

Daniel Klein's Survey Procedure Statement and Analysis

How Well Donna Perry's Survey Control Ensured Against Hypothetical Rigging of the Results

By Daniel B. Klein, Associate Professor of Economics, Santa Clara University
Lead investigator of "Survey on how one's policy views evolve," conducted Spring 2003.

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This analysis is an auxiliary to the Survey Control materials prepared by myself and Ms. Donna Perry, concerning the conducting of the survey entitled, "Survey on how one's policy views evolve." The set of 58 questions in the survey deeply probe the respondent's political views and policy opinions.

I am a social scientist at Santa Clara University. In my research and teaching I am unusually forward and unabashed in my policy views, which are pragmatically libertarian. I have affiliations with many classical liberal and libertarian organizations. The material on my personal webpage makes plain my sensibilities and policy judgment.¹

I asked Donna Perry, Assistant Dean, Administrative/External Relations, at the Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University, to provide the cover-letter for the survey, keeping my identity from the survey recipient, because if I had signed the cover-letter the recipients could easily have found information about me; that might have affected how and whether they filled out the survey.

It would be natural and reasonable for people, knowing that I am forwardly libertarian, to take my survey results with a grain of salt. I openly admit that I went into the survey hoping for certain findings.² That is why I asked Ms. Donna Perry to control, receive, and secure the survey; to provide an independent assurance of the survey's integrity.

¹ For a statement in favor of social scientists putting their sensibilities and commitments on the table, see Gunnar Myrdal, *Objectivity in Social Research*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969.

² Specifically, I conducted the survey hoping to find that in as much as there is a pattern of revision in the individual's reported policy views from the time she was 25 to the time she answered the survey – that is, in as much as there is a pattern in the set of reported individual "ideological migrations" – that pattern went preponderantly in the libertarian direction. Readers of the survey work might assume that I also had hoped to confirm reports of the lopsidedness of faculty politics (Democratic v. Republican). That is an important matter, and one on which it is worth better establishing the facts, whatever they may be. But, to my mind, the data on the issue of lopsidedness is a byproduct of the investigation; and not a matter about which I had hoped to come up with any particular findings.

Ms. Perry's role as Survey Controller includes the securing of a complete set of copies of all the filled-out surveys returned to her office. These files are in a locked area, and only she has the key. Once I make the survey dataset publicly available, anyone will be able to request Ms. Perry to spot-check the accuracy of the dataset against her set of complete files. To fulfill such a request, Ms. Perry will require that the requester make a payment of \$15/hr worked to the Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University. (To arrange such a request, contact Ms. Perry at dperry@scu.edu.) She or her successor will continue to secure the files and offer this data checking service until at least 1 May 2013.

By this document I intend to explain how Ms. Perry's control guarded against my rigging the results. As a framework of analysis, I posit here that I sought to rig the results, and explore whether rigging could have been done, and to what extent. I will consider all conceivable forms of rigging, and discuss how well Ms. Perry's control guarded against the rigging imagined.

I have not done anything to rig or fudge the results, ever. None of the deceptive practices posited here actually occurred. But the point of the Survey Control is to avoid your having to take my word for that.

Here, the order in which I consider posited deceptive practices is from most significant to least significant. That is, I start with the posited deceptive practice that the survey-control process guarded against *least well*.

Posited Deceptive Practices:

1. **Bootlegging 69 surveys.** In transporting the complete packets containing the surveys from the copy shop to Ms. Perry's office, I could have bootlegged 69 of them, filled them out to serve my supposed ideological purposes, and mailed them in to Ms. Perry using the normal business reply envelope. There would be no way of knowing which 69 surveys were inauthentic.

Commentary: The figure 69 here corresponds to the envelope shortfalls, as explained in section VII of the Survey Process Description (and reported in line 14 of the Overview Table); the shortfalls led to the generation of 69 surveys, each of which was given a novel ID number, and to which the remaining 69 address labels were affixed.

The posited deceptive practice is perfectly sound in logic. In retrospect, my error was to assume that the numbering of surveys and the production of survey packets would be done perfectly accurately; I should have had someone double-check the numbering before they were turned over for packet production.

(Alternatively, this problem could have been prevented by asking Ms. Perry to handle the entire process of numbering, producing, and delivering the survey packets, quarantining me from that whole process, but that would have been asking a lot).

In terms of assessing my innocence, the explanation of the shortfalls based on mis-numbering of the surveys (as explained in Section VII of the Survey Process Description) is corroborated both by the person who did the numbering (Bahaa Seireg), in reporting that he had extra surveys for all six sets, and by staff of the copy shop, who said they noticed gaps in the numbering (and corrected the noticed gaps). Ms. Perry is witness to both of these testimonies.

Notice that in as much as the copy-shop autonomously filled in gaps that they noticed, as they say they did, if I had bootlegged surveys, the copy-shop's fill-ins would have generated ID-number duplicates in the final set of completed surveys. But there were only two instances of ID-number duplication in the set of completed surveys.

Suppose I did the posited deceptive behavior. Sixty-nine (69) surveys constitute 4.1 percent of the 1678 (non-blank) returned surveys. Depending on what rigging I would be suspected of, this could or could not be significant. In terms of rigging to favor the claim that ideological migration goes in the libertarian direction, 69 surveys deliberately filled out to support that finding would be significant. In terms of rigging to favor the claim that political party support among academics is lopsided, 69 surveys deliberately filled out to support that finding (by marking the respondent as one who votes Democratic) would not be significant.

All remaining posited deceptive practices are not in evidence, extremely minor in magnitude, and in most cases amendable to analysis of the posited-bogus material.

2. **Forging sealed survey packets.** One could imagine that in shuttling the sealed survey packets from the copy shop to Ms. Perry's office I divert some of them and replaced them with bogus packets (that is, sealed envelopes containing, say, blank sheets of paper), and then filled out the diverted surveys and sent them in. There are three reasons to rule out such conduct: (1) In 44 cases, the packet was returned by the postal service as undeliverable, and these envelopes were opened by Ms. Perry, and the contents were in all cases normal (and saved in the Postal Returns binder); (2) Recipients of the bogus material could have contacted Ms. Perry (whose name appeared as the sender of the envelope) saying something like: "Why did you send me a set of blank paper?"; (3) Ms. Perry could have spot-checked some of the sealed packets just to test their integrity.
3. **Mailing in bogus surveys with duplicate ID numbers.** One could imagine that I printed up surplus surveys, assigned them ID numbers that duplicated authentic survey ID numbers, filled out the surveys, and sent them in. Given that 31 percent of surveys were returned, in about one third of the bogus cases Ms. Perry would have received surveys with duplicate ID numbers. In fact, there were only two cases of duplicate ID numbers (Hist 894 and Pol Sci 173) (apparently Bahaa

Seireg simply erred in numbering the surveys). These surveys are amenable to analysis.

4. **Mailing in bogus surveys lacking ID numbers.** Surveys without ID numbers would of course stick out as such. In fact, there were three such surveys received and processed: An Econ survey that had no ID number at all (presumably because of error on the part of Bahaa Seireg or the envelope stuffers at the copy shop); this survey has been assigned the novel ID 2999.1; and two surveys where the ID number was either torn off or scribbled out; these have been assigned novel ID numbers 5999.1 and 6999.1. These three surveys are amenable to analysis. (Survey 5999.2 is related but treated in the next point.)
5. **Retroactively adding surveys to the set of completed surveys.** There was only one survey (#3175) that Ms. Perry's team did not process (that is, did not copy or check-off) and was passed forward to me among the processed surveys; in principle, that survey could be bogus and introduced by me after the processing. I have furnished a copy of that survey to Ms. Perry, and it has been added to her files. Another survey was received by Ms. Perry but was not processed because the entire identifier was torn off (not just the number, but also the discipline); Ms. Perry placed this survey into the Irregulars binder. This survey has been retroactively processed and assigned novel ID number 5999.2 (it was assigned to the Pol Sci group based on the answer to Q39). These two surveys are amenable to analysis.
6. **Falsifying data in the Excel file.** Of course, all the surveys could be perfectly authentic and yet I simply ignore what is written on them and make up or alter the "data" that appears in the Excel file. This, however, is exactly the point of having Ms. Perry control the survey, keeping a complete and secured set of copied surveys, and offering to spot-check the data at anyone's request.