



University of Connecticut
The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research

Memo of Understanding

Adam Berinsky and Eric Schickler are currently completing a project that strives to put together a comprehensive archive of public opinion data from the mid-1930s through the mid-1940s. This project involves approximately 450 datasets from the Roper Archives. Berinsky and Schickler will obtain all of the available Gallup data from 1936 to 1945 (the datasets beginning "AIPO"), all the Roper/Fortune datasets ("RFOR"), all the NORC datasets ("NORC"), and all the data collected by Cantril's Office of Public Opinion Research ("OPOR") during this period.

This project has the potential to make a significant contribution to the social science profession. **First, Berinsky and Schickler are recoding all of the data and cleaning it so that it is in a more easily usable form. This project has taken a great deal of effort. For example, one OPOR dataset from 1940 contained 20 different keypunch errors that had to be ferreted out through a process of trial and error. Second, Berinsky and Schickler are putting together a set of codebooks that make the data much more user-friendly. In its current form, the data is extremely difficult to use because the codebooks do not always correspond in a clear fashion to the data files and because the data itself is organized in unusual ways (for example, the answer to a single closed-ended question is sometimes spread across six variables). When Berinsky and Schickler complete the recoding project, the data will be ready for use by scholars across a number of disciplines.**

Berinsky and Schickler estimate that the data recoding project will be completed by the fall of 2007 and are preparing to make their work accessible to the larger research community. Once Berinsky and Schickler finish cleaning and compiling the data, they will compile the individual datasets into a series of cumulative datasets, each with its own codebook. Berinsky and Schickler plan to combine the various Gallup datasets they are recoding and cleaning into single year files (e.g. a single file with all the Gallup polls for 1936; another for 1937, and so on through 1945). This will make it much more viable for individual scholars to take advantage of the data; the approximately 350 Gallup polls would be combined into ten annual files. The same will be done for the Roper and OPOR Polls from this era. These datasets will not contain every question asked in a given year – such a dataset would be too unwieldy for general use -- but they will **contain all questions that were asked multiple times, as well as other politically relevant questions from that year.**

Berinsky and Schickler will provide these datasets as well as the cleaned individual datasets and codebooks to the Roper center to make available for dissemination to its members. This project will greatly enhance the Roper data collection and make the data more attractive to a wide universe of scholars. In this effort, Berinsky and Schickler are using the "Roper Social and Political Trends, 1973-1994" dataset – an NSF funded project – as a model. The Social and Political Trends dataset was compiled and cleaned through the efforts of a joint research team, headed by Professor Henry Brady of the University of California-Berkeley and Professor Robert

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Putnam of Harvard University. This dataset is a partial compilation of many datasets in a single file. The resulting file was then distributed through the Roper Center using its normal procedures.

Membership in the Roper Center has traditionally included the right to order a certain number of data sets with charges for any beyond that limit. However, the Roper Center is adopting a system like that of ICPSR, in which membership includes unlimited rights to download and use data from the collection. Hence, the data will be available at no cost to any number of people at member institutions. The new system will be implemented in Fall 2005 and will apply to the proposed datasets.

Signed:

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