



Question Wording Experiments in the ANES 2008 Time Series Study

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The 2008 ANES Time Series study included several experiments to test new versions of questions that have been asked on past ANES surveys. Respondents were randomly assigned to be asked either the original question or the new version. These experiments involve pairs of questions on several topics, with respondents randomly assigned in one "major" experimental group for several sets of questions and 9 additional minor splits for individual questions or small sets of questions.

The "Major" splice assigned respondents to one of two groups that received different versions of questions on both the Pre-election and Post-election waves of the survey. The additional minor splices each involved questions on one topic and one wave. This document describes these splices in detail.

MAJOR SPLIT ("OLD/NEW")

Pre-election

In the Major Splice, a random half of respondents (assigned to the group called "OLD") were administered six (6) traditional 7-point scales: government services-spending, defense spending, health insurance, guaranteed jobs and income, environment-jobs tradeoff, and women's role. For each, placements of Presidential candidates followed self-placement. The second half of respondents (assigned to the group "NEW") were asked, in place of these 7-point scales, new sets of similarly worded questions that used branching follow-up questions, with the exception that no new set of questions was asked with regard to women's role.

One remaining Pre-election 7-point scale, on aid to blacks, was not included in the split but was administered to all respondents as self-placement without Presidential candidate placements. A summary of the topics and corresponding variable identifiers is included below.

SUMMARY OF OLD/NEW SPLICE FOR ISSUES:

<u>OLD</u> (7-point scale)		<u>NEW</u> (branching)	
▪ government services-spending	N1a-N1c2	government services	N1d-N1f2a
▪ defense spending	N2a-N2c2	defense spending	N2d-N2f2a
▪ health insurance	N3a-N3c2	health insurance	N3d-N3h2a
▪ guaranteed jobs and income	N4a-N4c2	job security	N4d-N4h2a
▪ environment-jobs tradeoff	P4a-P4c2	environmental effort	P4d-P4h1
▪ women's role (1/2 sample only)	P7a-P7c2	--	

NOT SPLIT: aid to blacks 7-pt scale (full sample) P5-P5a

The OLD/NEW Major Splice also encompassed a split on the question rating the issue's importance; either the "OLD" 4-category version or a NEW 5-category version was administered for the first five (5) issue splits listed above. Additionally, the same splitting of issue importance followed self-placement on the un-split aid to blacks 7-point scale and followed the question on gun control [P6-P6a].

The OLD/NEW sample splice was also applied to the module on media use. The media-use module comprised either a set of previously-used Time Series questions (OLD), or else revisions to that set (NEW):

	<u>OLD</u>	<u>NEW</u>
▪ media use (frequency/duration, attention)	A11b1-A11d1	A12a-A12d1a

Post-election

The Pre-election assignment to OLD or NEW carried over into the Post-election interview for the following:

	<u>OLD</u>	<u>NEW</u>
• Post-election media use	A2a-A2f	A3a1-A3f
• turnout	C1a	C1b-C1b3a
• interest in government and politics	E5a	E5b1-E5b2
• abortion	G3a-G3c	G3d1-G6a3
• how often discuss politics	H4a-H4a1	H4b

- how often trust government M1a1 M1a2
- how much public officials care M3a1 M3a2

For abortion, the splice assigned either the traditional 4-category (OLD) question that asked when abortion should be permitted, or else a set of branching (NEW) questions repeated for a series of different abortion circumstances. Abortion positions of the Presidential candidates and the issue importance of abortion were also asked according to OLD/NEW version format.

OTHER SPLITS

Pre-election

Remaining Pre-election splits were independent of the above split and of one another and were given letter designations:

	<u>1ST VERSION</u>	<u>2ND VERSION</u>
• A/B - Interest in following campaigns	A1a	A1b
• C/D - Efficacy	E9a-E9d	E10a-D30d
• E/F - Economy	F2a-F2a1	F2b1-F2b2
• G/H - Personal trust	F8a	F8b
• J/K - Pres cand and President traits	K1a1,b1,c1,d1,e1,f1,g1, K2a1,b1,c1,d1,e1,f1,g1; R2a1,b1,c1,d1,e1,f2,g1	K1a2,b2,c2,d2,e2,f2,g2, K2a2,b2,c2,d2,e2,f2,g2; R2a2,b2,c2,d2,e2,f2,g2
• M/N - Marital status	Y2a	Y2b

In each pair of alternate versions, the first (A,C,E,G,J) was the version used in the Time Series prior to the 2008 Study. The second versions (B,D,F,H,K) are revisions new in 2008.

Post-election

Independent Post-election splits did not have letter designation:

	<u>1ST VERSION</u>	<u>2ND VERSION</u>	<u>3RD VERSION</u>	<u>4TH VERSION</u>
• Government threat (<i>placement</i>)	R1	R8	--	--
• Nominee/winner questions	T1-T1f1,T2 (<i>nominee</i>)	T1-T1f1,T3 (<i>nominee</i>)	T4-T4f1,T5 (<i>winner</i>)	T4-T4f1,T6 (<i>winner</i>)
• Government bailout	Y1a	Y1b		

ANALYSIS APPROACHES

Data users may be interested in conducting analyses that combine, compare, or cross these splices. ANES will soon release memos to help users understand the differences in results obtained with the different versions of each question, and to help users understand how to combine the different versions of each question into a single analysis.

An analysis that includes questions from two or more independent splits will have data missing at random. Analysts interested in analyzing data that combines responses from different splits may wish to consult literature on analyzing data missing at random. One helpful reference is Paul D. Allison, *Missing Data*, Sage: 2001.