

# Comparisons of Questions Across Two Surveys: Results from a Quasi- Experiment

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# Congress: Exercising Citizenship in American Democracy

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## □ **Completed Interviews**

- Pre-Election: 1511
- Post-Election: 1223

## □ **Sample Sizes (pre)**

- National RDD: 1018
- Contested CDs: 493

## □ **Incentives**

- Pre-Election: 120 minute phone card
- Post-Election: None

## □ **Length of Interviews**

- Pre-Election: 31 minutes
- Post-Election: 22 minutes

## □ **Non-Standard Interview Procedures**

- Active and passive timers.
- Conversational pace, adjusted to match respondent.
- If the respondent interrupted with an appropriate response, interviewer recorded the answer without completely reading the question or response options.

# National Election Study (NES)

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## □ Completed Interviews

- Pre-Election: 1511
- Post-Election: 1347

## □ Sample Sizes (pre)

- 2000 Panel: 1187
- Fresh Cross (RDD): 324

## □ Incentives

- Pre-Election: \$20, \$40, \$50
- Post-Election: \$20, \$40, \$50

## □ Length of Interviews

- Pre-Election: 29 minutes
- Post-Election: 29 minutes

## □ Standard Interview Procedures

- Traditional interviewing.
- Standardized pace.
- Interviewers were required to read the full question and all responses before accepting an answer from the respondent, even if the respondent interrupted with an acceptable answer.

# Identical Questions

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## **Results Similar**

- How many days in the past week did you read a daily newspaper?
  
- Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, and Independent, or something else?

## **Results Dissimilar**

- How many days in the past week did you watch the national news on TV?
  
- In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have time. Which of the following statements best describes you:
  - Number 1: I did not vote in the election this November
  - Number 2: I thought about voting this time, but didn't
  - Number 3: I usually vote, but didn't this time; or
  - Number 4: I am sure I voted

# Identical Questions

Type of Result	Question/ Response	Congress		NES	
		RDD	Over Sample	Fresh Cross	Panel
Similar Result	Read newspaper 7 days/week	34.0	30.9	34.3	34.9
	Party affiliation Republican	29.4	34.1	31.5	31.9
Dis-similar Result	Watched network news 7 days/ week	38.3	36.4	33.7	30.2
	Number 3: I usually vote, but didn't this time	11.0	9.0	16.5	13.7

# Different Administration Similar Results

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## Family Financial Status

- **Congress** - We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you and your family are much better off, somewhat better off, somewhat worse off, much worse off, or just about the same financially as you were a year ago?
  
- **NES** - We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you (and your family) are BETTER OFF, WORSE OFF, or just about the same financially as you were a year ago?  
  
(Is that) MUCH [better/worse] off or SOMEWHAT [better/ worse] off?

## House Candidate Party

- **Congress** – (IF NEEDED): For whom did you vote? (Did you vote for:)
  - Fill Candidate 1 (Democratic Candidate)
  - Fill Candidate 2 (Republic Candidate), or
  - Someone else (ENTER TEXT)
  - WRONG DISTRICT
  
- **NES** - Who did you vote for? Did you vote for ((the [Democrat/Republican], [DEM CAND NAME/REP CAND NAME])) ((or)) ((the [Republican/Democrat], [REP CAND NAME/DEM CAND NAME])) ((or the candidate, OTHER CAND NAME)) ((or someone else?))?
  - PRELOAD DEM CAND NAME, PRELOAD REP CAND NAME, PRELOAD IND/3RD, PARTY CAND NAME, Other {SPECIFY}, R says these are not the candidates in R's district {SPECIFY}

# Different Administration Dissimilar Results

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## National Economic Status

- **Congress** - Now thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, much worse, or stayed about the same?
- **NES** - Now thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten BETTER, STAYED ABOUT THE SAME, or gotten WORSE?

Would you say MUCH  
[better/worse] or SOMEWHAT  
[better/ worse]?

## Congress' Performance

- **Congress** - What about the way the U.S. Congress has been handling its job?  
(Do you:) Strongly approve, Somewhat approve, Somewhat disapprove, Strongly disapprove, Neither approve nor disapprove (volunteered), DK, RF
- **NES** - Do you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE of the way the U.S. Congress has been handling its job?  
  
(Do you [approve/disapprove])  
STRONGLY or NOT STRONGLY?

# Different Administration Mixed Results

Type of Result	Question/ Response	Congress		NES	
		RDD	Over Sample	Fresh Cross	Panel
Similar Result	Somewhat worse personal financial status	20.9	18.2	19.5	20.0
	Voted for a Democratic House member	45.6	42.6	43.5	46.0
Dis-similar Result	Much worse national economy	26.6	24.1	32.0	32.1
	Strongly approve of Congress's job	6.4	6.8	21.8	20.7

# Questions Worded Differently

## Similar Results

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### Influence Other's Vote

- Congress** - We would also like to find out about some of the things people do to help a party or a candidate win an election. During the recent election campaigns, did you talk to any people or try to convince them why they should vote for or against a particular candidate? CLARIFY IF NEEDED: The recent election campaign is any time during the past year.
  - Yes, No, DK (DON'T PROBE), RF (DON'T PROBE)
  
- NES** - We would like to find out about some of the things people do to help a party or a candidate win an election. During the campaign, did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates?
  - Yes, No, DK, R, N

### Senate Candidate

- Congress** – Did you vote for a Senate candidate?
  
- NES** – How about the election for the United States Senate? Did you vote for a candidate for the U.S. Senate?

# Questions Worded Differently

## Dissimilar Results

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### Contacted by Party Representative

- **Congress** - Now I'd like to ask about any contact you had with the political parties or candidates during the recent election campaigns. Were you contacted either by phone or in person by a political party or candidate representative? (CLARIFY IF NEEDED: The recent election campaign is any time during the past year.)
  - Yes (by phone/in person), No, DK - DON'T PROBE, RF - DON'T PROBE
- **NES** - As you know, the political parties try to talk to as many people as they can to get them to vote for their candidate. Did anyone from one of the POLITICAL PARTIES call you up or come around and talk to you about the campaign this year?
  - Yes, No, Don't Know, Refused, N.

### Interest in Elections

- **Congress** - I'd like to get started with a question regarding the past election. Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Were you very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in the 2002 political campaigns?
- **NES** - Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you have been VERY MUCH INTERESTED, SOMEWHAT INTERESTED or NOT MUCH INTERESTED in the political campaigns so far this year?

# Questions Worded Differently

Type of Result	Question/ Response	Congress		NES	
		RDD	Over Sample	Fresh Cross	Panel
Similar Result	Yes, attempted to influence other's vote	33.7	28.6	34.9	32.8
	Yes, voted for Senate candidate	96.3	97.2	94.6	96.3
Dis-similar Result	No, was not contacted by a party representative	44.1	39.5	52.7	46.2
	Somewhat interested in campaigns	43.1	41.7	50.0	51.7

# Congress/Presidency Party Control

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□ **Congress** - Do you think it is better when one party controls both the presidency and Congress, better when one party controls the presidency and the other party controls Congress, or doesn't it matter?

- One party control both
- One party controls the presidency and the other party controls Congress
- Doesn't matter
- DK
- RF

□ **NES** - Do you think it is better when ONE PARTY CONTROLS both the presidency and Congress, better when CONTROL IS SPLIT between the Democrats and Republicans, or DOESN'T IT MATTER?

- Better When One Party Controls Both
- Better When Control Is Split
- It Doesn't Matter
- Don't Know
- Refused
- N

# Congress/Presidency Party Control

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<b>Question/ Response</b>	<b>Congress</b>		<b>NES</b>	
	<b>National RDD</b>	<b>Over- sample</b>	<b>Fresh Cross</b>	<b>Panel</b>
<b>1 party controls both</b>	24.0	24.4	22.8	21.2
<b>Control split</b>	38.1	38.8	61.1	60.5
<b>Doesn't matter</b>	37.9	36.8	16.1	18.3

# Bush's Handling of War

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- **Congress** - And what about the way George W. Bush is handling the war on terrorism? (Do you:)
  - Strongly approve
  - Somewhat approve
  - Somewhat disapprove
  - Strongly disapprove
  - Neither approve nor disapprove (volunteered)
  - DK
  - RF

- **NES** - All things considered, do you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE of the way George W. Bush is handling the war on terrorism? (split)
  - Approve
  - Disapprove
  - Don't Know
  - Refused
  - N.

(Do you  
[approve/disapprove])  
STRONGLY or NOT  
STRONGLY?

- Strongly
- Not Strongly
- Don't Know
- Refused
- N.

# Bush's Handling of War

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Question/ Response	Congress		NES	
	National RDD	Over- sample	Fresh Cross	Panel
Strongly approve	37.9	36.8	52.5	57.6
Somewhat approve	33.2	37.8		
Not strongly approve			22.1	19.0
Somewhat disapprove	14.4	13.2		
Not strongly disapprove			7.7	8.3
Strongly disapprove	14.0	12.2	17.7	15.1
Neither approve disapprove (vol)	0.5	0.0		

# Demographic Examples

## Similar Results

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### Marital Status

- **Congress** - Are you currently married?
  - Yes No DK RF
- Are you:
  - Living with a partner, Widowed, Separated, Divorced, or Never married
  - DK
  - RF
- **NES** - Are you MARRIED NOW and living with your spouse - or are you WIDOWED, DIVORCED, SEPARATED, or have you NEVER MARRIED?
  - Married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Never married, Partnered, not married {VOL}, Don't Know, Refused, N.

### Education Level

- **Congress** - What is the highest grade of school or level of education you have completed?

Do you have a GED or other high school equivalency?
- **NES** - What is the highest grade of school or year of college you completed?

Did you get a high school diploma or pass a high school equivalency test?

What is the highest degree that you have earned?

# Demographic Examples

## Dissimilar Results

### Race

- **Congress** - Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

Please tell me your race using one or more of the following categories. Please answer yes or no to each.

- Are you White?
- Black or African American?
- American Indian or Alaska Native?
- Asian or Pacific Islander?
- Are you another race I have not mentioned?

- **NES** - What racial or ethnic group or groups best describes you? {MULTIPLE MENTIONS}

- Black (African American), Asian, Native American, Hispanic or Latino, White, Other {SPECIFY}, Don't Know, Refused, N

{ IF HISPANIC OR LATINO MENTIONED FOR RACE, CODE AND DO NOT ASK, OTHERWISE ASK: }

Are you of Spanish or Hispanic origin or descent?

### Religion Guidance

- **Congress** - How much guidance do your religious beliefs provide in your day-to-day living? Would you say:

- A great deal of guidance
- Quite a bit of guidance
- Some guidance, or
- No guidance
- DK
- RF

- **NES** - Would you say your religion provides SOME guidance in your day-to-day living, QUITE A BIT of guidance, or A GREAT DEAL of guidance in your day-to-day life?

# Demographic Examples

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Type of Result	Question/ Response	Congress		NES	
		RDD	Over Sample	Fresh Cross	Panel
<b>Similar Result</b>	Respondent married	57.2	57.5	59.9	56.8
	High school diploma or equivalent only	27.4	28.0	26.5	26.7
<b>Dis-similar Result</b>	Black "only"	5.2	4.7	10.3	Not comparable
	Great deal of guidance from religious beliefs	43.0	39.6	48.3	51.8

## Short Summary

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- ❑ Some similarities and some differences between surveys
- ❑ Many possible causes – preceding items, interviewing modes, etc
- ❑ Either could be better or more correct – no external evaluation
- ❑ Further demonstrates the need for caution in question and questionnaire design – outcomes can be affected

## More Information

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[www.indiana.edu/~csr/AAPOR04\\_presentation.htm](http://www.indiana.edu/~csr/AAPOR04_presentation.htm)