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Abstract

Aldrich, Niemi, Rabinowitz, and Rohde propose a number of modifications to ongoing survey efforts based on the results of the 1979 Pilot Study. The authors find that almost one-half of respondents will place themselves on a range of points when responding to seven-point scale questions if given the opportunity to do so. The authors speculate that permitting "range" answers will allow for the study of ambiguity in the public's positions over the course of the 1980 campaign. Aldrich et. al. also suggest using a series of specific "branching" questions to divide respondents into categories. They find that this method is superior to the traditional seven point scale method in a number of ways. For example, the predictability of a surrogate vote based on issue positions is higher for the branching format. The authors also find that the salience measures in the 1979 Pilot Study are effective and remain stable across interviewing waves. Finally, the authors' analysis of the 1979 Pilot Study reveals that certain experimental measures did not perform as expected. For example, the proposed change to the seven point format which fixed the middle point as "support for the status quo" shifted the response distribution toward greater support for government intervention, but did not yield greater predictability or higher relationships with background variables.

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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Overseers
National Election Study

FROM: John Aldrich
Richard Niemi
George Rabinowitz
David Rohde

RE: Issues

We profited enormously from the pilot study and make the recommendations below on the basis of the results from that study. As we detail on the pages that follow, our proposals require very little extra time, and we suggest compensating deletions in any event.

I. Proposed Additions or Retentions

We propose:

1. That the two foreign policy issues used in the pilot study, defense spending and relations with Russia, be added to the standard list of issues (seven-point scales).
2. That respondents be explicitly allowed to use ranges of points on the seven-point scales. This requires a very small change in wording. Ex's: Q's E12-12e, 13-13e of Wave, Form A.
3. Using the "branching" format--analogous in form to the traditional party identification sequence--in a very limited way. Rate only self and Carter, and after the convention, the Republican candidate. Use only for two issues (which would also be asked in a seven-point scale format), social security and

defense spending. Use could be limited to (two or more) panel interviews.

Ex's: Q's E4-E11 of Wave 1, Form A.

4. Keeping or adding the following issue questions (seven-point scale format unless otherwise noted):

- Jobs and standard of living
- Aid to minorities
- Health insurance
- Liberal-conservative
- Inflation/unemployment
- Defense spending
- Social Security
- Relations with Russia
- Tax cut
- Abortion (Q G10 from 1976 post-election)
- Energy (new questions)

5. Obtaining placements (as best we can judge now) on seven-point scales for the following:

- Reagan
- Connally
- Bush
- Baker
- Carter
- Kennedy
- Brown
- Republicans, Democrats (on liberal/conservative scale only)

NOTE: Candidates could be eliminated as they drop out of the race, even if by crossing them out of the already printed interview.

6. Using the salience questions developed for Wave 1 of the pilot study, including rearranging the "cards" at the end of the issues section. Ex's: Q's E1f, E2d, E15-15a of Wave 1, Form A.

7. Retaining the "most important problems" question as in past interviews, and the question about which political party would better handle the problem. Q's E1-1b, E4 of 1976 post-election.

II. Possible Addition

Lower on our priority list, but possibly high on the list for those interested in retrospective voting is the addition of:

1. A rating of "current federal government policy" on the seven-point scales.

III. Proposed Deletions and Pilot Study Items Not to be Added

We propose:

1. Not using what we called the "status quo" format. Ex's: Q's E2-3 of Wave 1, Form A.
2. Dropping the following seven-point scales:
 - Urban unrest
 - Tax rate
 - Rights of accused
 - Marijuana
 - Busing
 - Women's place
3. Dropping the placements (used, e.g., in 1976) on seven-point scales of:
 - Republicans
 - Democrats
 - Blacks
 - Whites
 - Etc.
4. Not using the salience measure developed for Wave 2 of the pilot study. Ex's: Q's D6-6b of Wave 2, Form A.
5. Deleting all of the added questions about most important problems except which political party would do a better job in handling the problem.

E.g., Q's E2-E9j of 1976 post election, except E4.

6. Not using our question on additional important problems. Q's E16-16b of Wave 1, Form A.

7. Deleting some material on party differences from multiple panel waves and altogether if necessary.

JUSTIFICATION OF PROPOSALS

I. Additions

Number 1

Our justification for these items is contained under I, Number 4 along with that for other specific issues. We call special attention to these two, however, because we feel that foreign policy issues have been neglected in recent years and should be incorporated into the standard set of scales whether or not our other recommendations are accepted. These two issues were used in the pilot study and worked extremely well, as noted later. Consequently they are the obvious candidates for that role.

Number 2

Respondents should be explicitly allowed to use ranges of points on all seven-point scales because this yields many more analytical possibilities than the traditional format at virtually no cost. The pilot study shows that the use of ranges is feasible, and analysis of the results lends support to their use. Let us elaborate on each point.

The added analytical possibilities hardly need to be spelled out in detail. The ambiguity of candidate issue positions has long been noted, but to date there has been little opportunity to study the public's perceptions of or reactions to such fuzziness. Likewise, it has frequently been thought that respondents may be unsure of their own feelings. If respondents can now indicate that they have some awareness of self and candidate locations--e.g. that they are "kind of" liberal--without having to specify precise positions, we can begin to study the role of ambiguity in presidential campaigns. One might well expect, for example, that both self and candidate placements will become more precise as the campaign

goes on. One would also look for the relationship between issues and candidate evaluations to vary widely depending on the ambiguity of perceived positions. Even our understanding of the nature of individual attitudes might be revised if we have data on how ambiguously individuals rate their own positions.

The design of the 1980 survey is particularly suited to these analytical concerns. The fact that the electorate will be interviewed throughout the year means that there is a unique opportunity to assess the development of and change in candidate images. The relatively large number of viable candidates makes it likely that there will be considerable variation in the clarity with which they are perceived. And the panel component means that we can look at the individual-level dynamics of image formation. These factors make the immediate adoption of this proposal both appealing and compelling.

All of these arguments might be for naught if it were costly to obtain relevant data. But the format worked out for the pilot study is simple and requires no more time to administer than the traditional format. There is a slight difference in the introduction the first time the scale is used (Q E12 of Wave 1, Form A). After that the only change is to say "at what point or points would you place yourself...." Importantly, there is also no cost in the sense of loss of information for those who do not want to study ambiguity. Analysts who so desire can use the mean of the range as one way of eliminating ambiguity. Those who want literally a seven-point scale can use the rounding rules used in the past by ISR to eliminate those who persisted in giving a range. Thus there is no information currently obtained that cannot be derived simply from the results based on the use of ranges. (We suggest that mean scores and rounded scores be inserted at the processing stage in addition to the coding convention developed for the pilot study.)

The results of the pilot study suggest that the ambiguity format will be very useful. Tables 3, 4, and 5 show relevant data about the use of ranges. Appropriately enough, there are probably two points that should be especially noted in the tables. Apparent in Table 3 is that the two issues yield differing degrees of ambiguity; self and candidate placements in the relations with Russia issue are consistently more ambiguous than on the aid to minorities issue. A second point is the overall use of ranges. Perhaps the most telling number is in the right-hand column of Table 5. Altogether, given 12 opportunities to use a range, almost exactly half did so one or more times.

The effects of the ambiguity format--and the absence of certain effects--also support use of this format. Allowing the use of a range appears to reduce slightly the number of no opinion responses. (See Table 1, lines 5-6, where the appropriate comparison is between Wave 1, where the ambiguity format was used, and Wave 2, where the traditional format was used.) This would be a negative feature if all of the range users were those likely to have non-attitudes. Two results indicate that this is not the case. In Table 6, we can see that there are individuals who use a range in Wave 1 and then say that they have no opinion in Wave 2. However, there are also many individuals--in fact, more on the aid to minorities issue--who use a single point in Wave 1 and then have no opinion in Wave 2. Even more to the point, variables such as education, political interest, and level of political information have little relationship to the use of ranges (an average r_b of .02 for seven variables). Indeed, some of these relationships are "reversed," meaning that those who we would expect to know about politics use ranges more frequently (e.g., Table 7). Use of a range is not simply a confession that the respondent has no opinion. Lastly, the predictability of a surrogate vote using a "spatial" model is better using scores derived from the range data than from the traditional format (Table 8).

Altogether, the "ambiguity" format worked out exceedingly well in the pilot study. This along with the virtually zero cost of implementing it provides ample justification for its use in the 1980 survey.

Number 3

The branching format is akin to the traditional party identification question in that an initial question divides respondents into three categories with follow-up questions dividing each of the initial extremes into two categories and the initial middle into three categories. The results of using the branching format for issue questions in the pilot study are extremely suggestive. Yet it would be far too radical a move to suggest that the traditional seven-point scale format be scrapped entirely in favor of the branching format. Considerably more evidence is needed on the relative merits of each. Hence, in our only recommendation for something that is any way experimental, we suggest a very limited use of the branching format.

The suggested use of the branching format is the minimum which is likely to yield interpretable results. Two items are suggested because there is always the possibility that any one item is somehow problematical (e.g., not discussed at all in the campaign). In addition, we can be much more certain of our ground if we get consistent results across issues. We have also suggested collecting a minimum number of candidate ratings. Finally, we have suggested that the branching format be used only in the panel interviews. Indeed, their use could be even further restricted to a couple of waves of the panel if different interview schedules are used for different waves. (A minimum of two waves is essential so that stability coefficients can be calculated.) For issues we suggest those used in the pilot study. One is a domestic issue, one is a foreign policy issue. More government action is the liberal response on one and the conservative response on the other. Both are likely to be important for years to come.

A major reason for wanting to preserve some use of the branching format is that the predictability of a surrogate vote based on issue positions is higher for the branching format than for the traditional format, particularly for the social security issue (Table 8). (Other results, not shown, yield small but highly consistent differences for the issue of defense spending.)

There are added reasons for thinking that the branching format is a good one. Just as the responses to the initial party identification question are sometimes used by themselves, responses to an issue question in the branching format can be used by themselves. In fact, if one wishes to distinguish individuals who are pro, neutral, and anti on some issue, the branching format would seem to be considerably better than the seven-point format. With the latter, one has to assume that four, or alternatively 3-5, represent a neutral position. There is no guarantee that all respondents interpret the points in this fashion. With the branching format, on the other hand, respondents sort themselves into an initial trichotomy.

Another seemingly positive result of the branching format is that it is more difficult for individuals to end up in the neutral, "4," position. On the face of it this is not obviously an improvement. However, it seems likely that many individuals have weakly held opinions but nonetheless do come down on one side of an issue or another. If given the easy "out" represented by a seven-point scale, they will choose the obviously neutral, non-committal position of "4." Ordinarily we would not find out which way they lean. The branching format clearly encourages individuals to indicate more frequently which side of an issue they come down on. For self placement on the social security question, for example, 40 percent of the respondents place themselves squarely in the middle using the traditional format; only 7 percent are in the middle using the branching format. On the defense item, the percentages are 28 percent and 7 percent

with the traditional and branching format, respectively. Contrasts are similar for the candidates.

An additional effect of the branching format, which we also judge to be positive, is that of sharply increasing the mean difference between respondents' self placement and candidate placement and the standard deviations of those differences (Table 9, lines 3-4). The reason clearly lies in the reduced number of "4" ratings. Numerous individuals who previously had zero distance between themselves and the candidates by virtue of self and candidate placement at "4" now

have a non-zero distance. This increases the mean distance. However, since some of the newly non-zero distances are very small, while others are larger (as for example, when the respondent places himself/herself at "5" and the candidate at "3", the standard deviation also rises. The greater standard deviations represent increased differentiation among individuals and how they view candidates. That the distances that appear with the branching format but appear as non-zero with the traditional format apparently represent meaningful though small differences between the respondent's feelings and his or her perception of the candidate's position is suggested by the greater predictability of the surrogate vote noted earlier.

Altogether, then, it appears that the branching format has substantial potential for improving measurement of respondent and candidate locations on issue dimensions. However, only considerably more evidence would warrant wholesale changes away from the seven-point scale format. Just as the seven-point format was initially used experimentally in 1968 on a trial basis, we suggest using the branching format in 1980. The risk, represented by the cost of asking these additional questions, is small, and the potential pay-off is substantial.

Number 4

Our reasons for keeping or adding specific issues are as follows:

Jobs and Standard of Living, Aid to Minorities, Health Insurance, Abortion, Liberal-Conservative. The need for continuity in the election studies is great. Of all the issues included in recent studies, these seem the best for that purpose. They also have the potential for being important in future elections and not just in 1980. Together they provide broad coverage of issues, including two (jobs and minorities) on which the parties have traditionally been divided and which

are likely to be perennial political issues for the foreseeable future, the issue which divides Kennedy from the others (health insurance), an issue that divides Republicans as well as Democrats (abortion), and the general and abstract liberal-conservative dimension. All of these items (except for abortion, on which there is no need for further testing) were used in the pilot study and continue to work well in terms of their overall distributions, differentiating candidates (Tables 1, 9), predictability of surrogate votes (Table 8), and so on.

We recommend that the abortion item be asked the same way as in 1976 (G10, post-election). However, it is useful to ask for the candidates' positions on this issue as well as self-placement, and it should be rated on the salience measure.

On the liberal-conservative item only, we recommend obtaining more than the usual number of placements (the political parties plus those for whom thermometer ratings are obtained and/or those who are placed on the other seven-point scales). This item is particularly useful for multidimensional scaling, and the more placements there are, the more reliable the scaling becomes.

Inflation/Unemployment. This is a perennially important political issue and is especially salient now (Table 11). Surely there should be some question(s) about it. We strongly suggest a form in which inflation and unemployment are viewed as competing since it has been posed in this fashion by political leaders. It is true that there is presently a kind of unemployment question (jobs and standard of living). And, the inflation scale from 1972 could be reintroduced (or the questions from 1976 utilized). But that would not raise the trade-off question posed by politicians and many economists. At the Stanford conference there was some sentiment for asking all questions in a form that called explicitly for a trade-off. While we are not proposing to move to that form of question entirely,

the way this issue has been defined politically makes it a natural for that form.

Faced with a choice between two desirable or, in this case, undesirable goals, it would not be surprising if more than the usual number of respondents opted out, saying that they had not thought about the issue or didn't know where to place themselves. This is exactly what happened in the pilot study in two separate formats used for this item (Table 1), suggesting that the trade-off feature had precisely the effect anticipated.

In the pilot study we experimented with a multiple-question format for this item, but it was difficult to translate the responses to those questions into a single scale. Consequently, we suggest that inflation/unemployment be included in a seven-point scale format (i.e., as in question E1 of Wave 1, Form A, though with ranges allowed per our first suggestion).

Social Security. This item was probably the single most talked about issue at the Stanford conference, so that we anticipate considerable interest in including it in 1980. We utilized it in the pilot study, and it proved to be a relatively good predictor of the vote, at least in one format (Table 8). It is an issue that will be around for a long time, and is therefore one that should provide continuity with future election studies. Finally, it is a trade-off item in the same way as the inflation/unemployment question (and the proportion with no opinion was relatively high).

Defense Spending, Relations with Russia. There have rarely been good foreign policy questions asked in the surveys. In fact, there is some feeling that foreign policy items are intrinsically unworkable because they will not differentiate well among respondents or candidates. These two items worked remarkably well in the pilot study. For example, the standard deviations of the

placements, an indication of differentiation of ratings, were in the same range as for the domestic issues (Table 2). The correlation between Wave 1 and Wave 2 placements for the relations with Russia issue was similar to those on domestic issues; on the defense spending issue, self-placement was remarkably more stable (Table 10). The salience ratings for these items showed them to be no less salient than some of the domestic issues (Table 11). Most significantly, they were good predictors of a surrogate vote, even after controlling for variables such as party identification and approval of Carter's presidency (Table 8). Finally, defense spending provides a third trade-off item.

Tax Cut. This issue may be a major concern in the forthcoming presidential election and should be asked about. Fortunately, it was included in the pilot study (D7-7b of Wave 1, Form A), which put to rest the concern that few individuals would choose one or another of the alternatives, such as no reduction. All three of the options provided for were selected by a large number of respondents.

We suggest that this item be turned into a seven-point scale rather than asked in the format used in the pilot study. There should be no difficulty in doing this, since the end points ("about 1/3 reduction" and "no reduction") are simply the most extreme responses of the question as worded. Making this into a seven-point scale permits greater differentiation than is possible with the present form. It would also make it easier to obtain placements for multiple candidates on this issue and to obtain a salience rating for it.

Energy. Energy surely seems like an issue area which will be of major importance in 1980. It is a complicated area because it is multifaceted. We did not have time to come up with suitable questions, but feel that it is important for there to be coverage of this domain. It is unlikely that any single item would suffice, so a series of questions rather than a seven-point scale is probably called for. If possible, nonetheless, candidate placements and a salience rating should be obtained.

Number 5

It seems absolutely necessary to obtain ratings of a large number of candidates because the field will not yet be narrowed down by the time interviewing begins. We have recommended those who appear to us at the present time to be the most serious possibilities for the presidential nominations. Obviously there ought to be some flexibility to determine as late as possible just what the appropriate set is. We caution, however, against deleting individuals prematurely. It would be most unfortunate if an eventual candidate were eliminated.

Placements of a relatively large set of potential candidates should also be of considerable assistance in looking at the process of elimination and for such analyses as multidimensional scaling to obtain perceived candidate and issue spaces. It is for the latter purpose that we recommend retaining the party placements on the liberal/conservative scale. Since this scale is an abstract one, on which parties are likely to maintain fairly stable positions, placements on this single item should be especially valuable.

We recommend dropping the placement of candidates when they are no longer possibilities. Since interviews cannot be printed repeatedly, this might be done simply by deleting names already printed on the schedule. We presume that interviewers could be instructed to delete names right up to the time of interviewing.

Number 6

Perhaps the most frequent complaint by formal theorists about the election study data is that there is no good salience question. But even to the broader political science audience, the absence of a salience question seems like a serious deficiency. A variety of questions have been used over the past several elections to try to get at the relative importance of various issues, but none

has proved highly successful. We think that the results of the pilot study warrant the conclusion that we have found a useful mechanism for obtaining salience ratings.

The salience question(s) used in the pilot study pass(es) three critical tests: (1) The salience rating of each issue had relatively high Wave 1-Wave 2 correlations, even though the format was somewhat different in the two waves (Table 12). (2) The salience ratings of individuals tended to be reasonably stable over time (mean intraindividual correlation of .37), insuring that the issue correlations were not a methodological artifact of some people tending to rate all issues as salient while others rated all issues unimportant. (3) The questions provide good interitem discrimination. The mean number of items discriminated (i.e., untied rankings) in Wave 1 was 4.89 and in Wave 2 was 3.96 out of a maximum possible 7. (The lower figure in the second wave resulted more from excessive missing data, generated by requiring the respondent to locate current government policy on an issue before being asked about its salience, than from poor discrimination. In both waves approximately 3/4 of the highest possible discrimination was achieved once missing data was taken into account.)

In terms of its substantive usefulness, the salience questions provided encouraging results. In general we observed that individuals who rated an issue as important had (in our judgment) a somewhat better sense of candidate placement on issues than individuals who rated the issue less important. The predictive effectiveness of issue positions appeared to be enhanced by the inclusion of salience ratings, but the results were not overwhelming. The results for one very simple model involving salience are shown in Table 13.

We also estimated more complex models of the effects of issues, party, region, and race on the differential thermometer evaluations of Carter and

Reagan. We performed three sets of regressions which differed only in how we treated the issues. In the first case our issue variable was

$$\sum_i (| \frac{\text{Self placement}_{\text{Issue } i} - \text{Carter placement}_{\text{Issue } i}}{\text{Issue } i} | - | \frac{\text{Self placement}_{\text{Issue } i} - \text{Reagan Placement}_{\text{Issue } i}}{\text{Issue } i} |)$$

where the sum was computed over the six issues on which we had full information on both waves. In the second case our issue variable was computed exactly as before except that in computing the sum each relative proximity (i.e., proximity to Carter - proximity to Reagan) was multiplied by the salience score given to that issue by the individual. In the third case each issue (in relative proximity form) was included as a separate variable in the regression.

In terms of explaining variance, the third case must of necessity explain more than the first. In the first treatment each issue is forced to have equal weight while in the third the weight for each issue is estimated so as to optimize prediction. The second case, however, has no necessary relation to either the first or third. If self weighting of items is of more predictive value than general weighting, the second case could explain more variance than the third. However, if self weighting has no value in aiding prediction, results could be worse than in the equal weighted model. Empirically, in both the first and second waves, we found the equal weighted case least effective and the regression weighted case most effective with the salience weighted case in between. The explained variance for the three cases in Wave 1 were .543, .553, .568, respectively and in Wave 2 were .635, .681, .691, respectively.

Prior to the pilot study, there was some concern about the mechanism for obtaining salience rankings on multiple issues. A "board" with a 0-100 scale needed to be developed which would hold "issue cards" indicating an individual's salience for each issue. A satisfactory solution to that problem seems to have been found. This method also allows individuals to keep a running tally of the

rating they have given to previous issues.

The "board" method also makes it possible for individuals to rearrange the cards at the end, after having placed all issues on the 0-100 scale. We propose retaining this feature. About 20 percent of the respondents to the pilot study did some rearranging, and many of the changes were substantial, with over half of the rearrangers changing at least one issue by 20 or more points.

The use of this device does create one potential problem. It would seem to work best if all the issues were asked about in one section. However, given a relatively large number of seven-point scales, it might be desirable on other grounds to ask them in two parts, just as in 1976 some were asked in the pre election study and some in the post election study. If this is considered necessary, we still feel the option of rearranging the cards at the end of each of the sets would be desirable. While not quite as nice, we think that it would still fulfill the primary function of allowing the respondent to rectify

a serious misplacement of any issue on the scale.

Number 7

It is important to have a check on whether or not we have asked about issues which are perceived by the electorate as among the most important problems facing the country. It is especially appropriate to have this information over a period of time as will be possible in 1980. The "most important problems" question provides such a check, as well as being useful in its own right.

We suggest using the traditional question rather than the question we developed for the pilot study for several reasons. First, the traditional question maintains continuity with past studies. Second, the traditional question is almost identical to the Gallup question and therefore provides additional comparability. Third, there seems little justification in the results of the pilot study for suggesting replacement of this question with the one we developed. While a high proportion of respondents cite some issue in response to the traditional question, over 60 percent failed to cite any issue using our format. The 0-100 rating that was obtained for respondents who did cite an issue in the pilot study was not particularly useful because of lack of variance. Over half of the respondents placed it at 100 and nearly everyone else rated it extremely highly.

II. Possible Addition

Number 1

For our purposes, placing "current federal government policy" on the seven-point scales became expendable when we decided to recommend not using the salience format developed for Wave 2 of the pilot study. (Recall that that form of the salience question required determining the distance between the respondent and his/her rating of current government policy.) Nonetheless, those interested in retrospective voting made a strong argument at Stanford for its use, and they may want to argue for its inclusion in the 1980 survey.

The results from the pilot study are somewhat ambiguous. Carter was not placed identically to current government policy. Nonetheless, the differences do not seem consistently large or systematic. Evidence is provided in Table 14. The differences in mean placement are typically not very large and are variable between waves in any event. Correlations between placements of Carter and government policy are relatively high, at least judging in terms of correlations typically derived from survey data. The differences in the mean distance between self and Carter versus self and government are also quite small on average and are somewhat inconsistent.

In short, we do not need this stimulus placed on the seven-point scales, but we call attention to the possible need of others for it.

III. Deletions

Number 1

There was some sentiment at the Stanford conference for fixing the status quo point on seven-point scales by making position number 4 an alternative such as "government now doing what is needed." Alternatives toward one end of the scale would indicate that the government should do less. (Ex's: Q's E2 and E3 of Wave 1, Form A.) With the results of the pilot study in hand, along with our proposal for use of branching questions (I-3), it appears that there is little to recommend use of this format.

One of the chief reasons is apparent simply in the means and distributions of responses. All of the ratings of self and candidates (with the exception of Kennedy, whose extreme rating on health care probably accounts for the deviation) are lower in number than the ratings obtained by the traditional format, implying greater support for government involvement in providing health insurance and job guarantees (Table 2, line 1-2). This difference can probably be attributed to "do something" responses from individuals who want a problem solved even if they are unsure of the solution. That is, individuals are probably responding in part to their desire to see the government solve a problem rather than solely to the policy alternatives posed. This argument is supported by observing the response distribution. Unlike other formats, there is no tendency for there to be more or fewer "4's" or for there to be lumpiness at any other specific point on the seven-point scale. Instead, the entire distribution of responses is shifted leftward by the status quo format. This intrusion of the matter of governmental intervention might be acceptable if the status quo format yielded greater predictability and/or higher relationships with background variables. However, the new format yields about the same levels of predictability (Table 8)

and relationship with background variables as the traditional format.

It should be observed that the branching format employs the notion of fixing the middle position as the status quo point. While this is not precisely the same as using a seven-point scale with "4" labelled as the status quo, it should provide some information for those especially interested in this notion.

Number 2

Our reasons for dropping various seven-point scales are as follows:

Urban Unrest. This scale is simply outdated.

Tax Rate. (G8 in 1976 post-election). Discussion at the Stanford conference, which we agree with, suggested that this is the least well worded of the seven-point scales. Also, politically, the question of a tax cut now seems to be more salient than that of the tax rate.

Rights of Accused, Marijauna, Busing, and Women's Rights. While all of these issues are still controversial, our view is that the issues we propose using are more salient politically than these. While the political agenda can change unpredictably, we have to make some guesses as to what is likely to be important six or eight months from now. We think that these four issues will simply not be major controversies in the presidential campaign. In addition, some of the issues we propose using broaden the scope of the entire set of issue questions more than these issues would. Specifically, other things being equal, we prefer adding a foreign policy issue rather than another domestic item, since the former have been severely underrepresented.

While we suggest dropping all four of these items, busing and women's rights are a little higher on our priority list than the other two.

There may be some sentiment for retaining the marijauna and women's rights issues simply to document societal change over a long period of time.

If they are retained for this reason, we would suggest that only self-placement be obtained and that the issues not be asked about in more than one wave of the panel.

Number 3

Group ratings on the seven-point scales undoubtedly yield some interesting results. For instance, Jennings and Niemi use such placements to compare the "real" generation gap and the perceived gap. Nonetheless, ratings of groups have been little used to our knowledge. Nor do there seem to be strong theoretical reasons for obtaining group ratings. Finally, of course, there is a limit to the number of placements that can be obtained on each scale. Since we feel that it is necessary to ask about a number of candidates--given that the interviewing begins well before the conventions--it seems essential that group placements are deleted.

Number 4

We prefer the salience measure developed in Wave 1 of the pilot study to that developed in Wave 2 for several reasons. First, the measure used in Wave 2 requires asking for placement of current government policy on the seven-point scales. Not only is this one more item to place, but "don't know" responses to that item mean a loss of respondents who actually give a salience rating. The loss is on the average of 15 percent of the respondents (Table 1). Second, as we noted earlier, this missing data meant that the method used in Wave 2 resulted in less discriminating power than that used in Wave 1. Finally, it would be difficult to employ the method used in Wave 2 if as we propose, respondents are permitted to use ranges in placing self and current government policy on the seven-point scale. The staff for the pilot study did a remarkable job in coming up with a way in which interviewers could immediately determine the distance

between self-placement and placement of current government policy. Doing so when individuals are allowed to give ranges rather than single points would no doubt tax even their considerable ingenuity.

Number 5

We suggest deleting all of the follow-up material typically asked about most important problems except perhaps which political party would do a better job in handling the problem. In part this is simply a judgment about what is most important given a tremendous squeeze for space in the interview. Questions E7 and E9, however, will essentially be replaced by obtaining 0-100 salience ratings as suggested in our proposed addition number 5. Question E9 obtains a rank order of issues, but that can be obtained (along with additional information) from the ratings.

Number 6

See justification for I, Number 7.

Number 7

Although we don't presume to speak for others, it is our feeling that much of the material on party differences and perceptions of parties in general could be asked only once during the panel. If necessary for lack of space, some of these questions could even be deleted altogether from the panel and/or the repeated cross-sections. We have in mind questions such as A20-23 of the 1976 pre-election; these might be asked only once in the panel. Questions D4-D4a and especially D5-D5c (1976 pre-election) could surely be asked just once in the panel and perhaps not at all.

These questions have sometimes been important in the past, but they seem to have been of less use recently. (This applies especially to D4 and D5.) Most importantly, answers to these questions are relatively unlikely to change

significantly over the panel period inasmuch as they represent feelings about long-standing political parties rather than candidates who come and go. To the extent that the answers vary, the fact that they are mostly open ended makes them difficult to compare across time. A simple correlation of time 1 and time 2 answers, for example, is inappropriate because the answers cannot be ordered, much less intervally scaled. These represent only a small fraction of the total number of questions asked in the survey, but being open ended, they take a lot of interview (and later coder) time. Together with the suggestions for deleting retrospective information made by Niemi, this would represent a substantial reduction in Section D of the 1976 pre-election interview.

Tables

NOTE:

Status Quo format: Middle alternative labelled "Government now doing what is needed," with more government activity toward one extreme and less activity toward the other.

Branching format: Series of questions identical in form to the traditional party identification questions.

Ambiguity format: Ranges of points could be given for placements on seven-point scales.

1-7 format: Traditional seven-point scales.

Table 1

Percentage with No Opinion about Self and
Others' Placement on Issues

Issue	Format		Wave 1						Wave 2							
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Self ^a	Carter ^b	Reagan	Ford	Kennedy	Gov't	Self	Carter	Reagan	Ford	Kennedy	Dems	Reps	Gov't
Government Health Insurance	Status quo	1-7	7.9	20.2	41.6	--	21.0	--	8.5	23.1	44.9	38.9	25.5	--	--	20.4
Jobs & Standard of Living	Status quo	1-7	8.9	13.0	33.5	--	--	--	10.6	17.1	36.0	29.4	--	24.2	30.3	16.6
Social Security	Branching ^c	1-7	12.6	23.8	42.0	--	--	--	12.8	23.2	43.3	34.5	--	33.5	36.0	19.7
Defense Spending	Branching ^c	1-7	11.1	13.3	34.5	--	--	--	11.9	10.7	34.8	23.2	--	--	--	13.0
Relations with Russia	Ambiguity	1-7	5.7	6.1	30.1	14.9	23.7	8.7	7.7	9.7	36.4	20.3	--	25.3	28.6	12.9
Aid to Minorities	Ambiguity	1-7	6.8	7.3	28.1	17.7	17.7	8.9	7.7	14.4	37.5	29.6	--	24.1	26.9	14.4
Inflation/ Unemployment	1-7	1-7	26.1	18.6	33.3	25.5	25.7	15.8	18.9	18.2	43.4	35.7	--	--	--	8.1
	Branching ^c	Branching ^c	20.7	18.9	35.1	30.9	--	--	17.9	26.1	44.6	33.7	--	--	--	--

^aIncludes those saying "haven't thought much about it," and "don't know." N = 280 for Wave 1; N = 236 for Wave 2. N's for the inflation/unemployment item are 139 and 123 for waves 1 and 2, respectively, of the 1-7 format and 141 and 113 for the branching format.

^bPercentage saying "don't know" of those who themselves have an opinion. N is 280 (236) minus the number with no self-placement, except lower for the inflation/unemployment item.

^cWith the branching format there was more than one opportunity to say "don't know." The percentage is those who said "don't know" at any point.

NOTE:

Creation of seven point inflation/unemployment scale for the branching format
was as follows:

Which problem is more serious?

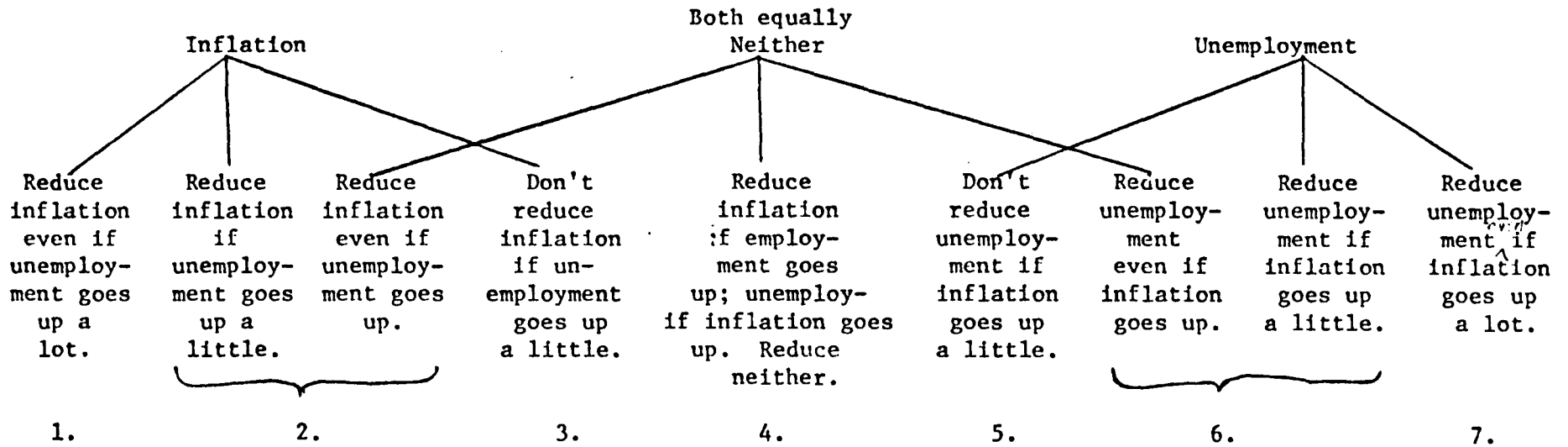


Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Self- and
Others' Placement on Issues^a

Issue	Format		Wave 1							Wave 2						
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Self	Carter	Reagan	Ford	Kennedy	Gov't	Self	Carter	Reagan	Ford	Kennedy	Dems	Reps	Gov't
Government Health Insurance	Status quo	1-7	\bar{X} s.d. 2.97 (1.90)	3.18 (1.34)	4.35 (1.64)	--	1.95 (1.50)	--	3.94 (2.23)	3.75 (1.49)	5.11 (1.48)	4.30 (1.26)	1.93 (1.47)	--	--	4.23 (1.46)
Jobs & Standard of Living	Status quo	1-7	3.87 (1.82)	3.16 (1.30)	4.34 (1.69)	--	--	--	4.85 (1.76)	3.67 (1.37)	4.98 (1.44)	4.47 (1.37)	--	3.37 (1.47)	4.76 (1.35)	3.80 (1.43)
Social Security	Branching	1-7	5.06 (1.57)	4.92 (1.55)	4.29 (1.88)	--	--	--	4.60 (1.43)	4.44 (1.32)	3.94 (1.32)	4.27 (1.06)	--	4.87 (1.25)	4.03 (1.26)	4.58 (1.21)
Defense Spending	Branching	1-7	4.70 (1.95)	4.47 (1.87)	5.53 (1.77)	--	--	--	4.39 (1.63)	4.25 (1.31)	5.06 (1.28)	4.63 (1.11)	--	--	--	4.40 (1.17)
Relations with Russia	Ambiguity ^b	1-7	3.61 (1.67)	2.84 (1.60)	4.06 (1.68)	3.52 (1.59)	3.09 (1.57)	3.10 (1.46)	3.70 (1.84)	2.71 (1.45)	3.94 (1.51)	3.41 (1.28)	--	3.05 (1.35)	3.59 (1.45)	2.98 (1.35)
Aid to Minorities	Ambiguity ^b	1-7	4.31 (1.72)	3.25 (1.40)	4.29 (1.51)	3.91 (1.26)	2.85 (1.66)	3.16 (1.50)	4.67 (1.57)	3.44 (1.30)	4.52 (1.32)	4.11 (1.07)	--	3.14 (1.30)	4.27 (1.22)	3.10 (1.36)
Inflation/ Unemployment	1-7	1-7	3.65 (1.38)	4.55 (1.50)	3.38 (1.59)	3.88 (1.31)	5.00 (1.64)	4.72 (1.39)	3.42 (1.40)	4.68 (1.40)	3.11 (1.40)	3.75 (1.22)	--	--	--	4.70 (1.39)
	Branching	Branching	2.88 (1.63)	2.90 (1.69)	2.64 (1.96)	2.62 (1.61)	--	--	2.54 (1.35)	2.56 (1.46)	2.39 (1.54)	2.61 (1.63)	--	--	--	--

^a All entries are based on those who ranked themselves or others 1-7 on the item and in the wave indicated. N's differ widely but can be determined from Table 1.

^b Respondents who gave a range are scored at the midpoint of the range. E.g., "2-3" is scored 2.5.

Table 3

Use of Ranges versus Single Points
with the Ambiguity Format

Placement	Self	Carter	Reagan	Ford	Kennedy	Gov't
Relations with Russia						
Single point	73.8%	73.6%	70.5%	75.3%	73.5%	72.1%
Two point range	19.0	20.3	24.0	20.2	21.5	21.7
Three point range	7.2	5.7	5.5	4.5	4.5	5.4
Four or more point range	-	.4	-	-	.5	.8
Total	100.0% (263)	100.0% (246)	100.0% (183)	100.0% (223)	100.0% (200)	100.0% (240)
Aid to Minorities						
Single point	80.5%	81.3%	86.1%	82.7%	82.2%	81.7%
Two point range	16.9	15.8	12.3	13.6	15.4	14.0
Three point range	1.1	1.7	1.6	3.3	1.9	3.8
Four or more point range	1.5	1.2	-	.5	.5	.4
Total	100.0% (261)	100.0% (241)	100.0% (187)	100.1% (214)	100.0% (214)	99.9% (235)

Table 4

Use of Ranges versus Single Points

Across Two Issues^a

Placement	Self	Carter	Reagan	Ford	Kennedy	Gov't
Single Point on Both	65.6%	66.8%	64.7%	68.2%	65.4%	67.1%
Single Point Range }	22.0	20.5	26.9	21.4	24.9	19.4
Range on Both	<u>12.4</u>	<u>12.7</u>	<u>8.4</u>	<u>10.4</u>	<u>9.7</u>	<u>13.5</u>
Total	100.0% (250)	100.0% (229)	100.0% (167)	100.0% (201)	100.0% (185)	100.0% (222)

^aBased on those who expressed opinions on both issues.

Table 5

Use of Ranges versus Single Points
Across All Placements

Number of Times a Range was Used ^a	Relations with Russia	Aid to Minorities	Both Issues
0	53.6%	71.4%	49.6%
1	16.8	9.6	13.2
2	7.9	5.0	6.4
3	4.6	2.9	3.6
4	7.9	3.2	7.1
5	3.9	2.5	6.4
6	5.4	5.4	3.2
7-12	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10.4</u>
Total	100.1% (280)	100.0% (280)	99.9% (280)

^aSix placements (self, Carter Reagan, Ford, Kennedy, Government) were possible for each issue.

Table 6

Percentage Using a Range or Single Point in
Wave 1 and Having No Opinion in Wave 2

Wave 1 Placement	Self	Carter	Reagan	Ford	Gov't
Relations with Russia					
Range	5.0%	13.6%	36.8%	25.5%	15.5%
Single point	4.3%	8.7%	12.5%	14.4%	11.6%
Aid to Minorities					
Range	0	10.5%	14.3%	21.9%	5.6%
Single point	6.1%	15.6%	25.3%	21.3%	14.4%

Table 7

Use of Ranges versus Single Points, by Talking
About Politics and Government

Placement	Talked about Politics	Haven't Talked	Talked about Politics	Haven't Talked
	Relations with Russia		Aid to Minorities	
Self				
Range	29.1%	23.6%	20.8%	13.9%
Single Point	70.9	76.4	79.2	86.1
	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
	(151)	(72)	(149)	(72)
Carter				
Range	32.2%	19.4%	21.4%	12.5%
Single Point	67.8	80.6	78.6	87.5
	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
	(146)	(62)	(140)	(64)
Reagan				
Range	32.5%	30.6%	16.8%	4.7%
Single point	67.5	69.4	83.2	95.3
	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
	(117)	(36)	(113)	(43)

Table 8

Regression of Candidate Evaluations on
Self-Candidate Issue Distances

Carter Thermometer Score - Reagan Thermometer Score = $b_0 + b_1(| \text{ Self Placement} - \text{ Carter Placement} | - | \text{ Self Placement} - \text{ Reagan Placement} |)$
 $+ b_2(\text{Party Identification}) + b_3(\text{Strength of approval of Carter presidency}) + b_4(\text{Which party can best handle the economy}).$

Issue	Wave 1 Format ^a	Standardized Regression Coefficients	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
Government Health Insurance	Status Quo	-.23*	-.22*
Jobs & Standard of Living	Status Quo	-.31*	-.34*
Social Security	Branching	-.36*	-.04
Defense Spending	Branching	-.26*	-.24*
Relations with Russia	Ambiguity ^b	-.27*	-.24*
Aid to Minorities	Ambiguity ^b	-.27*	-.17*

^aIn Wave 2 the format was always the traditional 1-7 form.

^bWhen calculating distances, rounded scores were used for respondents giving ranges.

*Significant at .05 level.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations for Distance
between Self and Others on Issues^a

Issue	Wave 1					Wave 2						
	Carter	Reagan	Ford	Kennedy	Gov't	Carter	Reagan	Ford	Kennedy	Dem's	Rep's	Gov't
Government Health Insurance	\bar{X} 1.77 s.d.(1.72)	2.03 (1.63)	-	1.86 (1.89)	-	2.28 (1.65)	2.38 (1.70)	2.53 (2.11)	2.03 (1.52)	-	-	2.49 (1.67)
Jobs & Standard of Living	1.67 (1.70)	1.55 (1.55)	-	-	-	2.01 (1.67)	1.90 (1.58)	1.72 (1.47)	-	2.22 (1.72)	1.84 (1.52)	2.15 (1.63)
Social Security	2.51 (2.13)	3.13 (2.32)	-	-	-	1.55 (1.41)	1.33 (1.15)	1.17 (1.09)	-	1.47 (1.40)	1.35 (1.26)	1.51 (1.47)
Defense Spending	2.59 (2.02)	2.75 (2.27)	-	-	-	1.67 (1.38)	1.52 (1.44)	1.37 (1.22)	-	-	-	1.73 (1.38)
Relations with Russia ^b	1.58 (1.46)	1.50 (1.35)	1.28 (1.28)	1.46 (1.41)	1.58 (1.33)	1.48 (1.58)	1.64 (1.33)	1.24 (1.16)	-	1.40 (1.43)	1.43 (1.29)	1.51 (1.50)
Aid to Minorities	1.95 (1.57)	1.79 (1.48)	1.68 (1.44)	2.15 (1.71)	2.19 (1.73)	1.85 (1.59)	1.63 (1.41)	1.53 (1.33)	-	1.98 (1.70)	1.67 (1.46)	2.18 (1.72)
Inflation/ Unemployment												
Standard format	1.96 (1.48)	1.28 (1.17)	1.34 (1.24)	1.99 (1.58)	1.85 (1.49)	1.76 (1.52)	1.48 (1.35)	1.35 (1.00)	-	-	-	1.90 (1.47)
Branching format	1.62 (1.71)	1.19 (1.43)	1.83 (1.86)	-	-	1.28 (1.72)	1.08 (1.47)	1.07 (1.64)	-	-	-	-

^aAll entries are based on those who ranked themselves and others 1-7 on the item and in the wave indicated. Appropriate N's can be determined from Table 1.

^bRespondents who gave a range are scored at the midpoint of the range.

Table 10

Correlations (r) between Wave 1 and Wave 2 Placement^a

Issue	Self	Carter	Reagan	Ford	Kennedy	Gov't
Government Health Insurance	.51 (209)	.43 (140)	.51 (95)	-	.49 (143)	-
Jobs and Standard of Living	.51 (198)	.37 (155)	.48 (115)	-	-	-
Social Security	.56 (179)	.37 (122)	.44 (89)	-	-	-
Defense Spending	.78 (189)	.44 (159)	.61 (111)	-	-	-
Relations with Russia ^b	.49 (216)	.30 (187)	.54 (122)	.55 (157)	-	.22 (179)
Aid to Minorities ^b	.46 (212)	.40 (178)	.61 (122)	.36 (147)	-	.38 (180)
Inflation/Unemployment Standard format	.39 (80)	.34 (57)	.33 (38)	.34 (45)	-	.32 (62)
Branching format ^c	.36 (77)	.48 (63)	.53 (48)	.14 (60)	-	-

^aBased on those giving 1-7 placements on both waves.

^bRespondents who gave a range are scored at the midpoint of the range.

^c1-7 scoring as described in Table .

Table 11

Means and Standard Deviations for Saliience of Issues

Issue	Wave 1	Wave 2
Government Health Insurance	77.0 (24.4) (255)	75.9 (19.8) (171)
Jobs and Standard of Living	68.1 (24.3) (255)	70.9 (20.8) (174)
Social Security	74.0 (24.0) (247)	71.4 (20.1) (164)
Defense Spending	70.3 (23.3) (251)	72.6 (21.8) (179)
Relations with Russia	67.6 (25.0) (261)	67.2 (23.0) (188)
Aid to Minorities	60.2 (25.6) (261)	64.3 (25.0) (183)
Inflation/Unemployment		
Standard format	77.8 (20.4) (102)	76.9 (17.4) (91)
Branching format	81.8 (19.2) (137)	-

Table 12

Correlations (r) between Wave 1 and Wave 2 Saliency^a

Issue	Wave 1 x Wave 2 Correlation
Government Health Insurance	.41 (158)
Jobs and Standard of Living	.46 (156)
Social Security	.42 (145)
Defense Spending	.52 (161)
Relations with Russia	.47 (176)
Aid to Minorities	.48 (167)
Inflation/Unemployment	.39 (70)

^aBased on final (adjusted) saliency ratings.

Table 13

Regression of Candidate Evaluations on Self Placement on Issues

Issue	Standardized Regression Coefficients, Wave 1	
	Carter Thermometer Score - Reagan Thermometer Score = $b_0 + b_1(\text{Self Placement}) + b_2(\text{Party Identification})$	Carter Thermometer Score - Reagan Thermometer Score = $b_0 + b_1(\text{Self Placement} + b_2(\text{Party Identification}) + b_3(\text{Issue Salience})$
Government Health Insurance	-.13*	-.16*
Jobs & Standard of Living	-.15*	-.16*
Social Security	+.08	+.10
Defense Spending	-.28*	-.28*
Relations with Russia	-.23*	-.29*
Aid to Minorities	-.08	-.08

*Significant at .05 level.

-level. All coefficients have correct sign.

Table 14

Placement of Carter versus Current Federal Government Policy

Issue	Difference in Mean Placement	Position of Carter	Correlation between Placements	Difference between Mean Distance, Self to Carter vs. Self to Gov't	Position of Carter
Government Health Insurance	.48	More Gov't	.47	.21	Closer to self
Jobs and Standard of Living	.13	More Gov't	.76	.14	Closer
Social Security	.14	Decrease	.55	.04	Further
Defense Spending	.15	Decrease	.56	.06	Closer
Relations with Russia	.26, .27 ^a	Maintain Relations	.66, .70	.00, .03	Same, Closer
Aid to Minorities	.09, .34 ^a	More Gov't	.53, .54	.24, .33	Closer
Inflation/Unemployment Standard format	.17, .02 ^a	Reduce Inflation	.55, .65	.11, .14	Further, Closer

^aWaves 1 and 2, respectively.

