

MIXED-MODE POLLING

More Than a Plan B

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GAME CHANGERS



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POLITICAL POLLING AT IPSOS, A SHORT INTRODUCTION

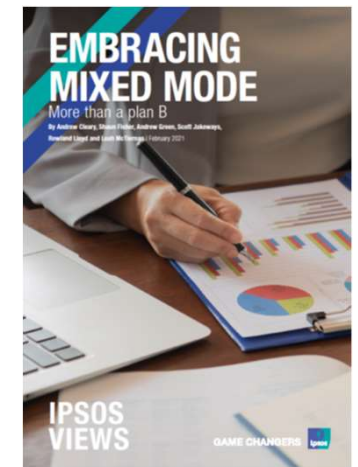
- Electoral polling is a very important activity because it is part of the electoral process. It brings relevant information on what is happening in an election campaign to the public. Well done, and well communicated, this is good for democracy.
- For several reasons, it's becoming much harder to do accurate electoral polls. The political environment is more volatile, which makes it harder to capture the rapid changes that happen during the electoral campaigns.
- Even with the best methods and teams, there is always a level of uncertainty and risk of errors. Nonetheless, we always strive to conduct our polling with the maximum level of rigor, based on our global expertise, which is why at Ipsos this is not exclusively a local activity.
- The Head of Election Research is responsible for working with the countries on forward planning, and all electoral projects are monitored during execution. Following the election campaign, a systematic post-election evaluation is also conducted. Furthermore, scientific programs are proposed to continuously improve methods and share lessons learned.
- At Ipsos we look at political polling as a continuous process as opposed to being event-driven, with the aim of building knowledge and expertise across the company.

MIXED-MODE AT IPSOS, BETTER THAN A PLAN B

- At Ipsos, our global breadth and depth of operational capabilities allows us to take a “mode agnostic” approach to research, which means that the research design drives the decision of the appropriate data collection method.

<https://www.ipsos.com/en/embracing-mixed-mode-research>

- That is about starting from the research need, not from the data collection method which is most easily available.
- A tailored approach to data collection is needed, taking in consideration the specificity of each country, both in terms of potential sample coverage and political environment, which can generate sizeable measurement error because of desirability effects.
- In pre-election polling, mixed-mode initially tried to deal with coverage error, as different profiles of voters had a tendency to respond to different data collection methods. That also proved useful at mitigating measurement errors, like interviewer related effects. Nevertheless, such benefits must be evaluated in each country, taking in consideration the specific geography, technological environment, culture and political circumstances.
- Pro-active use of mixed-mode can help research to address necessary trade-offs, in the context of providing the highest quality while focusing against the research project’s main priorities, as representativeness, measurement validity, consistency, speed and cost.



MIXED-MODE TO IMPROVE SAMPLE COVERAGE

- A cell-oriented sample design.

Face-to-face	Social-grade			
Gender * Age	A	B	C	D/E
18-24				
25-34				
35-44				
45-54				
55-64				
65+				

Telephone	Social-grade			
Gender * Age	A	B	C	D/E
18-24				
25-34				
35-44				
45-54				
55-64				
65+				

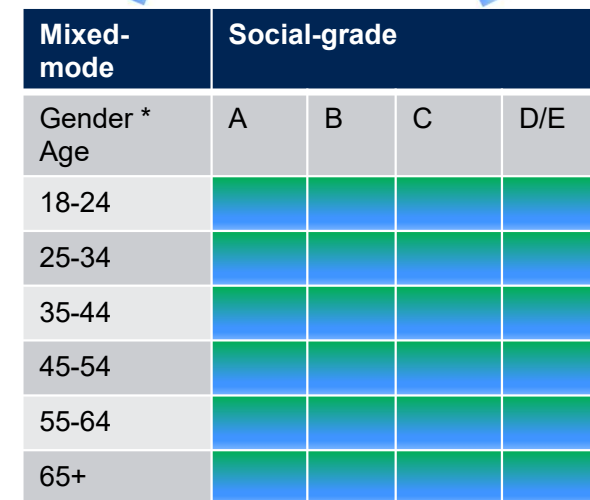
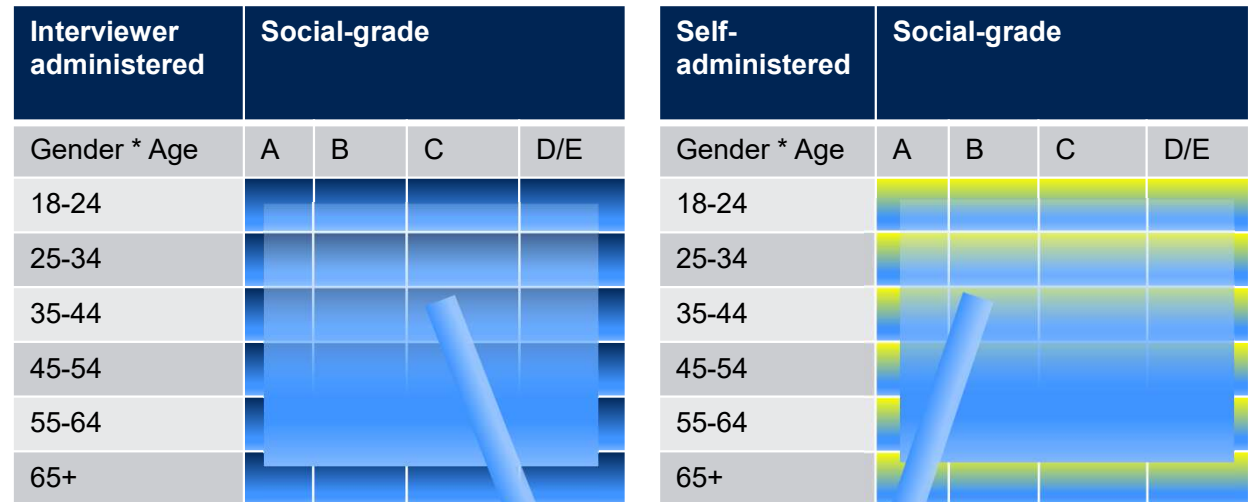
Online	Social-grade			
Gender * Age	A	B	C	D/E
18-24				
25-34				
35-44				
45-54				
55-64				
65+				

Mixed-mode	Social-grade			
Gender * Age	A	B	C	D/E
18-24				
25-34				
35-44				
45-54				
55-64				
65+				

- Even if a cell-oriented sample design can correctly cover all the sample cells, different data-collection modes can bring different respondent profiles for the same set of sample cells.
- Mixed-mode can compensate uncontrolled difference(s) in respondent profiles, by sourcing the sample cells in a more balanced way whenever it is possible.

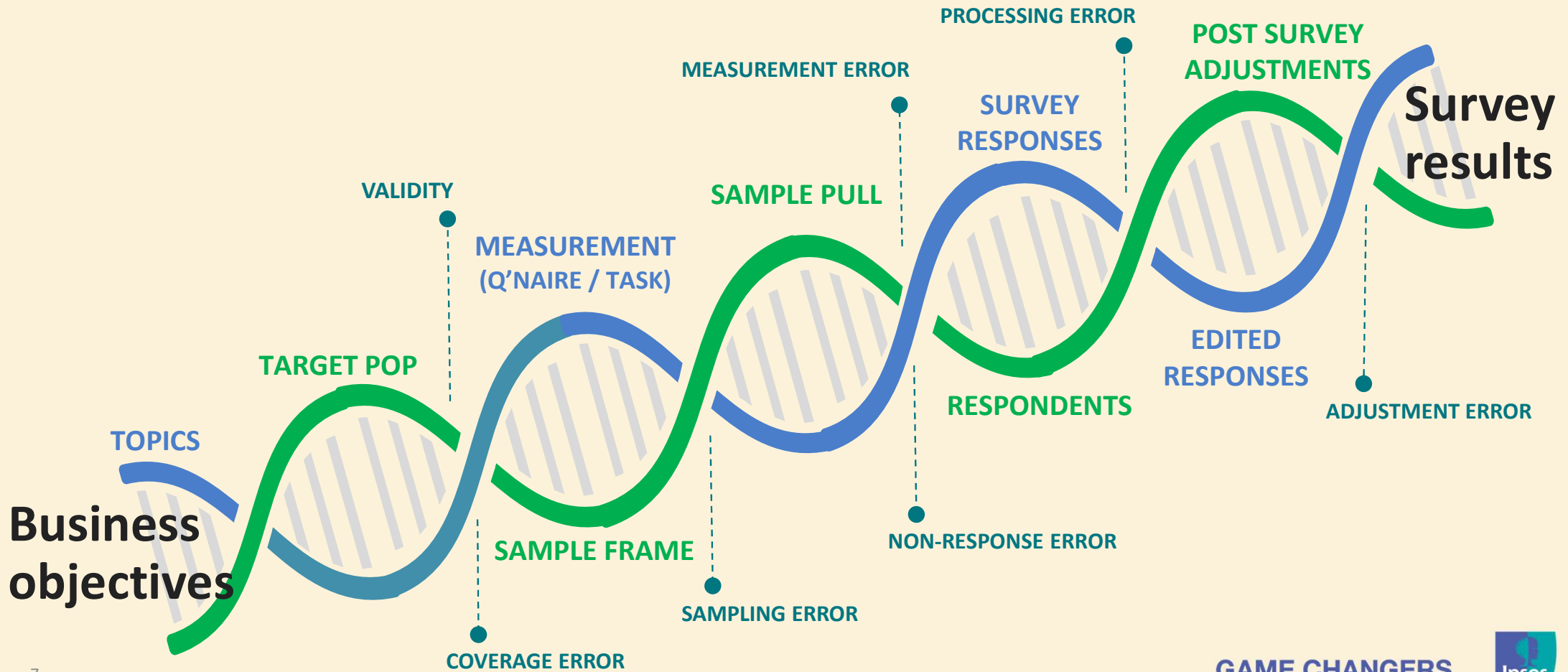
MIXED-MODE TO MITIGATE MEASUREMENT ERROR

- Measurement error occurs when a respondent's answer to a question is inaccurate, that is, it departs from the "true" value. It can vary across survey modes depending on whether the survey is conducted by an interviewer or is self-administered.
- Interviewer-administered surveys can offer respondents less privacy and anonymity, generating some acquiescence and/or social desirability. Both effects can severely impact election polling, affecting questions related to turnout, past vote recall and voting intention.
- The way a respondent provides the answer - spoken, written, or typed - can also affect the response, including the amount of time given to the response, the level of thought involved, and the amount of detail provided.
- Experience can help understanding measurement bias, although a preliminary analysis of the political market is needed.



Our shared challenge: Representation & Measurement

Representation and measurement issues are often intertwined. As already mentioned, different data-collection modes can bring different respondent profiles for the same set of sample cells. Each set of sample cells can also differ because of acquiescence and/or social desirability effects. Comparing results for a set of cells can help to appreciate and possibly to mitigate mode-effect(s).



WHAT ABOUT WEIGHTING?

- Weighting should not be used to correct measurement error, which occurs when respondent's answer to a question is inaccurate. That is specifically relevant for some socio-demographic variables (such as over-declared education or under-declared income) and obviously for any kind of past vote recall, when used in the weighting scheme. Only coverage error can be mitigated by appropriate weighting.
- In a cell-oriented sample design, weighting is needed to piece together the sample puzzle
 - A puzzle, not a patchwork, which is a fabric made of disparate pieces sewn together.
- That is all about piecing together the multiplicity of elements that the sample design must assemble to reconstitute the reality of target population
- Weighting is the appropriate tool to do it, and must reflect the underlying reasoning of the cell-oriented sample design
- Specific attention needs to be dedicated to interactions, especially the ones which are not directly controlled through the sample design.

ART & SCIENCE OF POLLING

- Mixed-mode surveys require a greater level of in-house expertise
- Researchers need to fully understand the strengths and limitations of the modes they combine
- Statistical theory helps us to measure and reduce sampling error. Real life is more complex and means we need to gauge the importance of what is more difficult to measure
- The "art" of the pollster, survey practitioner, is to appreciate and understand
 - the causes generating representation and measurement errors
 - their relative importance
 - the effects on survey results
 - the relative costs of the measures aimed to mitigate the errors
- Practicing such an "art" implies more error modeling, combined with a deep understanding of the sources of error
- Mixed-mode can be part of the framework, as it can help improving sample coverage and mitigating measurement error
- Appropriate weighting schemes are needed to piece together the sample puzzle

**THANK
YOU**

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