

The Lifecycle of a Probability Panelist

AmeriSpeak after Five Years

03.09.21

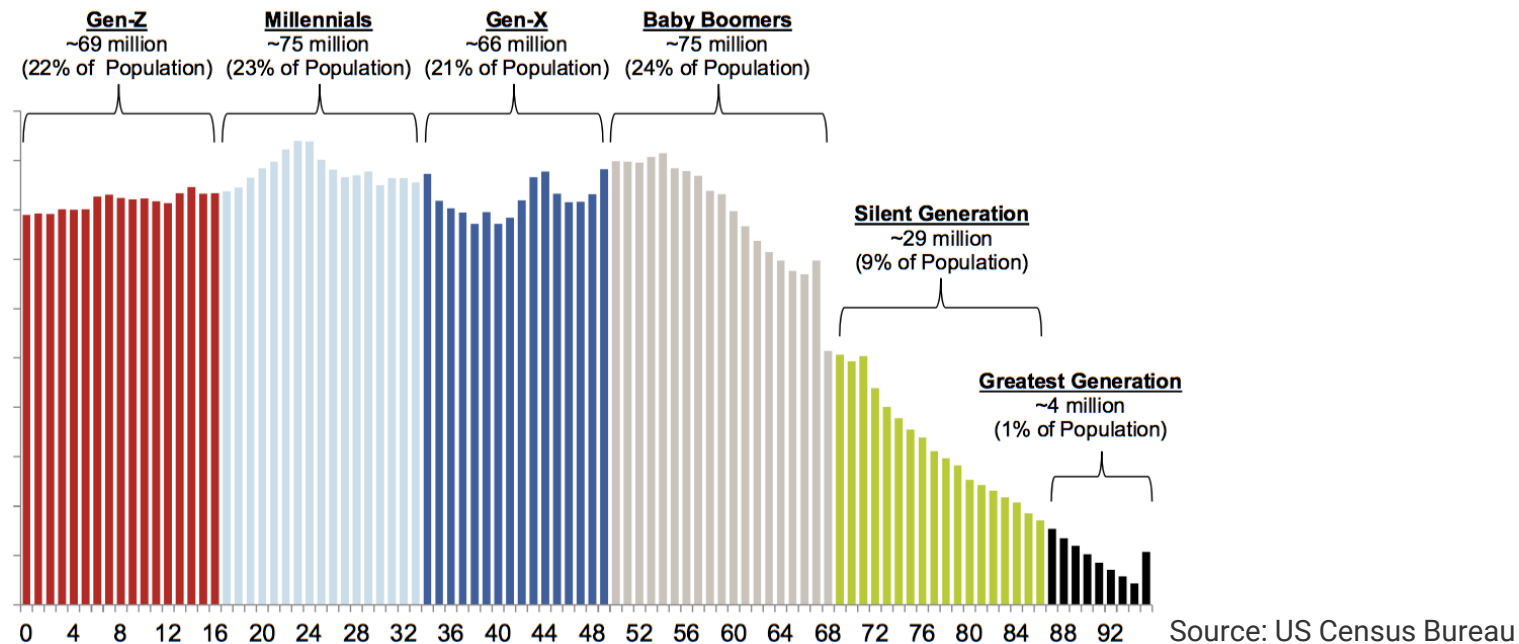
David Dutwin
Ipek Bilgen



The Concept of Lifecycle

Panels are not static.

- Panels are like the human race: there are generations
 - New generations are “born”
 - Old generations “fade away”
 - As such, the loss in older generations and the insertion of new generations will change the makeup of the overall entity. (For example: Americans are more Hispanic today than a generation ago).



Agenda

01 A look at AmeriSpeak over time

02 Is over-time participatory decline systematic?

03 The ebb and flow of attrition and recruitment

04 Can we predict panel nonresponse?

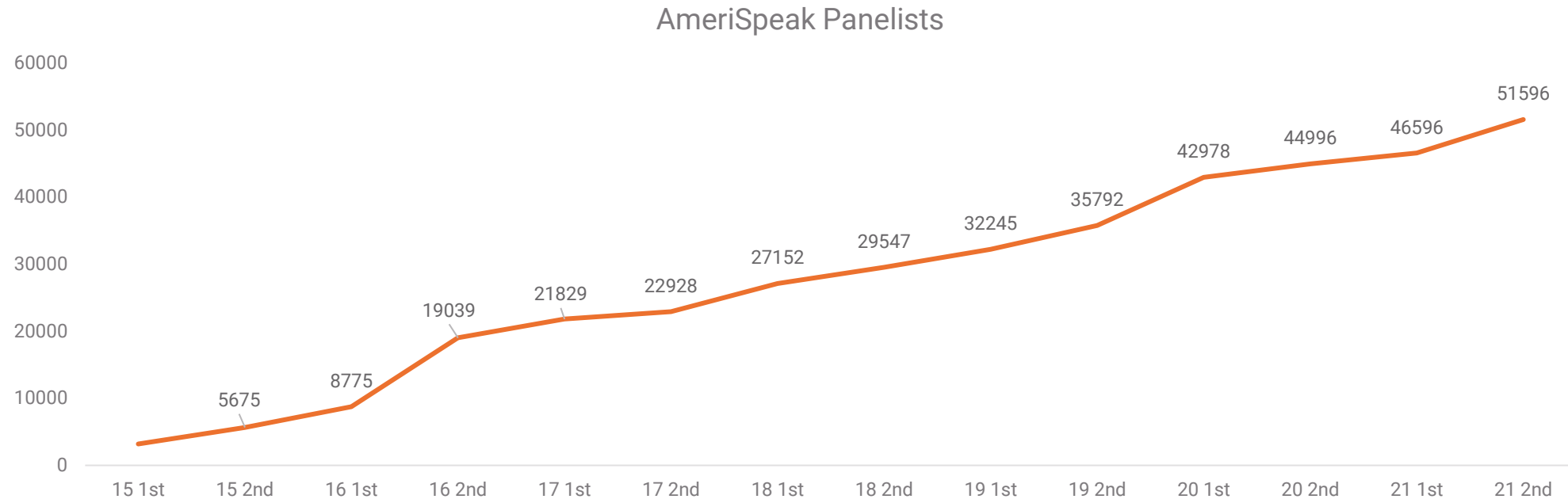


A look at AmeriSpeak over time

The AmeriSpeak Probability Based Panel

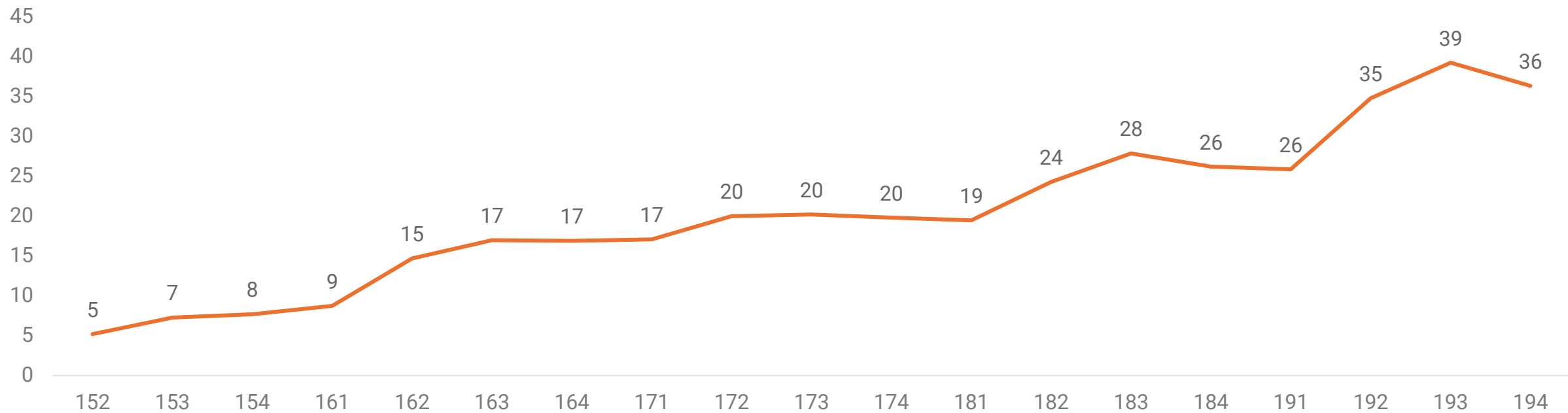
The Panel Build

- Typically, Area Probability National Sample
 - 4 Mailing with preincentive main recruiting design
 - Door to door non-response follow up for 1/5 of those invited
 - 2015-19 recruiting rate of 35%

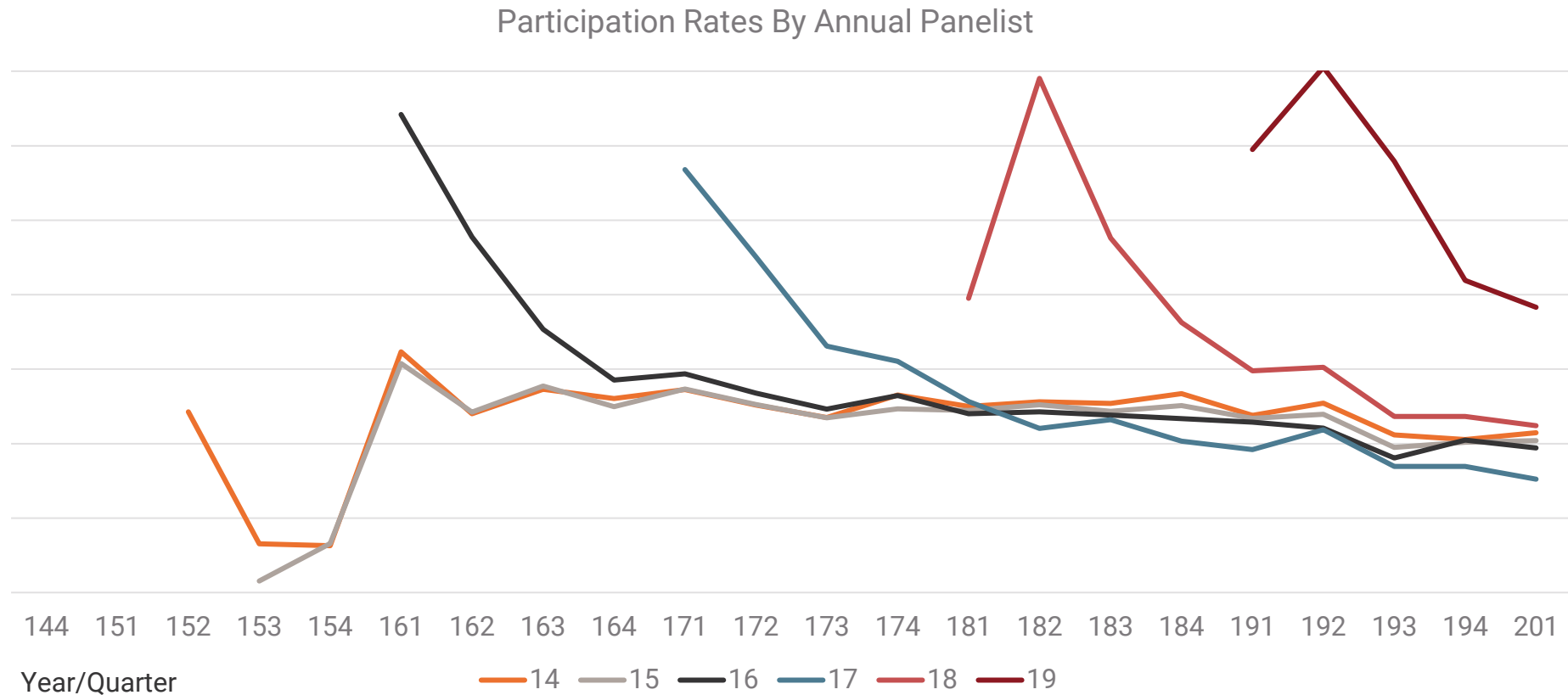


The typical respondent has now been in the panel for three years.

Panelist Age in Months of Survey Respondents



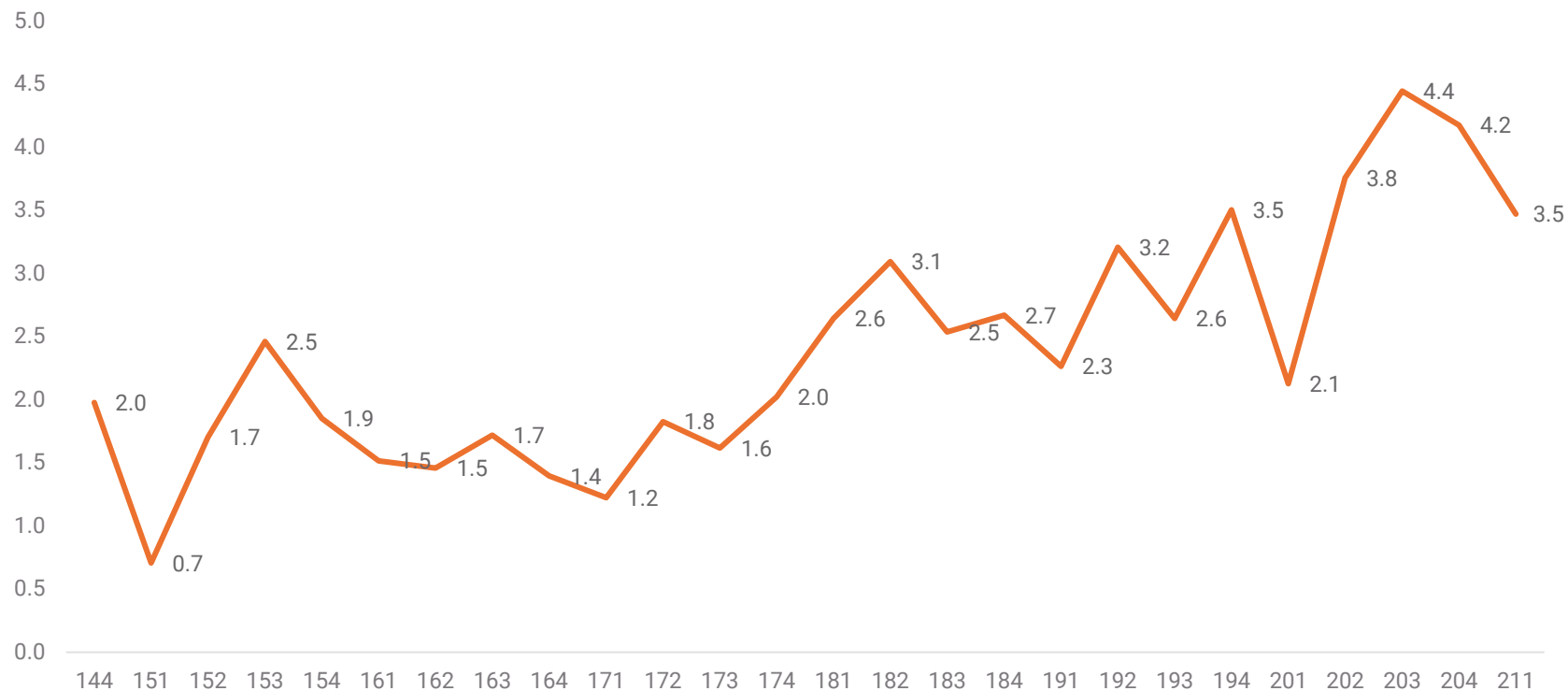
- Panelists have a “honeymoon” period that lasts about 6-9 months
- There is then a slower decline in participation over time that is markedly flat
 - Indeed, the participation rate of 2015 panelists today is about the same as 2018 panelists!



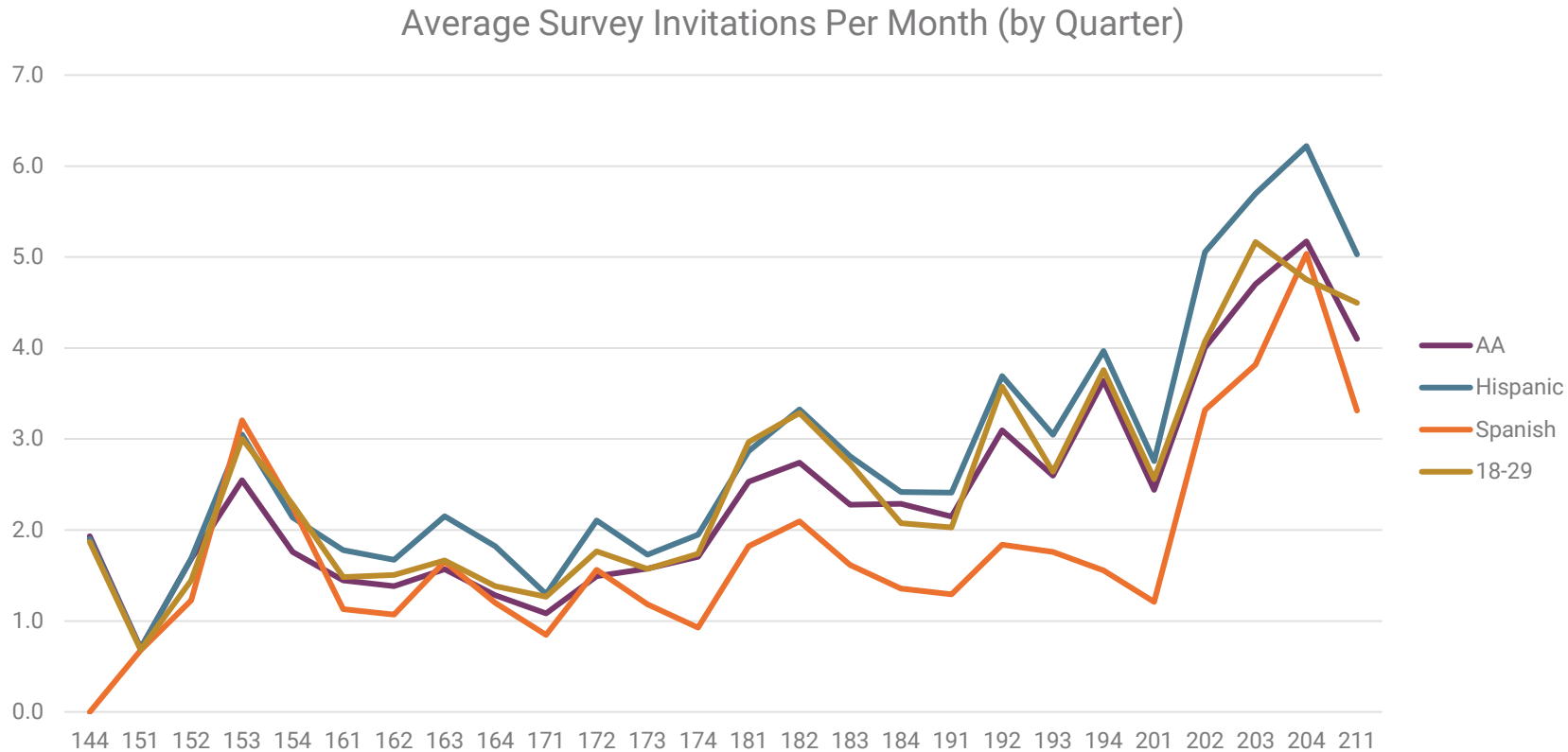
The AmeriSpeak Probability Based Panel

- On average AmeriSpeak panelists are invited to a survey once a week
 - Our goal has always been at the once per week level, but it took years to attain it
 - A noticeable “Covid peak” in early 2020, but regression to the mean since then

Average Survey Invitations Per Month (by Quarter)

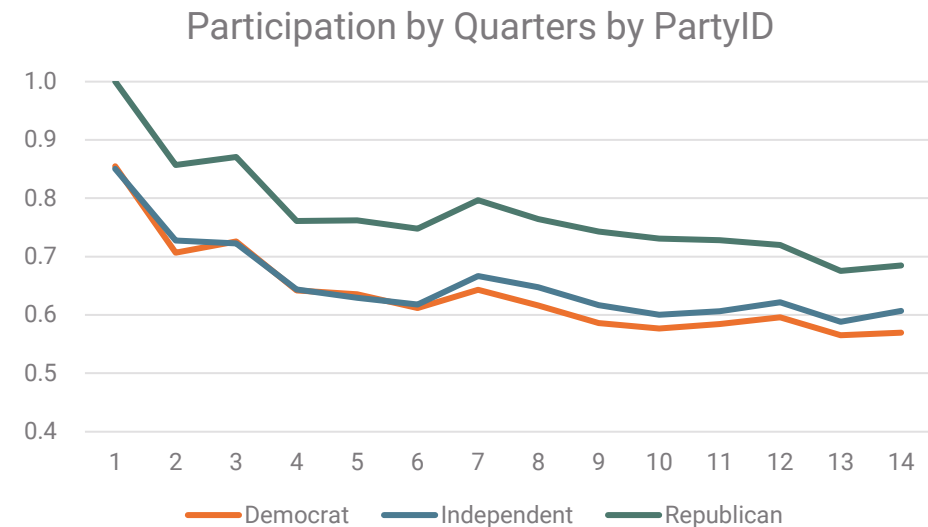
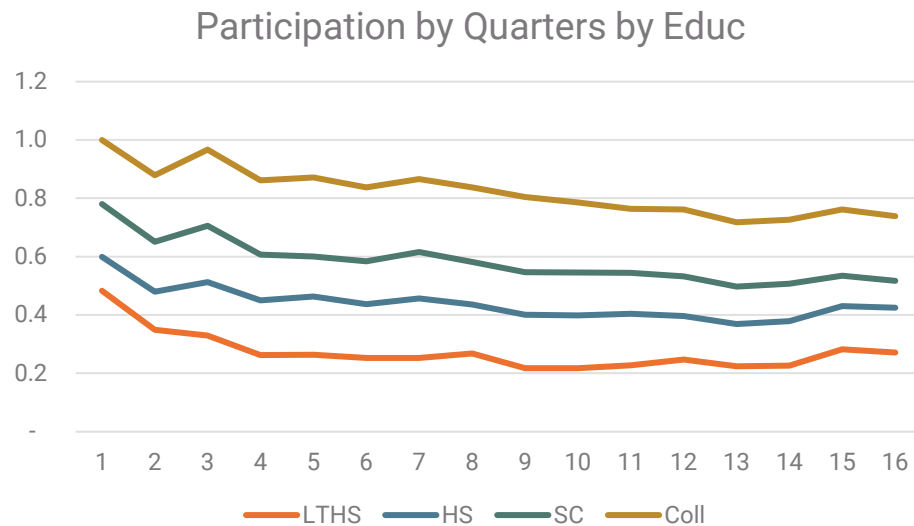


- Some groups are invited more than others
 - Currently over-recruiting Hispanics to lighten their burden
 - Generally, however, there is low variable in group invitation burden, ranging in 2020 from 3 to 6 per week

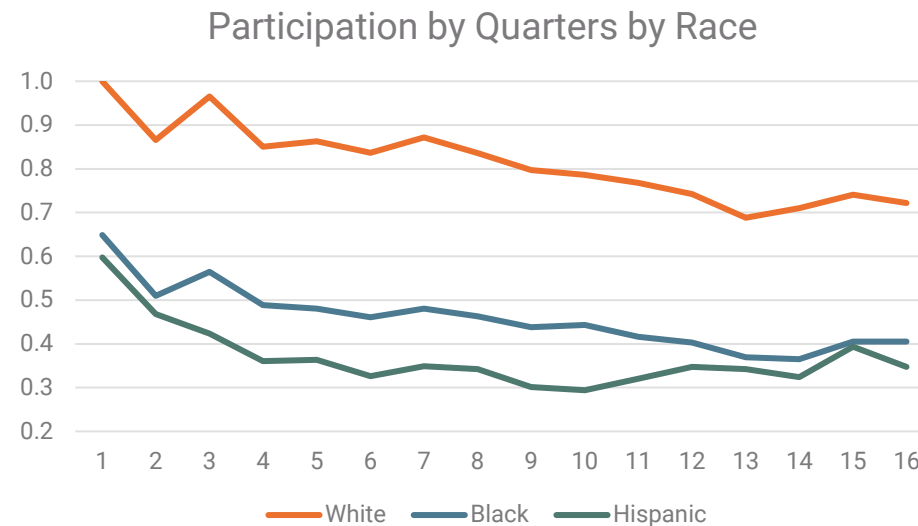


Is over-time participatory decline
systematic?

- The following charts show panelists in their “x” quarter of membership, regardless of when they joined.
- Many metrics like education and income (not shown) show little change.
- Republicans participate more, but again, with no relative change over time.

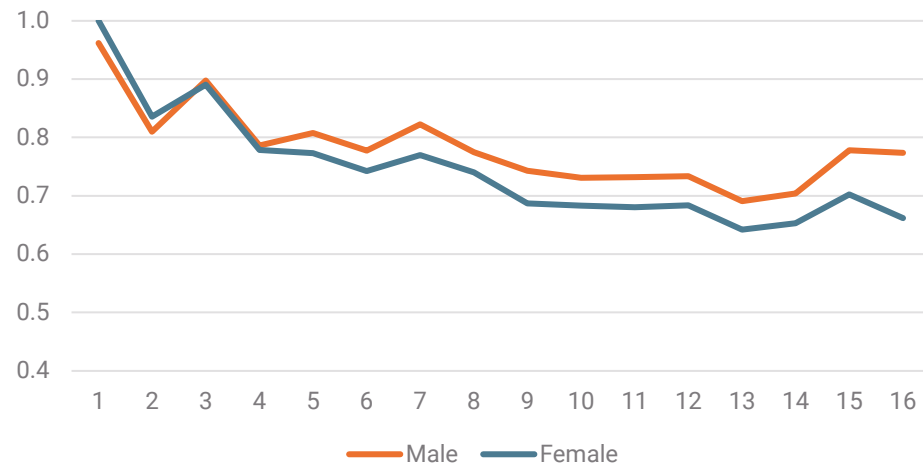


- There are insignificant differences in participation by race over time.
- Hispanic participation has in fact slightly increased over time, likely due to more focused efforts to maintain their engagement.

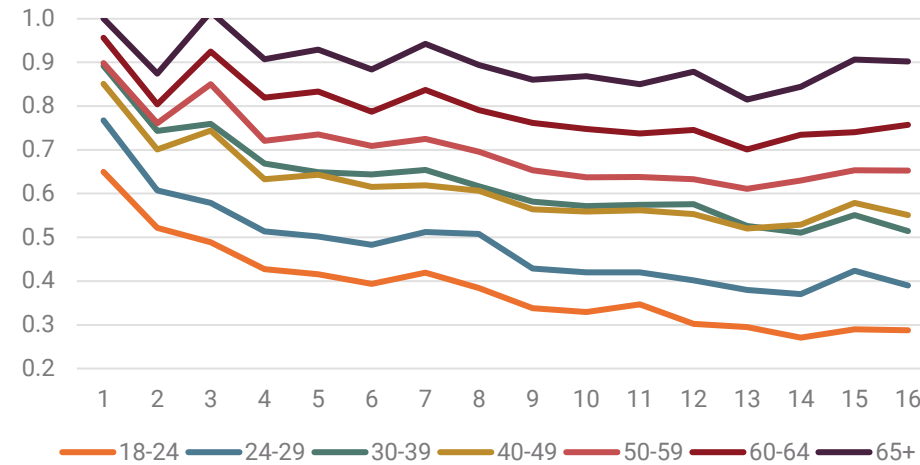


- Some metrics exhibit some “spread” over time

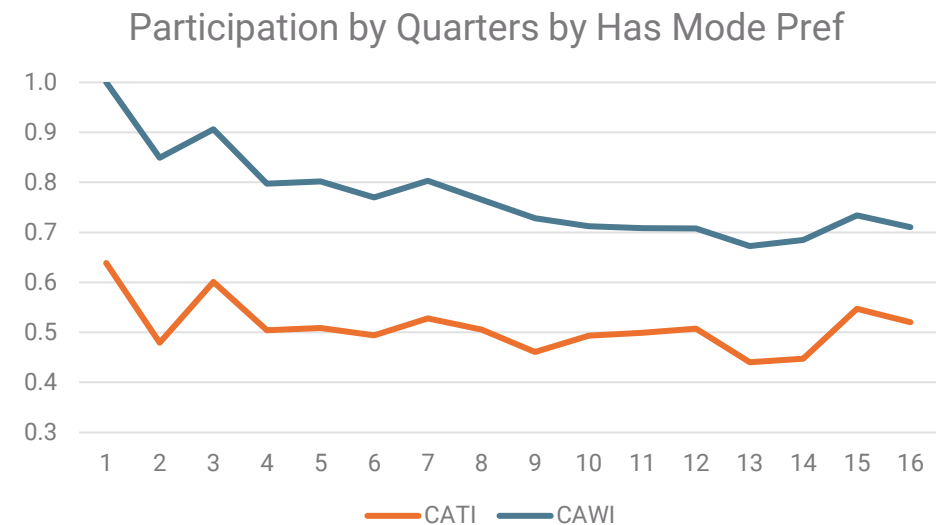
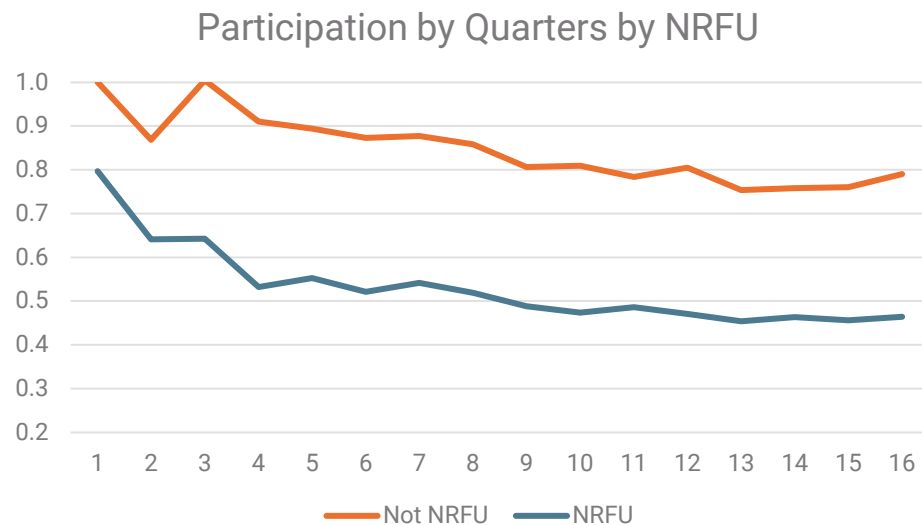
Participation by Quarters by Gender



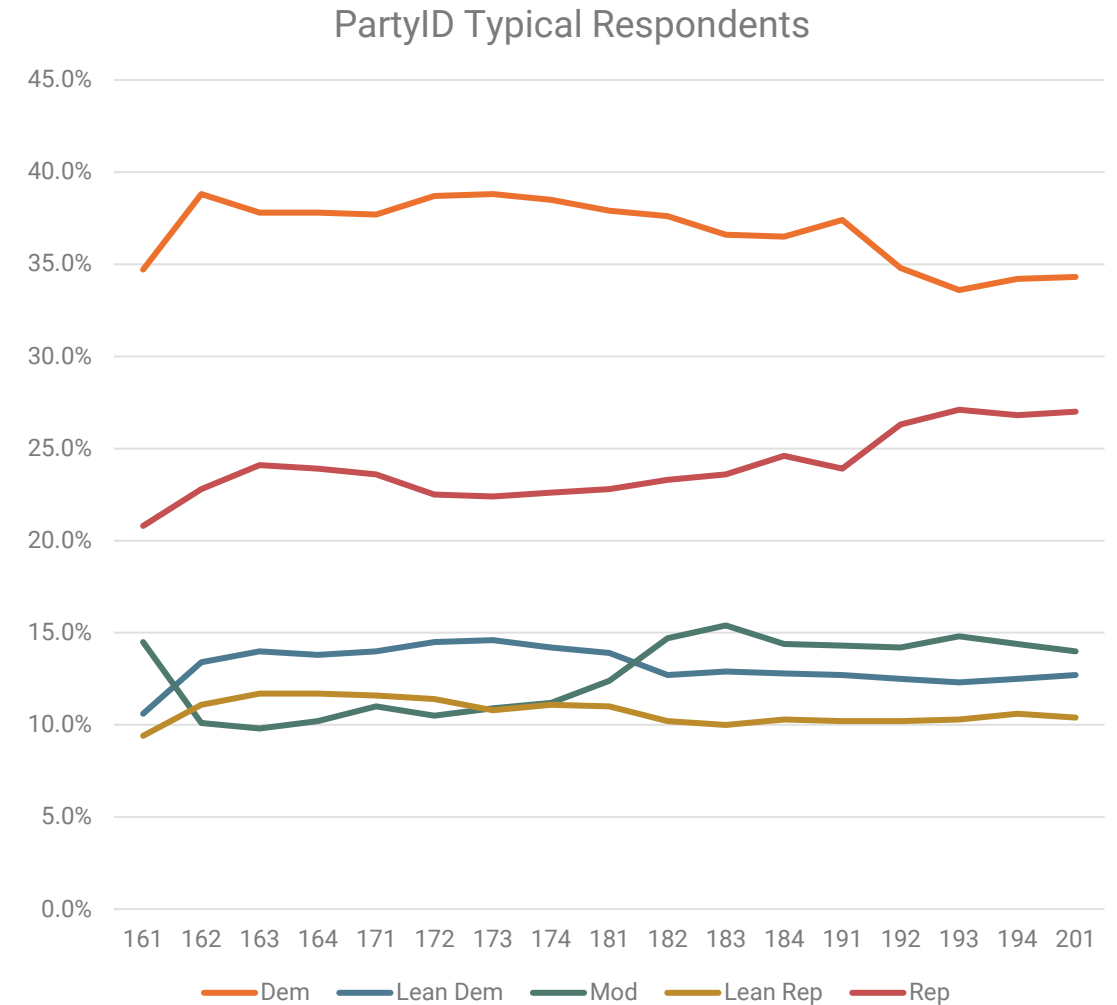
Participation by Quarters by Age



- Generally insignificant differences over time for NRFU status and mode status.



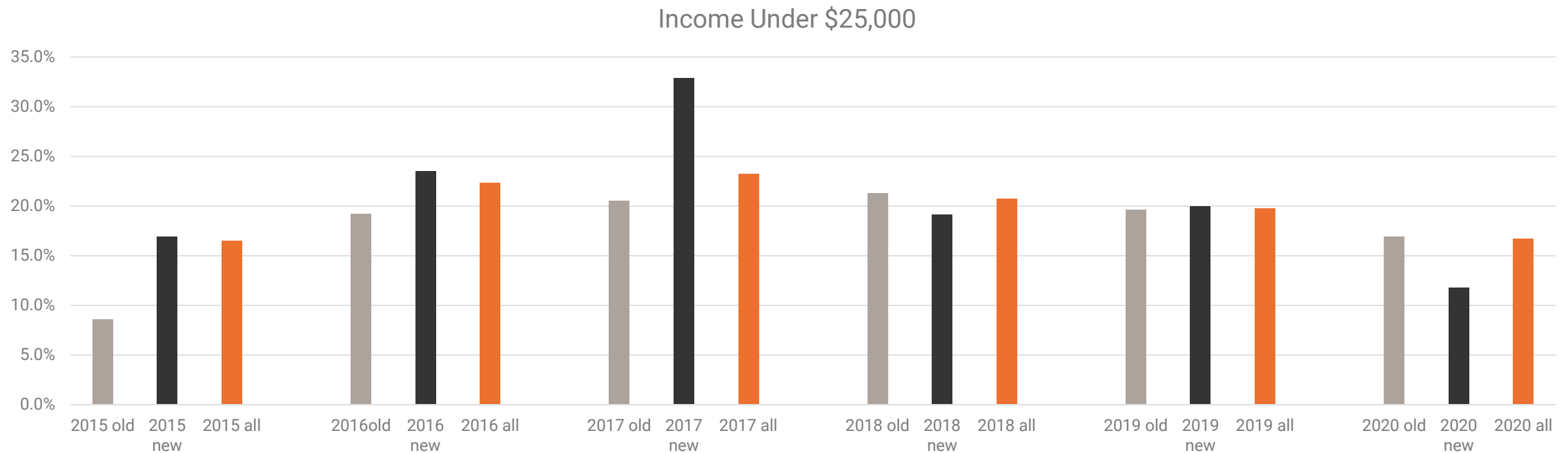
- *Taking a different perspective on panel makeup is shifting the x-axis to year-quarters. This will blend systematic nonresponse over time as well as the impact of fresh recruiting on a given cross section.*
- AmeriSpeak is more representative by PartyID than ever before



The ebb and flow of attrition and recruitment

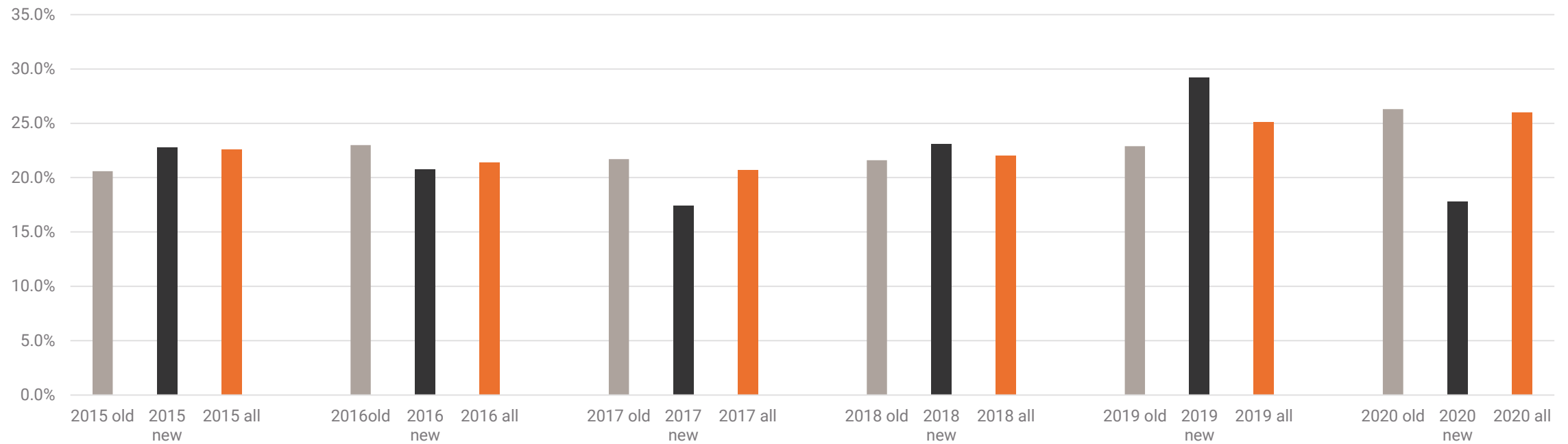
Panelists decline in participation, but are “replaced” by new recruits

- Each year the “old” panelists decline to some degree in participation
- New recruits keep the balance
- Below: “effective” panelists, that is, panelists * their participation rate, in aggregate



Another Example:

Republican



Can we predict panel nonresponse?

Can we Predict Who Will Become a Panelist?

- Big Data provides a wealth of data on both panelists and non-panelists with which to explore potential patterns of nonresponse
 - Consumer behavior
 - Voter behavior
 - Census data
 - Auto and housing purchase data
 - Financial data
- Positive Predictive Rate = 11%
- Panelists Correctly Classified = 6%

Can we Predict Who Will Become Less Active?

- In short, not well...and this is a great thing!
 - Regression models and panelist demographics explain less than 5% of variance.
 - Big data models do not do much better

		Predicted	
		Not VL	Very Low
Actual	Not VL	5170	5362
	Very Low	3304	4501

Low Participators

- Positive Predictive Rate = 58%
- Very Low Classified = 46%

		Predicted	
		Active	None
Actual	Active	17740	587
	Nones	3839	169

Recent Nones

- Positive Predictive Rate = 42%
- Nones Correctly Classified = 22%

What do lifecycle analyses tell us?

- Panel refreshing should NOT be simple random samples. If it were, over time, the sample would become less representative. Panel refreshing should be *responsive and reactive* to changes in effective panel participation.
- The biggest decline in panel participation occurs in the first 6 months. This is the best time for interventions to minimize declines.
- People stick with AmeriSpeak. We keep our panelist engaged by offering them a survey each week. We are able to keep our panelists for 3 years in the panel. Our other engagement efforts (such as newsletters, social media presence, etc.) also maybe helping this.
- We do not see a huge systematic participation decline over time, largely thanks to the fact that AmeriSpeak has periodically made adjustments to its sample to account for over-time systematic nonresponse. This is mainly due to our panel upkeep/big investment on annual recruitment.
- Systematic nonresponse both in AmeriSpeak recruiting and in panel attrition is, at worst, weak. Still, the lesson of the panel lifecycle is that nonresponse can *compound* over time, thereby still requiring strategic efforts to minimize and mitigate.

Thank you.

David Dutwin
SVP of NORC,
Chief Scientist of AmeriSpeak
Dutwin-david@norc.org

 Research You Can Trust™

 **NORC** at the
University of
Chicago