

**Revealed preference budget items  
on the 1995 National Election Pilot Study:  
A report**

A report to the Board of Overseers of the National Election Study  
and the Planning Committee for the 1996 National Election Study

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The 1995 Pilot Study included twelve new items designed to measure respondents' willingness to accept tradeoffs between deficits, taxes, domestic spending, and defense spending. The Pilot Study divided the twelve into four groups of three. The first set, questions B1, B2, and B3, addressed proposals to reduce the deficit by raising taxes, cutting domestic spending, and cutting defense spending. The second set, questions B8, B9, and B10, presented proposals to reduce taxes by cutting defense, cutting domestic spending, and increasing the deficit. The third set, questions F1, F2, and F3, addressed proposals to increase domestic spending by cutting defense, increasing the deficit, and raising taxes. The final set, questions F6, F7, and F8, presented proposals to increase defense spending by increasing the deficit, raising taxes, and cutting domestic spending. The deficit and tax batteries appeared in close proximity, separated by four questions (plus follow-ups); the domestic and defense spending batteries also appeared close by, separated by two questions (plus follow-ups). The two pairs of batteries, deficit and tax on the one hand and domestic and defense spending on the other, were separated by 60 to 90 questions (depending on Form).

Table 1 presents the question wording and the marginals. Majorities of respondents favored proposals to cut defense spending in order to increase domestic spending (61 percent), reduce the deficit (57 percent), and cut taxes (54 percent). Otherwise, respondents overwhelmingly preferred the status quo. While minorities, the largest numbers favored increases in domestic spending, even at the cost of higher taxes (35 percent) or larger deficits (31 percent). Deficit reduction won the approval of a distinct minority of respondents when paired with higher taxes (24 percent in favor) or with lower domestic spending (22 percent in favor). Increases in defense spending and decreases in taxes were especially unpopular, with fewer than one in five respondents willing to accept any tradeoff to achieve them.

#### *Non-response*

Despite concerns that respondents might find the questions difficult or repetitive, non-response was not a problem. Together, "don't know" responses, refusals, and failures to ascertain did not exceed 3 percent on any item; the average was 1.5 percent. As usual, non-responses over all twelve items add up, but not dramatically. Eighty-nine percent of the sample gives valid responses to all twelve items; only 4 percent replies "don't know" or refuses to answer to more than a single question. Finally, the non-response rate exceeded 2 percent on only three questions, B2 (domestic spending cuts to lower the deficit), B8 (defense cuts to lower taxes), and B10 (deficit increase to cut taxes). There is no obvious pattern to the non-response rate.

#### *Correlations between items*

The product moment correlations between the items, reported in table 2, range from .00 to .75 (less deficit and less domestic spending with less taxes and more domestic spending). In absolute value, the average correlation is .17. The stronger correlations indicate consistent support for domestic spending (the "more domestic spending" items correlated with themselves), consistent support for defense spending (the "more defense spending" items correlated with themselves), and coherent preferences for spending (either domestic or defense) over extraction (either deficit or taxes) or vice-versa (the "less extraction with less spending" items correlated with the "more extraction with more spending" items).<sup>1</sup>

#### *Revealed preferences in tradeoff pairs*

By the logic of their design, the twelve items yield information about the preferences of respondents over six tradeoffs, that is, whether respondents strictly prefer one budget option (say, lower taxes), whether they strictly prefer the other (say, higher defense spending), whether they are indifferent between them, or whether their preferences are inconsistent. As elaborated in my proposal to the Board, respondents who answer "yes" to one side of a tradeoff and "no" to the other side have strict preferences over the two alternatives. Respondents who answer "no" to both sides of the tradeoff exhibit indifference

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<sup>1</sup> This is consistent with the results of an exploratory factor analysis of the items by Larry Bartels.

between the two alternatives. Respondents who answer “yes” to both reveal inconsistent or illogical preferences between the two alternatives.

As shown in table 3, and as implied by the question marginals, satisfaction with status quo—that is, indifference—is widespread, but it is not, in general, a dominant preference. Respondents strongly favor the status quo only for the two extraction options, deficits and taxes. Indifferent respondents hover around a majority for tradeoffs between domestic spending and the two extraction policies, deficits and taxes. That is, for proposals that would alter domestic spending, taxes, or the deficit, the political problem is two-fold: a large segment of the population prefers the status quo, and the remainder of the population is divided between the two options. Finally, the status quo is least popular for the three tradeoffs involving defense spending, where majorities favor reduction whatever the purpose.

Very few respondents were indifferent across every pair of alternatives. (See table 4.) That is, very few respondents, 9.1 percent, answered “no” to all twelve questions. Twenty-nine percent of respondents, however, indicated indifference between half or more (four or more) of the pairs of alternatives, and only 9.5 percent revealed no indifference over the six pairs of alternatives. Satisfaction with the status quo is greatest for the options involving the deficit, followed closely by the options involving taxes and by the options involving domestic spending. There is dramatically less indifference for the options involving defense spending.<sup>2</sup>

Of equal substantive interest and greater methodological concern are inconsistent or illogical responses. As shown in table 2, respondents giving inconsistent responses amount to less than 5 percent of the total for all six of the pairs of options. For four out of the six policy pairs, the questions posing opposite sides of the tradeoffs were separated by some 15 to 20 minutes.<sup>3</sup> Under these circumstances, the consistency of responses across the pairs is quite remarkable. Respondents had plenty of time to forget their responses to the first question when they answered the second. This is good news.

The news is less unambiguously good in other respects. First, even though inconsistent responses are relatively rare for any given pair of policy opposites, inconsistency is not concentrated among a few respondents who answer “yes” across the board. As table 4 shows, almost 15 percent of the sample gives at least one inconsistent pair of responses, although almost all make the mistake only once.

Second, and potentially more worrisome, for one of the pairs of options, deficit with taxes, the inconsistent responses are numerous enough to reverse the direction of the relationship between the two questions posing opposite sides of the tradeoff. On average, the correlations between items posing policy opposites are negative ( $-.18$ ) and larger in absolute value than the correlations between items that are not policy opposites ( $.20$  versus  $.08$ ) (see table 2). In four of the six pairs, the correlation between pairs of opposites is between  $-.23$  and  $-.27$ .<sup>4</sup> In the fifth, the correlation between the opposite sides of the tradeoff between taxes and domestic spending is lower, at  $-.12$ . For the tradeoff between deficits and taxes, however, the pairs of opposites have a weakly *positive* correlation, at  $r = .05$ . The tradeoff between

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<sup>2</sup> The opposite of indifference is strict preference. Just 4.4 percent of the sample has strict preferences on all six budget tradeoffs, but 43.6 percent has strict preferences on half (four) or more, and 68.2 percent has strict preferences on three or more. See table 4.

<sup>3</sup> The exceptions are the tradeoff between deficits and taxes and the tradeoff between domestic spending and defense spending. In both those cases, the question pairs were separated by a minute or two. As table 2 shows, the domestic and defense spending tradeoff had the smallest proportion of illogical responses, but the deficit and taxes tradeoff had the highest proportion.

<sup>4</sup> We have good reason to expect these correlations to be negative: a “yes” response to one side of a tradeoff should not be paired with a “yes” response to the other side. But we have no reason to expect these correlations to be large: a “no” response to one side paired with a “yes” response to the other side indicates a strict preference, but a “no” response to both sides indicates a quite reasonable indifference. Because of this, the size of the correlation will depend upon the relative prevalence of strict preference and indifference over the options.

deficits and taxes invites the largest number of inconsistent responses (4.9 percent); the tradeoff between taxes and domestic spending is second (4.7 percent).

The inconsistent responses may or may not be a problem. A priori, I expected the tradeoff between deficits and taxes to draw the largest number of inconsistent responses. Respondents who believe truly in “supply-side” economics should deny the tradeoff between deficits and taxes. Moreover, note that the domestic spending and defense spending tradeoff draws the smallest proportion (1.9 percent) of inconsistent responses. Every other tradeoff involves spending and extraction, and respondents might plausibly if not reasonably *believe* that they might have greater spending and lower taxes or deficits if the government simply cut out waste, fraud, and abuse.<sup>5</sup>

The more problematic issue that both illogical and indifferent responses pose is the possibility of a response set.<sup>6</sup> This is probably an issue that cannot be settled conclusively, but I have strong reasons for believing that “yes-yes” and “no-no” responses to pairs of opposites are substantively meaningful and not merely a nuisance. First, theoretically, the answer “no” to both sides of a tradeoff is exactly the answer one would expect from respondents who are satisfied with the current allocation between the two options, and by far the largest amount of any “response set” is due to “no-no” responses. Only about 4 percent of the sample answers “yes” to both sides of a tradeoff for more than one pair of options (see table 4).

Second, empirically, “yes-yes” and “no-no” responses appear to be deliberate. As table 5 shows, inconsistent and indifferent responses are driven primarily by preferences and not (by and large) by intelligence and knowledge. Less educated respondents are more likely to give an illogical response, as we would expect regardless of whether the inconsistency is a response set or a substantive response. Better educated people are better equipped to understand tradeoffs. In addition, however, respondents with strong preferences for spending, whether for domestic or defense purposes, are more likely to respond inconsistently. They are more likely to believe that there is something for nothing. Responses indicating indifference, on the other hand, depend almost entirely on strength of preference. Education has no statistically discernible effect. But respondents with strong views on domestic spending and respondents with strong views on defense spending are less likely to reveal indifference, as they should be. People with strong preferences do not reveal themselves indifferent.

In sum, “yes-yes” and “no-no” answers appear to be substantial rather than mistaken. To refuse both sides of a budget tradeoff is to say that one prefers the status quo to a policy change in either direction.

### *Construct validity*

Table 6 shows the product moment correlations between these budget items and other indicators of preference for deficits, taxes, and spending, mostly the latter. For brevity, I have combined opposite sides of tradeoffs into a single item, coded -1 for strict preference for the first-named option, 0 for indifference, and 1 for strict preference for the second-named option. I have coded inconsistent responses missing, but they are few enough that nothing important changes if those responses are coded to the middle (indifference) category.

*Correlation with 1994 budget tradeoff items.* The 1994 Election Study asked three related budget tradeoff questions. The first asked respondents whether they would accept higher taxes to reduce the deficit. The second asked whether respondents would accept cuts in spending on health care to reduce the deficit. And the third asked whether respondents would accept higher taxes to increase spending on health

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<sup>5</sup> This is not an easy matter to test. In 1994, the Election Study asked respondents whether they believed the government wasted not very much, some, or a lot of what we pay in taxes. The response to that question strongly predicts inconsistent response, but the coefficient is negative: the government waste question is not tapping beliefs about waste but beliefs about the value of government spending.

<sup>6</sup> This is a possibility that was suggested by Larry Bartels, who shared with me an advance copy of his report on these same items.

care. Their responses correlate well with the answers to the closest of the current budget questions asked roughly nine months later. On average, the 1994 responses correlate with the responses to the closest 1995 items at  $r = .30$  and with the tradeoff scales at  $r = .30$ .

*Correlation with domestic and defense spending items.* The National Election Study core includes 12 items useful for assessing preferences for domestic and defense spending: seven-point scales for spending on services and defense and ten items from the spending battery, one specifically asking about defense and nine others combined into a domestic spending preference scale. The three tradeoffs involving domestic spending correlate at an average .31 with the services seven-point scale and at an average .44 with the nine-item domestic spending scale. The three tradeoffs involving defense spending correlate at an average .37 with the defense seven-point scale and at an average .45 with the defense spending item. In both cases, this is distinctly lower than the correlations between the two items, .55 in the case of the domestic spending scales and .64 in the case of the defense spending scales.

The correlations between the new budget items and the older ones, of course, are adequate but hardly astounding. There are certainly reasons for the modest correlations. The 1994 budget tradeoff questions asked specifically about spending on health care, the 1995 questions about “spending on domestic programs, like Medicare, education, and highways.” While the 1994 tradeoff items distinguished between strong and weak opposition to the proposal, moreover, the 1995 items allow a distinction between opposition to change from the status quo and support for policy movement in the opposite direction. Compared to the 1994 domestic and defense spending items, finally, the 1995 tradeoff items obviously assess more than just support for spending. As they were designed to do, they (unlike the spending items) measure respondents’ willingness to pay for spending. As the analysis of preference inconsistency in the previous section showed, support and willingness to pay are two different things.

In this case, then, the choice between new items and old comes down more to theory than to evidence. The items currently in the NES core measure support for spending on domestic and defense programs well, maybe better than the new items, but the new items measure willingness to pay for spending much better than the old items. On theoretical grounds, the new items seem much more defensible.

#### *Relationship to partisanship and ideology*

Table 7 shows the product moment correlations between the six budget tradeoffs, the individual twelve budget items, partisanship, and ideology.

The correlations of the budget tradeoffs with partisanship average .22, and the correlations of the budget tradeoffs with ideology average .18. As the correlations clearly show, the major partisan divisions cast Democrats as defenders of domestic spending and Republicans as opponents of extraction (both tax and deficit) and defenders of defense spending. Where these policy goals conflict, the impact of partisanship is much diminished: when push comes to shove, Republicans favor lower taxes over smaller deficits ( $r = -.08$ ), more defense over smaller deficits ( $r = .13$ ), and more defense over lower taxes ( $r = .12$ ), but not by a lot.

#### *Predictive validity*

The question yet to be addressed is the contribution these items might make to understanding voters’ decisions in elections. The first part of this analysis includes the six budget tradeoffs in an analysis of thermometer ratings of eight national leaders. The second part of the analysis compares the performance of the six budget items to the performance of other budget and issue items in an analysis of the president’s current popularity.

*Thermometer ratings.* Table 8 presents the analysis of the thermometer ratings of Bill Clinton, Bob Dole, Newt Gingrich, Ross Perot, Phil Gramm, Al Gore, Colin Powell, and Pete Wilson. On the whole, the budget tradeoffs have little impact on affect toward these eight political figures. None of the

tradeoffs is even remotely significant in explaining the ratings of Bob Dole, Colin Powell, and Pete Wilson, but this is hardly surprising, given the low knowledge of Powell's and Wilson's budget policy positions and the lack of clarity in Dole's positions (owing in large degree to his long role in the congressional GOP leadership). Where the budget tradeoffs have predictive power, however, the relationships are (with one exception) expected and interesting. Net of partisanship and ideology, respondents who favor greater domestic spending over smaller deficits rate Bill Clinton and Al Gore more highly. Respondents who prefer lower taxes to smaller deficits rate Phil Gramm more highly. Unsurprisingly, the budget tradeoffs collectively have their greatest influence on evaluations of Newt Gingrich. Respondents who care more about higher defense spending than smaller deficits rate Newt Gingrich more highly, and respondents who favor low taxes over higher defense spending and low taxes over smaller deficits rate the Speaker modestly higher.<sup>7</sup>

The influence of the budget tradeoffs on thermometer ratings, in sum, by and large confirm the policy reputations of the principals: Bill Clinton's administration is associated with high domestic spending, Phil Gramm is associated with low taxes, and Newt Gingrich is associated with high defense spending and lower taxes. One basis on which the Board might choose from among these items is on the basis of the reputations of the candidates.

*Clinton approval.* Table 9 presents the correlates of approval of Bill Clinton's performance as president, comparing the impact of preferences over budget tradeoffs to the impact of other issue positions.

As shown in column 1 of table 9, respondents' positions on budget tradeoffs have a greater impact on respondents' evaluations of Clinton's performance than they had on their affect toward him. Preference for domestic spending over smaller deficits has a consistent positive effect on the probability of Clinton approval; preference for domestic spending over defense spending has a slightly larger but slightly less significant positive effect. Moreover, in all but one specification (column 3, which includes the issue items half-sampled on the Pilot), respondents who favor low taxes over domestic spending and defense spending over low taxes are more likely to approve of Clinton's performance. Taken together, these make for a complex picture, but it is not necessarily a contradictory picture.<sup>8</sup>

Further, respondents' positions on budget tradeoffs have a greater impact on evaluations of Clinton's performance than almost any other issue position, including the seven point services scale, the seven point defense scale, and nearly all of the items in the spending battery. With coefficients in the .30 range, the effect of budget positions on Clinton evaluations is approached only by the effect of crime policy preferences (-.24, "get tough" the high category), Social Security spending preferences (-.26 [!]), positions on the defense spending seven-point scale (.47)<sup>9</sup>, and evaluations of the performance of the nation's economy over the last year (.29).

To be sure, we might expect the budget issue items to have a stronger effect than other issue positions just because they, like Clinton approval, are current. With the exception of the four issue questions half-sampled on the Pilot—crime policy preference, fear of assault, welfare policy preference, and government guarantee of jobs—all of the other issue items come from the 1994 survey. And indeed, if responses to the same set of issue items are regressed onto approval of Bill Clinton in 1994 (not reported), preferences over budget tradeoffs explain a little less and other issues—although not, interestingly, opinions on defense issues or the services seven-point scale—explain a fair bit more. The most important

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<sup>7</sup> The least sensible relationship between a budget tradeoff and thermometer ratings is also, drat it, the strongest relationship. Respondents who favored higher domestic spending over smaller deficits rated Ross Perot *more* highly. Respondents who preferred lower taxes to greater domestic spending also rated Perot higher.

<sup>8</sup> The complexity may reflect varied Clinton appeals in different parts of the country. The loyalty of those who favor defense spending over low taxes, for instance, may trace to Clinton's intense efforts to reassure voters in California.

<sup>9</sup> The budget tradeoffs have a range twice as great as the range of the seven-point scales: the tradeoffs are coded -1 to 1; the seven-point scales 0 to 1.

budget tradeoffs in explaining Clinton approval also change between 1994 and 1995: in 1995, the most important is the tradeoff between deficits and domestic spending; in 1994, the most important is the tradeoff between deficits and defense spending, with Clinton gaining greater approval from those who favor defense spending. (The deficits and taxes tradeoff also has an effect on 1994 approval, with advocates of deficit reduction more favorable to Clinton, but statistically, it is less robust.)

The contrast between 1995 and 1994 evaluations of Bill Clinton suggests a second basis on which the Board might choose among the budget items. As the policy alternatives being debated change, the policy criteria by which citizens evaluate leaders change. In the fall of 1994, the budget debate was not well focused, but there was an emergent elite consensus that defense had seen enough cuts. By the summer of 1995, the policy debate had been focused more sharply on the Republican proposal to balance the budget with deep domestic spending cuts. As the debate changed, the policy positions most relevant to citizens' evaluations of Bill Clinton changed.

Finally, table 10 compares the effect of three alternative sets of budget questions on evaluations of Clinton performance as president: the twelve budget items entered separately, the twelve budget items combined into the six budget tradeoffs, and the three budget tradeoff items that appeared on the 1994 survey.

Two things are worth noting in this table. First, respondents who in 1994 wished to increase domestic spending by raising taxes were more approving of Clinton's performance as president in 1995, even net of the effect of those similar preferences in 1995. The key to the relationship, however, is not the 1994 context but the 1994 question, which cited spending on "health care" specifically rather than domestic spending generally. Thus, the effect this variable has in 1995 on Clinton approval is a residual of the president's association with the issue of health care, in particularly with the expensive new program his administration proposed. Those who favored government spending on health care enough to want to raise taxes for it were more apt to approve of Clinton's performance as president.

Second, note that opinion on five of the twelve individual budget items has an effect on Clinton approval even net of partisanship, ideology, gender, and race. Respondents who favored greater domestic spending even at the cost of a larger deficit were significantly more likely to approve of Clinton's performance, as were those who preferred greater defense spending with higher taxes, those who preferred smaller deficits with higher taxes, those who opposed greater domestic spending with higher taxes, and those who opposed higher defense spending with lower domestic spending. On all but one of the six policy dimensions, that is, respondents' budget preferences shaped their evaluations of the president's performance in office.

### *Recommendations*

I draw two main conclusions from these analyses. First, the twelve revealed preference budget items work remarkably well as measures of citizen preferences on budget tradeoffs. Respondents had little difficulty with the task the items presented; missing data were minimal. The overwhelming number of respondents revealed preferences that made sense. The preferences they revealed were consistent with the opinions they expressed on other issues of deficits, taxes, and spending. Relatively few chose something for nothing, and those who did appeared to intend it. Large numbers of citizens revealed indifference, and likewise those who did seemed to do so deliberately. The relative prevalence of indifference should not have been unexpected: if public policy bears any relationship at all to what voters want, we should find satisfaction more often than not, especially on an issue as important and enduring as the government's budget.

Second, the twelve revealed preference budget items work much less well as predictors of political evaluations. In retrospect, this should not have been surprising. The policy debate twists and turns, and it should rarely be the case that *every* dimension of the budget debate is important to the choices voters make in politics.

Given the constraints on the resources of the Election Study, it is difficult to make the case that all twelve of these items should be repeated in 1996. Much as I am interested in the substance of public preferences on the budget, NES must in the end be true to its mandate, the study of choice in elections. Accordingly, my recommendation is that the Board retain only a small subset of these items—two, possibly three tradeoffs, or four to six questions—for the 1996 Study and beyond. The key question, then, is which two or three of the six tradeoffs the NES should incorporate.

My analysis of these items convinces me that there is not an answer to this question that will suffice in all circumstances. Rather, the choice among the tradeoff items depends upon two characteristics of the election season.

First, the choice among tradeoff items depends upon the nature of the budget debate. At the time the pilot study was in the field, the budget debate revolved around the Republicans' plan to balance the budget within seven years, mostly by enacting deep cuts in domestic spending. Unsurprisingly, the tradeoff between deficits and domestic spending is the single-most influential in shaping evaluations of Bill Clinton. Since then the president has accepted the need to balance the budget in the near term, and the debate has shifted toward how that goal will be reached, whether through deep domestic spending cuts and a large tax cut or through more modest domestic spending cuts and a smaller tax cut. Thus, the tradeoffs between deficits and domestic spending (items B2 and F2) on the one hand and between domestic spending and taxes (items B9 and F3) on the other seem good bets for the 1996 election season.

Second, the choice among tradeoff items depends upon the policy reputations of the candidates or other leading political figures. Respondents evaluate Newt Gingrich more fully according to their budget policy preferences for good reason, the Speaker's unusually public focus on the federal budget. Likewise, respondents associate Phil Gramm with low taxes for good reason, the senator's long association with fiscal conservatism. This observation probably offers no counsel for 1996: Bill Clinton's association with domestic spending is more from circumstance than from reputation (as the analysis of approval in 1994 indicates), and Bob Dole seems to have no distinct policy profile on the budget. But the lack of strong budget policy associations with the probably nominees need not always be the case. Should it happen that Phil Gramm wins the Republican nomination, the Board might want to consider incorporating the items that trade off deficits and taxes (B1 and B10).

In sum, with scant room on the survey, it is difficult to make the case that NES should extend all twelve of these items on the 1996 Study. The best bets for 1996 seem to be the tradeoffs between deficits and domestic spending and between domestic spending and taxes. But just as the Board re-evaluates the set of issue questions with each election, trying as best it can to anticipate the most important lines of policy cleavage in the election, so should the Board re-evaluate the set of budget questions with each election. As policy changes, and candidates change, and as the environment changes, the budget issues that cleave the electorate will also likely change.



Table 1

Question wording and marginals

Each year the government in Washington has to make decisions about taxes, spending, and the deficit. We'd like to know your opinions about what the government should do about the budget. I'm going to read you three proposals for cutting the federal budget deficit, and I'd like you to tell me whether or not you would favor each of them.

B1 (V2069) Do you favor increases in taxes paid by ordinary Americans in order to cut the federal budget deficit?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	23.7	23.9
No, do not favor	75.3	76.1
Don't know	0.6	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.4	
(N)	(486)	(481)

B2 (V2070) Do you favor cuts in spending on domestic programs like Medicare, education, and highways in order to cut the federal budget deficit?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	21.8	22.3
No, do not favor	76.1	77.7
Don't know	1.9	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.2	
(N)	(486)	(476)

B3 (V2071) Do you favor cuts in spending on national defense in order to cut the federal budget deficit?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	55.4	56.5
No, do not favor	42.6	43.5
Don't know	1.4	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.6	
(N)	(486)	(476)

Now I'm going to read you three proposals for cutting taxes, and I'd like you to tell me whether or not you favor each of them.

B8 (V2080) Do you favor cuts in spending on national defense in order to cut the taxes paid by ordinary Americans?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	52.5	53.7
No, do not favor	45.3	46.3
Don't know	1.9	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.4	
(N)	(486)	(475)

B9 (V2081) Do you favor cuts in spending on domestic programs like Medicare, education, and highways in order to cut the taxes paid by ordinary Americans?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	19.8	20.0
No, do not favor	78.8	80.0
Don't know	1.2	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.2	
(N)	(486)	(479)

B10 (V2082) Do you favor an increase in the federal budget deficit in order to cut the taxes paid by ordinary Americans?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	16.7	17.1
No, do not favor	81.1	83.0
Don't know	2.3	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.0	
(N)	(486)	(475)

Now we'd like to ask you a few more questions about what the government in Washington should do about the budget. I'm going to read three proposals for increasing spending on domestic programs like Medicare, education, and highways. I'd like you to tell me whether or not you favor each of them.

F1 (V2247) Do you favor cuts in spending on national defense in order to increase spending on domestic programs like Medicare, education, and highways?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	59.7	60.9
No, do not favor	38.3	39.1
Don't know	1.0	
Refused/Not ascertained	1.0	
(N)	(486)	(476)

F2 (V2248) Do you favor an increase in the federal budget deficit in order to increase spending on domestic programs like Medicare, education, and highways?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	30.9	31.3
No, do not favor	67.7	68.7
Don't know	1.2	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.2	
(N)	(486)	(479)

F3 (V2249) Do you favor increases in the taxes paid by ordinary Americans in order to increase spending on domestic programs like Medicare, education, and highways?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	34.0	34.5
No, do not favor	64.6	65.6
Don't know	1.0	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.4	
(N)	(486)	(479)

Now I'm going to read you three proposals for increasing spending on national defense. I'd like you to tell me whether or not you favor each of them.

F6 (V2257) Do you favor an increase in the federal budget deficit in order to increase spending on national defense?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	14.6	14.8
No, do not favor	84.0	85.2
Don't know	0.8	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.6	
(N)	(486)	(479)

F7 (V2258) Do you favor increases in the taxes paid by ordinary Americans in order to increase spending on national defense?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	12.7	12.8
No, do not favor	86.8	87.2
Don't know	0.4	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.0	
(N)	(486)	(484)

F8 (V2259) Do you favor cuts in spending on domestic programs like Medicare, education, and highways in order to increase spending on national defense?

	<i>All responses</i>	<i>Valid responses</i>
Yes, favor	9.3	9.3
No, do not favor	90.1	90.7
Don't know	0.2	
Refused/Not ascertained	0.4	
(N)	(486)	(483)

Table 2

Product moment correlations  
between budget items

	<i>Less deficit with</i>			<i>Less taxes with</i>		
	<i>taxes</i>	<i>domestic</i>	<i>defense</i>	<i>defense</i>	<i>domestic</i>	<i>deficit</i>
<i>Less deficit with</i>						
<i>more taxes</i>	-	.11	.05	.03	.06	.05
<i>less domestic spending</i>		-	.08	.02	.75	-.07
<i>less defense spending</i>			-	.71	.07	.05
<i>Less taxes with</i>						
<i>less defense spending</i>				-	.10	.13
<i>less domestic spending</i>					-	.00
<i>more deficit</i>						-
	<i>More domestic spending with</i>			<i>More defense spending with</i>		
	<i>defense</i>	<i>deficit</i>	<i>taxes</i>	<i>deficit</i>	<i>taxes</i>	<i>domestic</i>
<i>Less deficit with</i>						
<i>more taxes</i>	.07	-.01	.38	-.04	.12	.07
<i>less domestic spending</i>	-.26	-.23	-.15	.01	-.02	.27
<i>less defense spending</i>	.47	-.01	.03	-.27	-.20	-.17
<i>Less taxes with</i>						
<i>less defense spending</i>	.47	.08	.05	-.22	-.23	-.10
<i>less domestic spending</i>	-.25	-.18	-.12	-.01	-.02	.33
<i>more deficit</i>	.18	.33	.19	.19	.08	.07
<i>More domestic spending with</i>						
<i>less defense spending</i>	-	.25	.21	-.20	-.17	-.27
<i>more deficit</i>		-	.37	.20	.10	-.01
<i>more taxes</i>			-	.09	.25	-.00
<i>More defense spending with</i>						
<i>more deficit</i>				-	.49	.31
<i>more taxes</i>					-	.24
<i>less domestic spending</i>						-

N = 469-481

Table 3

Revealed preferences in tradeoffs

*Deficits and taxes*  
(V2069 and V2082)

Prefer lower deficits	19.2
Prefer status quo	64.0
Prefer greater lower taxes	11.9
Prefer both at once	4.9
(N)	(470)

*Deficits and domestic spending*  
(V2070 and V2248)

Prefer lower deficits	19.6
Prefer status quo	49.2
Prefer greater domestic spending	28.7
Prefer both at once	2.6
(N)	(470)

*Deficits and defense spending*  
(V2071 and V2257)

Prefer lower deficits	52.3
Prefer status quo	32.8
Prefer greater defense spending	10.6
Prefer both at once	4.3
(N)	(470)

*Taxes and domestic spending*  
(V2081 and V2249)

Prefer lower taxes	15.4
Prefer status quo	50.3
Prefer greater domestic spending	29.6
Prefer both at once	4.7
(N)	(473)

*Taxes and defense spending*  
(V2080 and V2258)

Prefer lower taxes	50.7
Prefer status quo	36.4
Prefer greater defense spending	9.7
Prefer both at once	3.2
(N)	(473)

*Domestic spending and defense spending*  
(V2247 and v2259)

Prefer greater domestic spending	59.0
Prefer status quo	31.7
Prefer greater defense spending	7.4
Prefer both at once	1.9
(N)	(473)

Table 4  
Incidence of indifference, inconsistency,  
and strict preference

	<i>Inconsistency</i>		<i>Indifference</i>		<i>Strict preference</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>
<i>None</i>	86.1	100.0	9.5	100.0	9.3	100.0
<i>1 pair</i>	10.2	13.9	18.6	90.5	8.8	90.7
<i>2 pairs</i>	2.3	3.7	19.5	71.9	13.7	81.9
<i>3 pairs</i>	0.7	1.4	23.4	52.4	24.6	68.2
<i>4 pairs</i>	0.7	0.7	12.1	29.0	22.0	43.6
<i>5 pairs</i>			7.9	16.9	17.2	21.6
<i>6 pairs</i>			9.1	9.1	4.4	4.4
( <i>N</i> )	(431)		(431)		(431)	



Table 5  
 Predictors of inconsistency and indifference  
 (Coefficients with t-statistics)

	<i>Inconsistency</i> ( <i>Inconsistent on one or more</i> ) ( <i>Probit</i> )		<i>Indifference</i> ( <i>Number of times indifferent</i> ) ( <i>Ordinary least squares</i> )	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Education (highest degree)	-.51 (1.2)	-.56 (1.7)	-.58 (1.3)	-.24 (0.7)
Political knowledge	-.30 (0.6)		-.16 (0.3)	
Level of information	.20 (0.4)		.21 (0.3)	
Apparent intelligence	-.12 (0.2)		.36 (0.5)	
Partisanship (Republican)	.04 (0.2)			
Strength of partisanship			-.28 (0.8)	-.39 (1.3)
Ideology (conservative)	-.04 (0.3)			
Strength of ideology			-.07 (0.3)	
Preference for domestic spending*	.55 (1.8)	.55 (2.2)		
Strength of preference for domestic spending			-1.51 (3.6)	-1.38 (3.8)
Preference for defense spending†	.31 (1.5)	.25 (1.4)		
Strength of preference for defense spending			-.61 (2.0)	-.77 (2.9)
(N)	(305)	(359)	(305)	(352)

\*Preference for lower (-1), same (0), or higher (1) spending on the environment, Social Security, welfare, AIDS research, food stamps, public schools, child care, crime, and health, rescaled to -1 to 1.

†Defense spending seven-point scale, coded -1 for much less, 1 for much more, rescaled to -1 to 1.

Table 6  
Correlations of alternative  
budget items

a. 1995 tradeoff items and 1994 tradeoff items

<i>1995 budget tradeoffs</i>	<i>1994 budget tradeoff items</i>		
	<i>Less deficit, more tax</i>	<i>Less deficit, less health spending</i>	<i>More health spending, more tax</i>
Deficit-tax tradeoff scale	.29		
Less deficit, more tax item	.35		
Less tax, more deficit item	-.01		
Deficit-domestic tradeoff scale		.30	
Less deficit, less domestic item		.29	
More domestic, more deficit item		-.17	
Tax-domestic tradeoff scale			-.30
More domestic, more tax item			.27
Less tax, less domestic item			-.15

b. 1995 tradeoff items and 1994 domestic spending items

	<i>1994 domestic spending items</i>	
	<i>Services-spending 7-point scale</i>	<i>9 item scale from spending battery*</i>
Deficit-domestic tradeoff	-.38	-.51
Tax-domestic tradeoff	-.34	-.46
Domestic-defense tradeoff	.21	.34

\* More, same, or less spending on environment, Social Security, welfare, AIDS research, food stamps, public schools, child care, crime, and health.

c. 1995 tradeoff items and 1994 defense spending items

	<i>1994 defense spending items</i>	
	<i>Defense spending 7-point scale</i>	<i>More, less, same for defense item</i>
Deficit-defense tradeoff	-.40	-.51
Tax-defense tradeoff	-.33	-.45
Domestic-defense tradeoff	-.37	-.38

Table 7

Correlations between budget items,  
ideology (conservative), and partisanship (Republican)

	<i>Partisanship</i>	<i>Ideology</i>
Deficit-tax tradeoff	-.08	.01
Less deficit, more tax item	-.01	-.05
Less tax, more deficit item	-.11	-.04
Deficit-domestic tradeoff	-.31	-.20
Less deficit, less domestic item	.31	.23
More domestic, more deficit item	-.18	-.10
Deficit-defense tradeoff	.13	.20
Less deficit, less defense item	-.14	-.22
More defense, more deficit item	.01	.02
Tax-domestic tradeoff	-.36	-.24
Less tax, less domestic item	.34	.22
More domestic, more tax item	-.21	-.14
Tax-defense tradeoff	.12	.17
Less tax, less defense item	-.10	-.17
More defense, more tax item	.10	.08
Domestic-defense tradeoff	.31	.25
More domestic, less defense item	-.26	-.23
More defense, less domestic item	.23	.15

Table 8

Budget preferences as predictors  
of affect (thermometer ratings) for political leaders  
(OLS coefficients and t-statistics)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Clinton</i>	<i>Dole</i>	<i>Gingrich</i>	<i>Perot</i>
Party identification (Republican)	-18.7 (9.8)	9.5 (5.2)	9.0 (4.3)	- 5.0 (1.0)*
Ideology (conservative)	- 4.9 (3.1)	3.3 (2.2)	7.2 (4.3)	3.8 (2.1)
Gender (female)	2.1 (0.9)	0.3 (0.1)	- 6.8 (2.6)	-10.5 (3.4)
Race (non-white)	5.0 (1.2)	-10.7 (2.6)	- 5.2 (1.1)	- 8.9 (1.7)
Deficit vs. taxes	- 0.7 (0.3)	2.6 (1.2)	3.5 (1.3)	- 0.3 (0.1)
Deficit vs. domestic	4.7 (1.9)	0.0 (0.0)	- 3.2 (1.2)	9.5 (3.2)
Deficit vs. defense	- 0.7 (0.3)	1.7 (0.6)	5.6 (1.8)	- 2.5 (0.7)
Taxes vs. domestic	- 1.8 (0.7)	0.6 (0.3)	- 2.7 (1.0)	- 5.1 (1.6)
Taxes vs. defense	- 1.2 (0.4)	- 1.6 (0.6)	- 4.2 (1.4)	3.7 (1.0)
Domestic vs. defense	- 1.0 (0.4)	0.5 (0.2)	3.5 (1.2)	- 1.1 (0.3)
( <i>N</i> )	(306)	(293)	(283)	(305)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Gramm</i>	<i>Gore</i>	<i>Powell</i>	<i>Wilson</i>
Party identification (Republican)	5.1 (2.1)	-10.9 (5.5)	0.5 (0.3)	6.3 (2.1)
Ideology (conservative)	6.6 (3.4)	- 5.8 (3.6)	2.5 (1.6)	4.4 (1.8)
Gender (female)	- 5.8 (2.0)	1.2 (0.5)	- 1.9 (0.8)	1.4 (0.4)
Race (non-white)	- 1.9 (0.3)	- 2.1 (0.5)	4.6 (1.1)	- 0.1 (0.0)
Deficit vs. taxes	4.7 (1.7)	- 0.2 (0.1)	2.0 (0.9)	2.4 (0.8)
Deficit vs. domestic	- 2.3 (0.7)	4.6 (1.8)	1.9 (0.8)	- 1.7 (0.5)
Deficit vs. defense	2.9 (0.8)	- 1.7 (0.6)	- 0.9 (0.3)	5.1 (1.2)
Taxes vs. domestic	0.6 (0.2)	- 0.0 (0.0)	1.0 (0.4)	- 2.7 (0.8)
Taxes vs. defense	- 0.7 (0.2)	1.9 (0.7)	0.5 (0.2)	- 5.0 (1.2)
Domestic vs. defense	1.4 (0.4)	- 2.1 (0.8)	0.6 (0.2)	- 1.1 (0.3)
( <i>N</i> )	(211)	(298)	(271)	(161)

\*For Perot only: strength of partisan identification.

Table 9

Budget preferences as predictors  
of approval of Clinton performance,  
compared to other issues  
(Probit coefficients and t-statistics)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>
Party identification (Republican)	-.77 (5.5)	-.74 (6.5)	-.74 (4.1)	-.71 (5.5)	-.72 (5.8)
Ideology (conservative)	-.17 (2.0)	-.16 (1.7)	-.05 (0.4)	-.13 (1.2)	-.13 (1.4)
Gender (female)	-.05 (0.4)	-.05 (0.2)	-.11 (0.6)	-.06 (0.4)	-.00 (0.0)
Race (non-white)	.51 (2.0)	.45 (1.7)	.20 (0.5)	.63 (2.0)	.60 (2.2)
Deficit vs. taxes	-.17 (1.3)	-.17 (1.2)	.18 (0.8)	-.18 (1.2)	-.23 (1.6)
Deficit vs. domestic	.33 (2.4)	.36 (2.6)	.41 (1.9)	.30 (2.0)	.33 (2.2)
Deficit vs. defense	.04 (0.2)	.11 (0.6)	.19 (0.8)	-.02 (0.1)	.07 (0.4)
Taxes vs. domestic	-.25 (1.7)	-.32 (2.1)	-.19 (0.8)	-.33 (2.0)	-.34 (2.1)
Taxes vs. defense	.32 (1.9)	.32 (1.8)	.11 (0.5)	.33 (1.8)	.33 (1.9)
Domestic vs. defense	-.30 (1.9)	-.37 (2.3)	-.45 (2.0)	-.35 (2.0)	-.28 (1.7)
Change in personal well-being		.14 (1.1)			
Anticipated change in well-being		.18 (1.2)			
Change in nation's economy		.29 (1.9)			
Crime policy preference			-.24 (2.1)		
Fear of assault			-.02 (0.0)		
Welfare policy preference			.08 (0.6)		
Government job guarantee			-.07 (0.5)		
Women's rights 7 point scale				-.42 (1.3)	
Defense spending 7 point scale				.47 (1.1)	
Standard of living 7 point scale				-.36 (0.9)	
Aid to blacks 7 point scale				.08 (0.2)	
Services-spending 7 point scale				.41 (1.0)	
Health insurance 7 point scale				.25 (0.7)	
Spending on environment					.03 (0.3)
Spending on foreign aid					.12 (1.1)
Spending on Social Security					-.26 (1.9)
Spending on welfare					.06 (0.4)
Spending on AIDS research					.12 (1.0)
Spending on food stamps					.04 (0.2)
Spending on public schools					.01 (0.1)
Spending on child care					.07 (0.5)
Spending on criminal justice					.06 (0.5)
Spending on health care					.17 (1.3)
Spending on defense					.03 (0.3)
(N)	(296)	(285)	(139)	(244)	(270)

Table 10

Alternative budget questions as  
predictors of Clinton approval  
(Probit coefficients and t-statistics)

<i>Variable</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Party identification (Republican)	-.77 (5.5)	-.74 (7.1)	-.67 (6.9)	-.67 (5.7)	-.64 (5.8)
Ideology (conservative)	-.17 (2.0)	-.14 (1.8)	-.12 (1.6)	-.17 (1.8)	-.14 (1.7)
Gender (female)	-.05 (0.4)	.07 (0.6)	.13 (1.1)	-.08 (0.6)	.06 (0.4)
Race (non-white)	.51 (2.0)	.46 (2.1)	.55 (2.6)	.63 (2.4)	.56 (2.5)
Deficit vs. taxes	-.17 (1.3)			-.10 (0.7)	
Deficit vs. domestic	.33 (2.4)			.35 (2.5)	
Deficit vs. defense	.04 (0.2)			.05 (0.3)	
Taxes vs. domestic	-.25 (1.7)			-.38 (2.5)	
Taxes vs. defense	.32 (1.9)			.35 (2.0)	
Domestic vs. defense	-.30 (1.9)			-.34 (2.1)	
Lower deficit, higher taxes		.29 (1.8)			.17 (1.0)
Lower taxes, increase deficit		-.14 (0.8)			-.09 (0.4)
Lower deficit, cut domestic		-.26 (1.1)			-.26 (1.1)
Increase domestic, increase deficit		.48 (2.9)			.49 (2.9)
Lower deficit, cut defense		.11 (0.6)			.08 (0.4)
Increase defense, increase deficit		.34 (1.5)			.36 (1.5)
Lower taxes, cut domestic		-.04 (0.2)			-.03 (0.1)
Increase domestic, higher taxes		-.37 (2.0)			-.47 (2.7)
Lower taxes, cut defense		-.03 (0.2)			-.04 (0.2)
Increase defense, higher taxes		.52 (2.2)			.46 (2.0)
Increase domestic, cut defense		.09 (0.5)			.09 (0.5)
Increase defense, cut domestic		-.53 (1.9)			-.53 (1.9)
1994: Lower deficit, higher taxes			.15 (1.4)	.27 (2.0)	.22 (1.8)
1994: Lower deficit, cut domestic			-.08 (0.7)	-.07 (0.5)	-.01 (0.1)
1994: Raise domestic, raise taxes			.35 (3.2)	.21 (1.6)	.28 (2.3)
LR test on budget coefficients	16.70	31.33	18.39		
	( $p < .05$ )	( $p < .005$ )	( $p < .001$ )		
(N)	(296)	(342)	(369)	(288)	(334)