individual states or congressional districts. Roughly one third of the questionnaire will consist of

standard ANES items (e.g., demographics, political predispositions, voting behavior) that are needed to assess the relevance and value of new items. The rest of the questionnaire is available for new content.