It's all about modes?

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La precisión de las encuestas electorales:
aportaciones para su perfeccionamiento
Mexico,
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Presentación

- There is a multiplication of methods to conduct surveys.
  - Datos:
    - USA 2012 & 2016
    - Canada 2015
    - UK 2015,
    - Scotland 2014, Brexit 2016.

- Do methods trace a different portrait of the state of voting intention and its change over time?

- Are there methods that are more variable?

- Syntesis

- Conclusion

La multiplicación de maneras de conducír sondeos

- Telephone polls among landline and cell phones
  - ‣ With interviewers
  - ‣ With Interactive voice response (IVR): only in North America and only among landlines in the US

- Web polls have spread
  - ‣ Opt-in panels, mostly, with varying methods of recruitment.
  - ‣ Probabilistic samples

- **Face to face**?

- If we had only one mode, would we get the same information?

- Where is it going? Do some methods give more accurate predictions?

Datos

Synthesis of information 4 elections & 2 referendums + info on penetration

| Election/referendum	Period	NB polls	% Web	% IVR	Internet penetration	Cell phones per 100
US presidential	JAN-NOV 2012	406	15%	33%		
Scotland Referendum	JAN-SEPT 2014	67	75%			
Canada election	AUG-OCT 2015	78	36%	36%	88%	79.1
UK election	APR-MAY 2015	95	76%		92%	129.6
Brexit	JAN-JUN 2016	127	71%		92%	129.6
US presidential	JAN-NOV 2016	407	53%	12%	74%	103.1
Mexico					57%	90.2

- The great majority of polls in the UK are Web polls.

- IVR (Robopolls) are used in about a third of the polls in Canada, less now in the US.

- Web penetration is high in Canada and UK, lower in the US.

- Cell phone penetration: higher in UK, lower in Canada (less than in Mexico)

Do different methods trace a different portrait of change in voting intention?

Are there systematic differences?

USA 2012 - Support for Obama (51%)

Change in support for Obama (prop. attribution of non disclosers) according to mode of administration
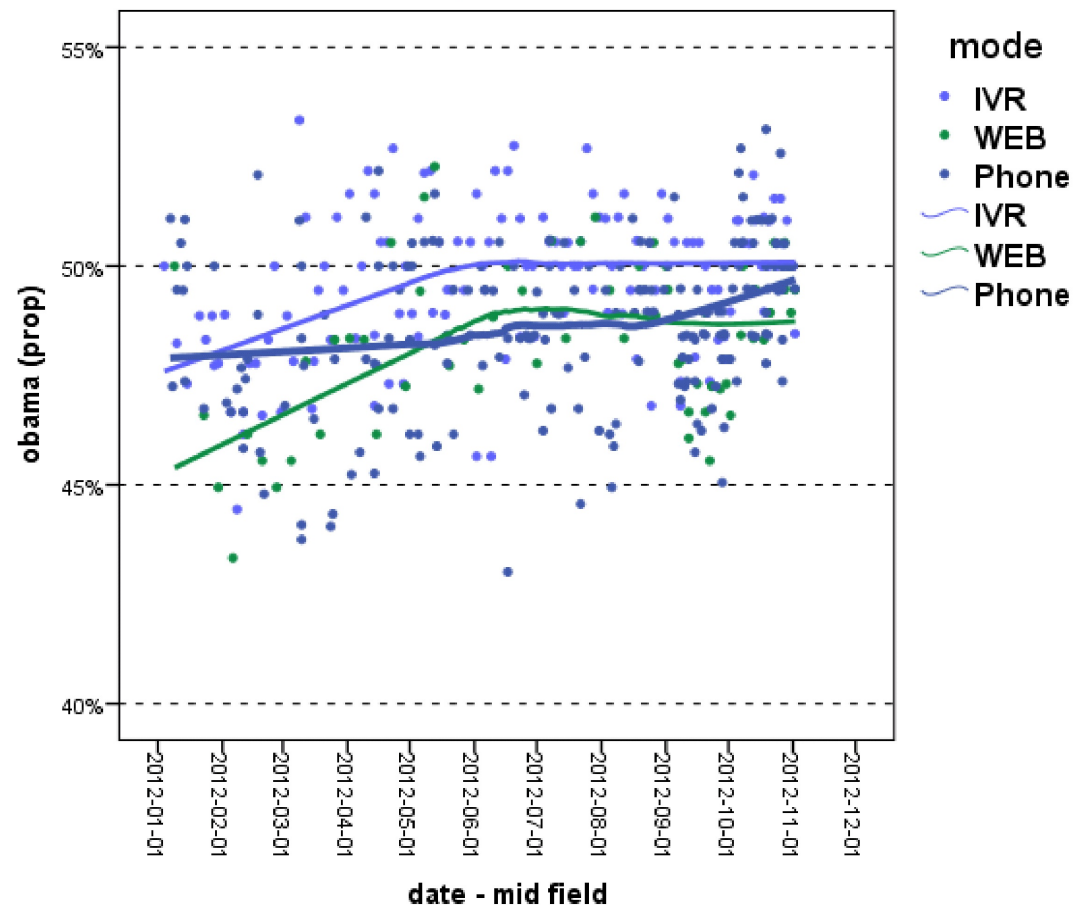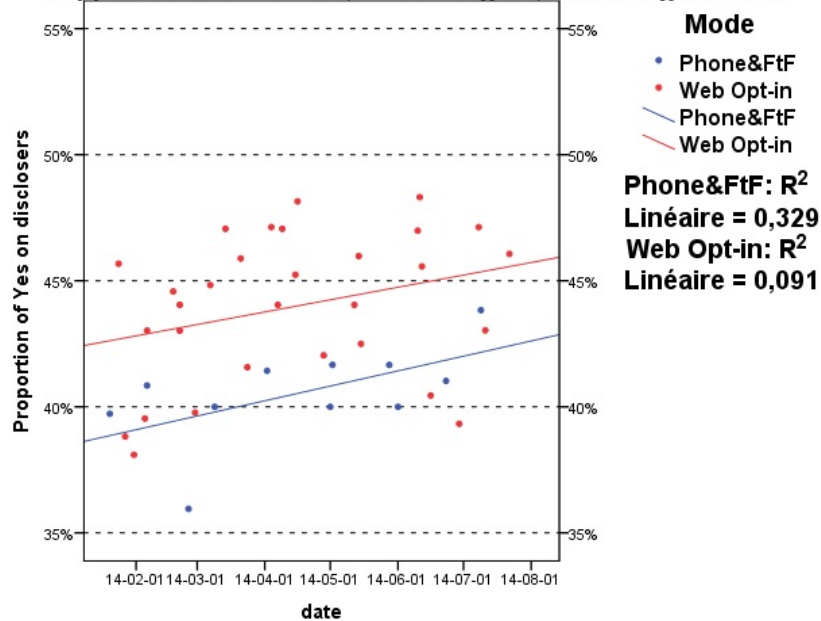
- IVR has Obama systematically higher than Web polls.

- IVR & Web polls do not trace the same portrait of change in support for Obama than telephone polls.
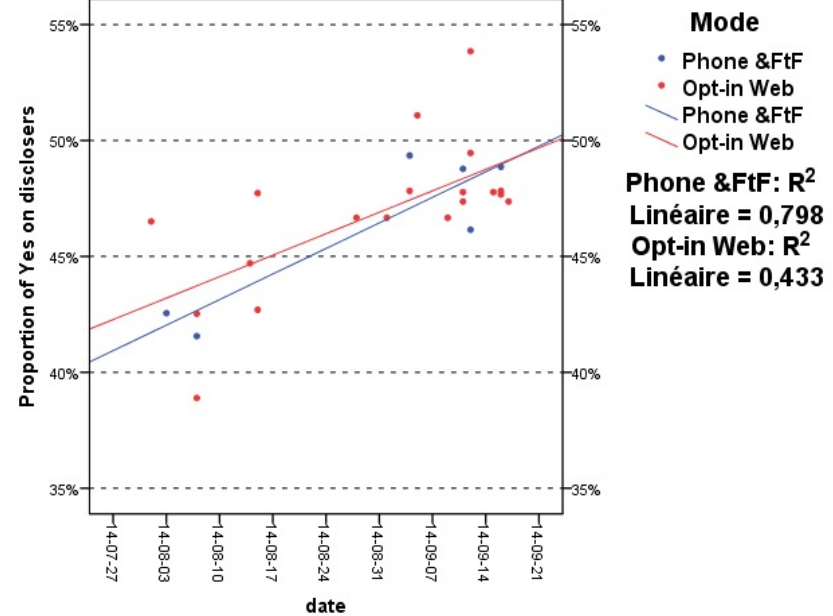
Scotland 2014 (Yes 44.6%)
It depends...first and last stretch

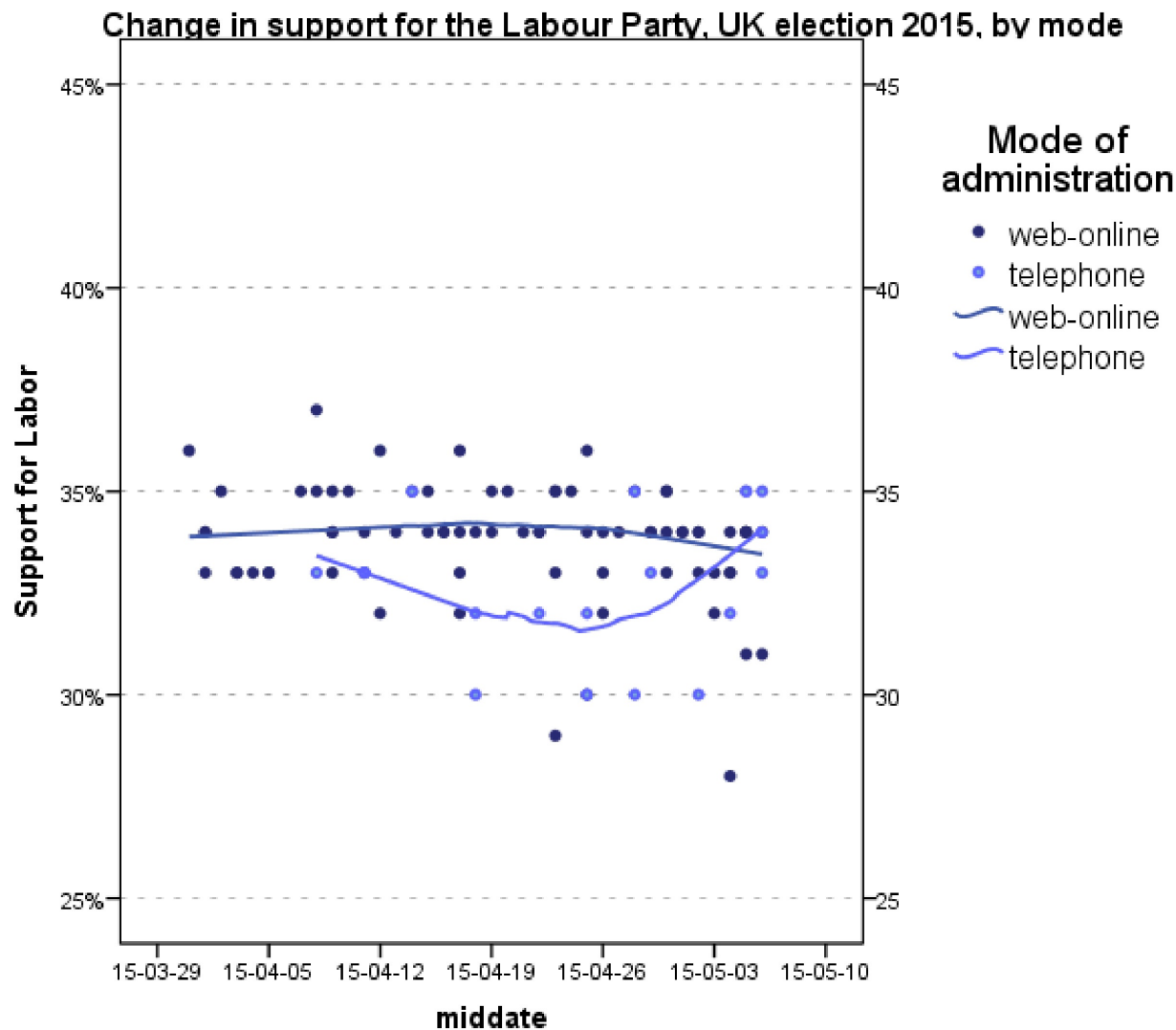**Support for the Yes side, before August, according to mode**

Mode
- Phone&FtF
- Web Opt-in
— Phone&FtF
— Web Opt-in

Phone&FtF: R^2 Linéaire = 0,329
Web Opt-in: R^2 Linéaire = 0,091

Support for the Yes side, after August, by mode

Mode
- Phone &FtF
- Opt-in Web
— Phone &FtF
— Opt-in Web

Phone &FtF: R^2 Linéaire = 0,798
Opt-in Web: R^2 Linéaire = 0,433

- Before August, Web estimates sytematically higher than non Web and more variable, except for YOUGOV.

- After August 1st, Web estimates similar to non Web on average with outliers.

UK 2015 (Labour 30.4%)

Change in support for the Labour Party, UK election 2015, by mode

Mode of administration
- web-online
- telephone
- web-online
- telephone

Support for Labor

middate

Change over time differs by mode. The difference Web-telephone disappears at the end.

Canada 2015 (Libs 39.5%)

Change in preferences by mode

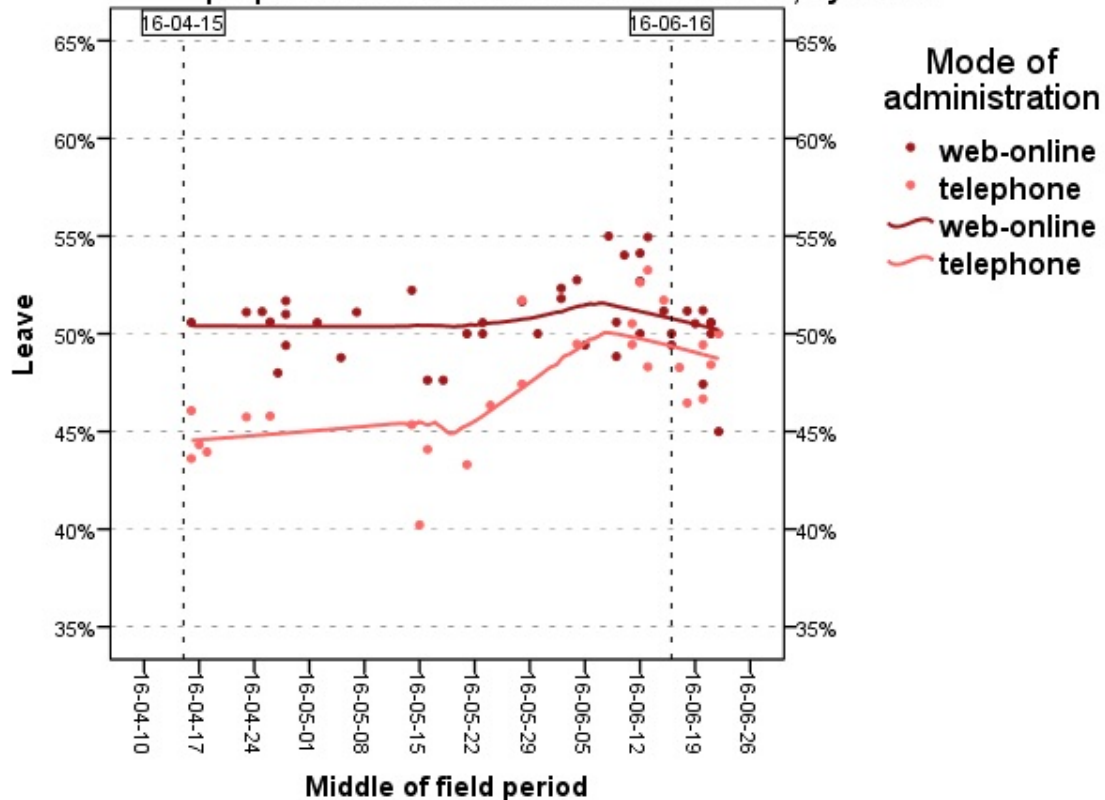Change in voting intentions for the Liberal Party of Canada, according to mode of administration
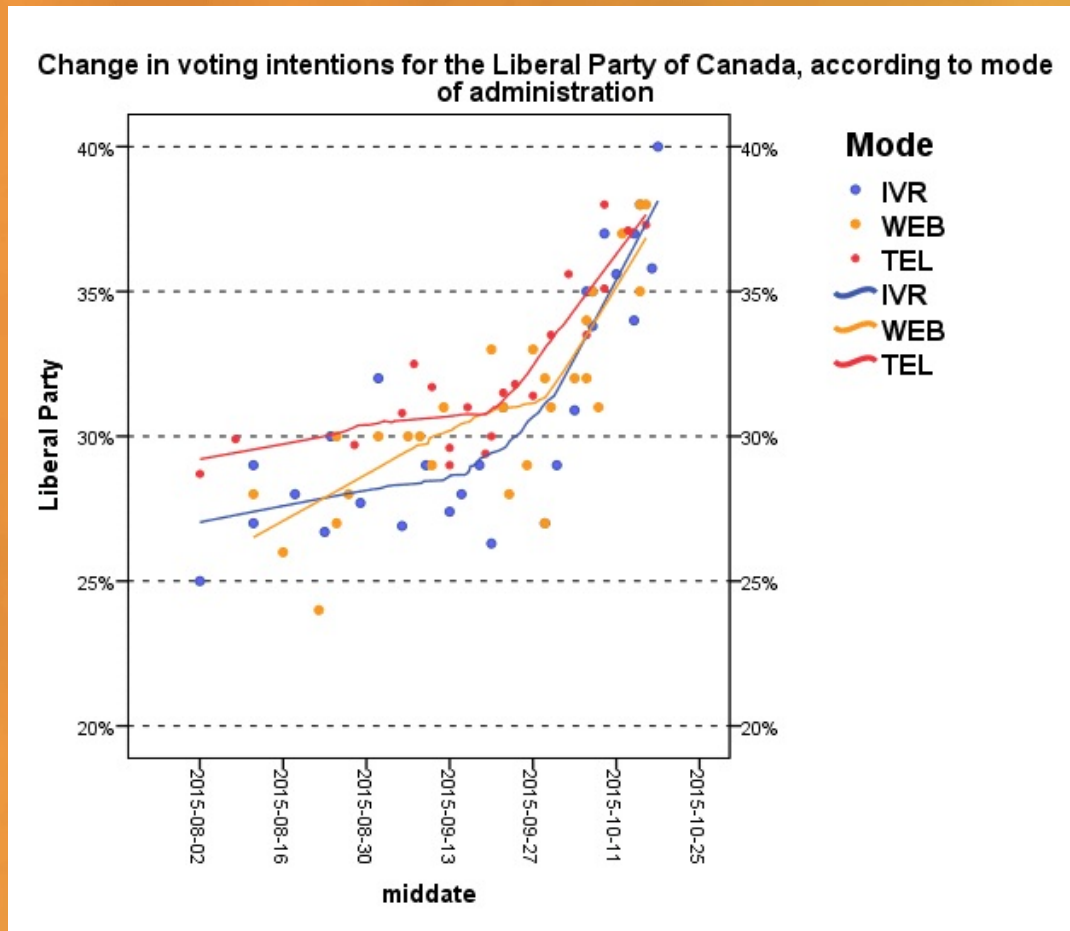
Difference by mode at the beginning of the campaign only.

Brexit 2016 (Yes 51.9%)

Change in support for the Brexit, from April 15 to June 23, 2016, Leave with proportional attribution of non-disclosers, by mode

Mode of administration
- web-online
- telephone
- web-online
- telephone

Each point represents a poll estimate postioned at the middle of the field work. Lines represent Loess estimates of change over time using Epanechnikov .65 estimation. The first vertical line represents the official launch of the campaign, the second, the shooting of Jo Cox. © C. Durand, 2016.

- Web opt-in: support stable.
- Telephone: substantial increase in support at mid campaign.
- Both similar at the end.

US 2016 (Clinton 51% on the two main candidates)

Support for Clinton from September 2016, by mode

Each point represents a poll estimate postioned at the middle of the field work. Lines represent Loess estimates of change over time using Epanechnikov .65 estimation. The vertical lines represent the debates © C. Durand, 2016.
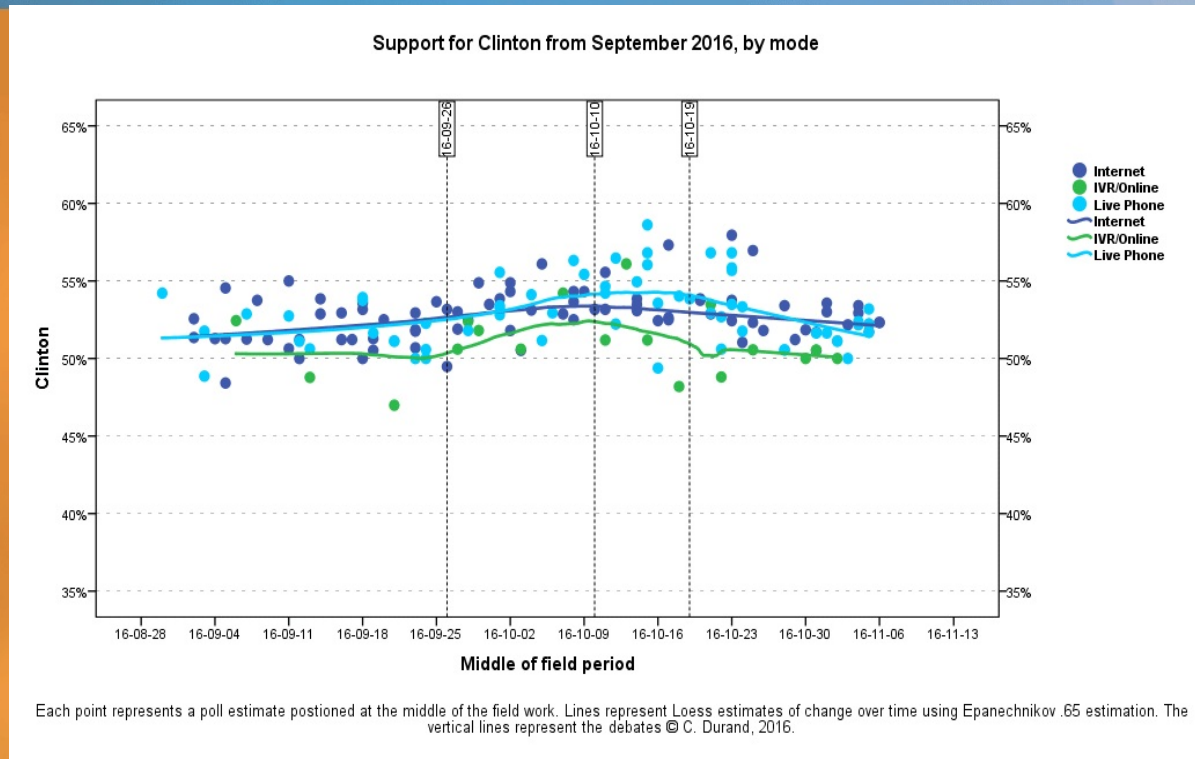
- Web (mostly opt-in) is similar to live phone.
- IVR/online systematically lower for Clinton.
- Web polls more stable than IVR and telephone.

Effect of mode?

- The difference according to methods tends to disappear close to election/ referendum Day (except for the US).

- The portrait of change over time is not always similar between methods.
  - Web polls tace a more stable portrait of change in voting intentions.
    - WEB polls underestimated Obama in 2012, overestimated Clinton in 2016.
    - Web polls overestimated Yes in Scotland, Labour in the UK election; adequate estimation of Yes to Brexit.
  - IVR polls tend to give better estimates, on average.
    - best estimation in US 2012 and 2016 and Canada 2015.
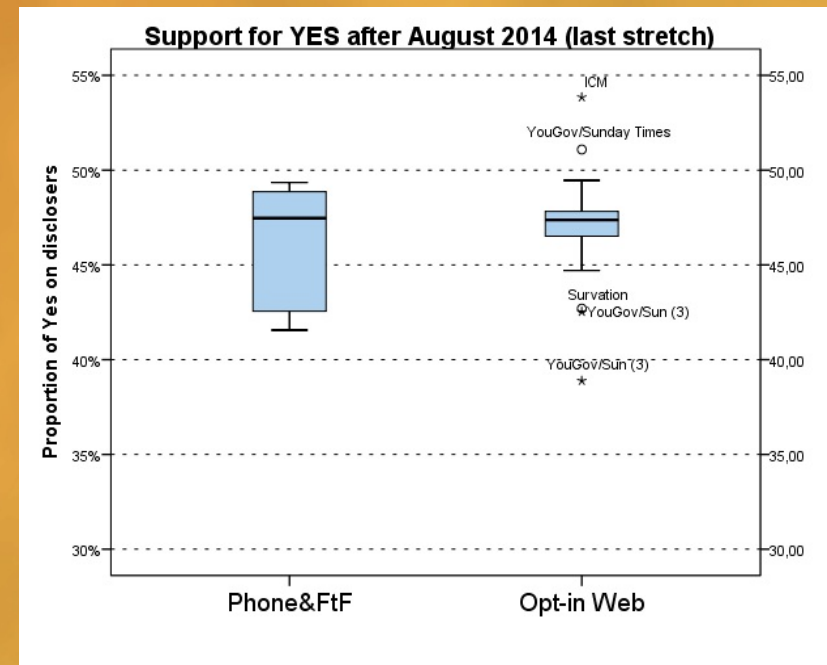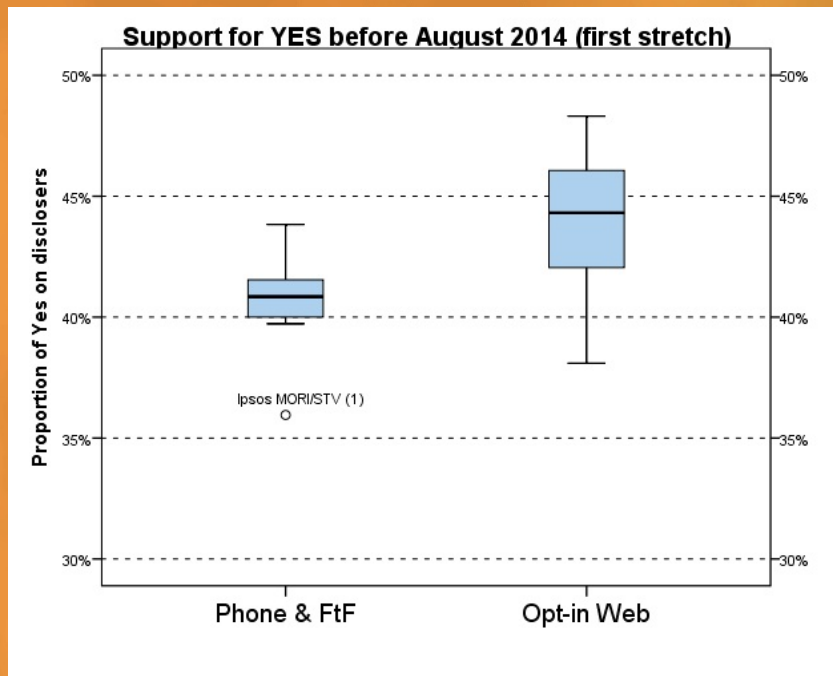
What about variation in estimates?

USA 2012 - Support for Obama (51%)

Variation in support for Obama, according to mode, by period
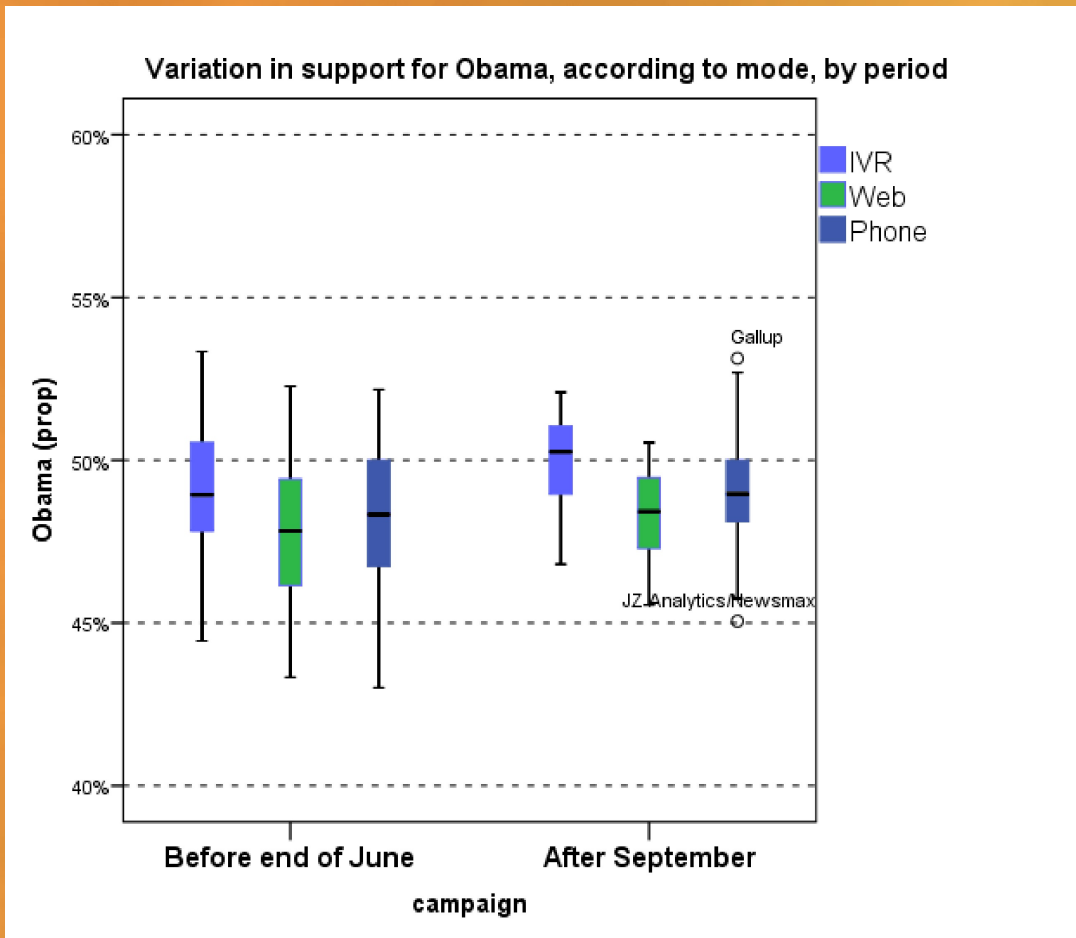
- Variation seems similar for the three methods after control for period.

- IVR polls tend to have a higher median, particularly after September.
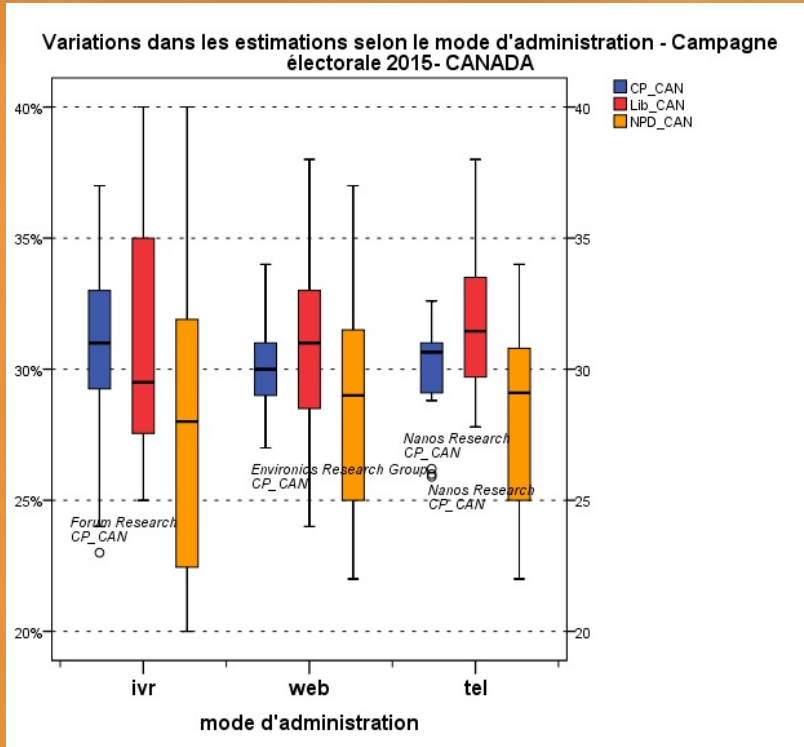
Scotland 2014 (44.6%)
It depends...first and last stretch

Support for YES before August 2014 (first stretch) — Proportion of Yes on disclosers; Phone & FtF; Opt-in Web; Ipsos MORI/STV (1)

Support for YES after August 2014 (last stretch) — Proportion of Yes on disclosers; Phone&FtF; Opt-in Web; ICM; YouGov/Sunday Times; Survation; YouGov/Sun (3); YouGov/Sun (3)

- Before August, Web estimates were more variable than non Web and their median higher.
- From August 1st, Web estimates became less variable, with outliers, and the median similar to non Web.

Canada 2015 (Libs 39.5%)
## Is there more variability according to mode?

Variations dans les estimations selon le mode d'administration - Campagne électorale 2015- CANADA

		Canada		
		Conserv.	Liberal	NPD/NDP
IVR	moy./mean	31.04	31.11	27.72
Web		30.21	31.04	28.50
Tel.		30.00	32.04	28.25
IVR	variance	10.55	17.78	36.90
Web		3.21	12.26	17.37
Tel.		3.64	8.78	13.50
IVR	médiane	31.00	29.50	28.00
Web		30.00	31.00	29.00
Tel.		30.65	31.45	29.10

- **More variance in IVR polls, similar means and modes.**
  - ♦ Mostly due to beginning of campaign: var= 13.5, web 3.8, tel 3.0. and to some regions (not shown).
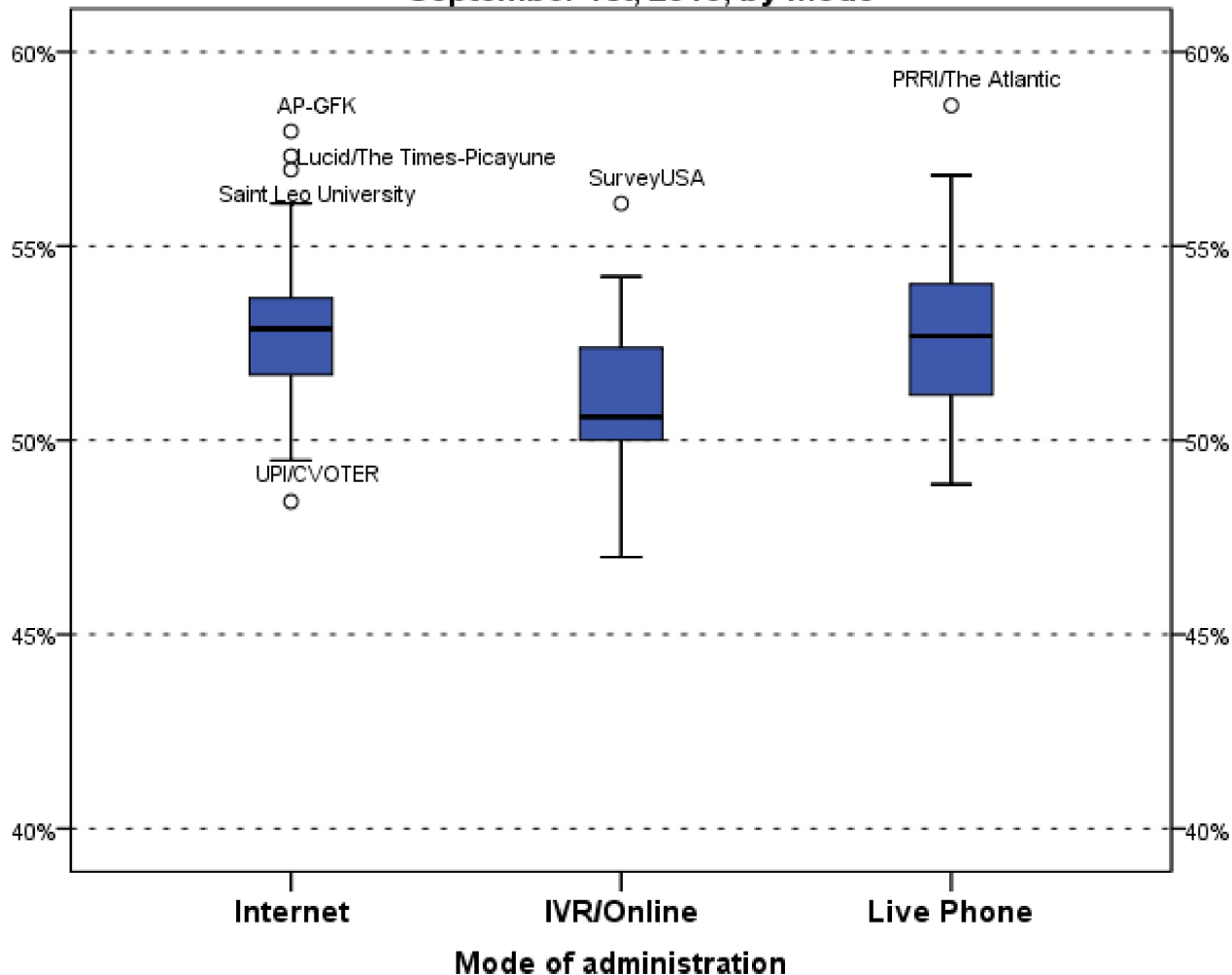
Brexit 2016 (Yes 51.9%)

Is the variability similar by mode?

Support for the Brexit, from UK election to April 22 2016, by mode
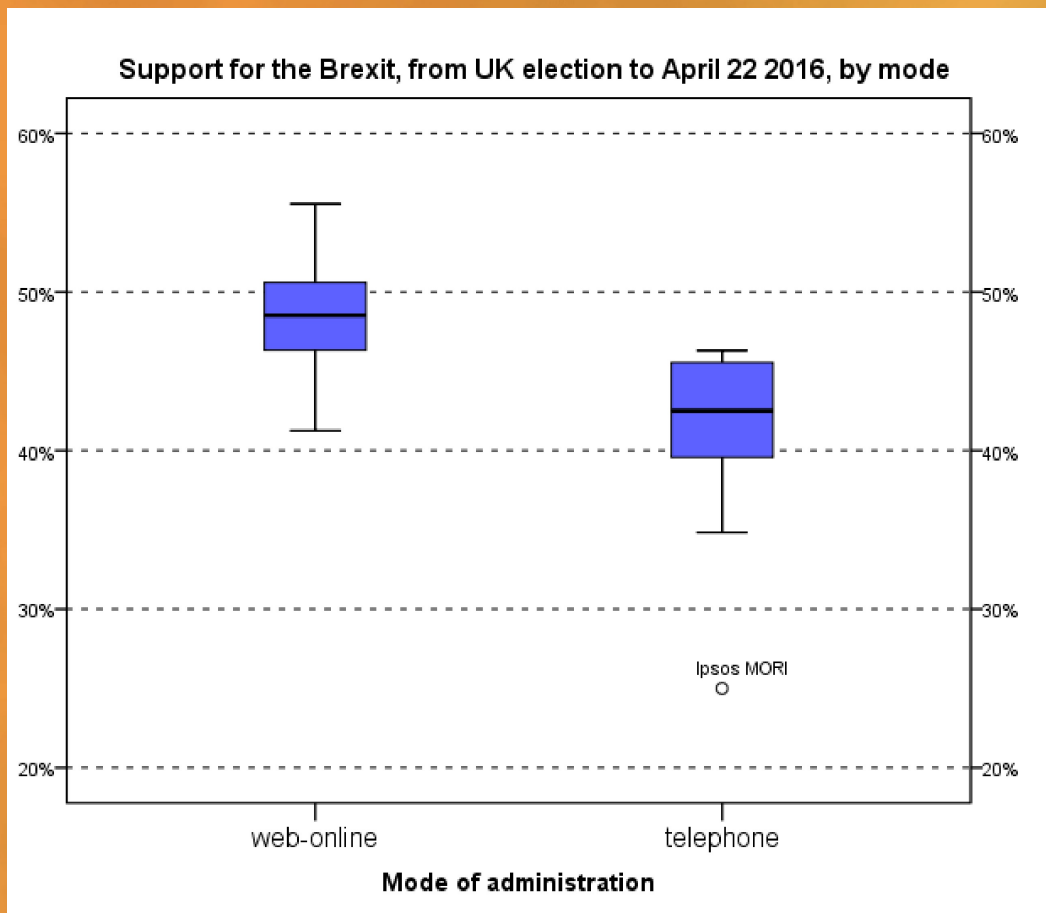
As of April 22 2016, similar variability, different medians.

USA 2016 (Clinton 51% of the two main candidates)

Variation in estimation of support for Clinton (on the two main candidates) from September 1st, 2016, by mode

- Similar variability
- Median lower for IVR/online

Is variation similar?

- The short answer is: generally yes.
- Except perhaps for IVR in Canada.

What do we learn?

- No huge difference between methods.

- Web (usually opt-in) polls have improved over time.
  - Not much systematic difference with other methods.
  - Sometimes, they fare better. BUT,
  - We don't know much about the recruitment methods used by the different pollsters.
  - **They may have more homogenous samples that do not trace as precisely variation in public opinion.**

- IVR polls are present only in the US and Canada.
  - Adequate or even best estimation (US 2016). Why?
    - Short & confidential
    - Probabilistic sample
    - In the US, no duplicates in the sample.

Where are we going?

- Face to face polls are disapearing for electoral purpose in western countries (and elsewhere?).
  - ‣ Only one pollster, Sofres, was doing face-to-face in Scotland in 2014.

- Web polls are very popular in small markets.
  - ‣ **Much research needed** in order to understand the composition of samples **and improve it**.

- IVR polls may spread outside of North America because they have a number of advantages (cheaper, short, probabilistic).

- SMS polls are likely to develop.

Conclusion

- When the election is close,
  - People rely on polls even more to inform them;
  - While it is THE situation where individual polls cannot inform, except to confirm that it is close;
  - And it is the kind of situation where usually there is a systematic bias.
  - And we fail to inform people that polls cannot tell them what will happen on Election Day.

- It's not about modes, it's about money.
  - Less money to conduct polls, particularly in small markets, means less expensive modes are going to spread.

Conclusion (2)

- More and more, people can decide whether they will answer a poll or not and when they will do it.

- This means that we will have to revise our methods to accomodate people, rehabilitate polls, improve sampling, and go back to acceptable response rates, which implies convincing people that it is important to answer polls.

- Mexico has almost reached an ICT penetration level where the new methods will be reliable to do polling.