

The 'Most Important Problem' Dataset (MIPD)
Codebook

Release 1.0

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1 Overview

1.1 Introduction

This document was written to familiarize users with the Most Important Problem Dataset (MIPD). The MIPD is an individual-level dataset that includes responses from surveys taken of individuals in the United States from 1939 through June 2015 with a focus on responses to “most important problem” questions. To achieve this, we coded all surveys during this time period that included responses to some form of the question: “What is the most important problem facing the nation today?” We then aggregated all survey responses into one master data file.

We coded responses into a wide variety (58 at a maximum) of issue areas that match issue classifications provided by Matthew Singer (2011), Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MARPOR) (Volkens, et al. 2014), and the Comparative Agendas Project (Baumgartner and Jones 2002). We also coded a number of other contextual variables at the individual level (demographics, economic evaluations, political preferences, presidential approval, party competency) that make the dataset suitable for a variety of research purposes.

2 Reference

2.1 Location

The MIPD dataset can be found in the following locations:

- Laron Williams’ personal website: <http://faculty.missouri.edu/~williamslaro/mipdata.html>
- Laron Williams’ Harvard Dataverse: <http://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/laronwilliams>
- Replication materials (as well as the Release 1.0) are also available on the *Conflict Management and Peace Science* website.

2.2 Citation

Please use the following citation if you use or reference the MIPD:

Heffington, Colton, Brandon Beomseob Park and Laron K. Williams. Forthcoming. “The ‘Most Important Problem’ Dataset (MIPD): A New Dataset on American Issue Importance” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*

2.3 Acknowledgements

This project would not be possible without the helpful research assistance of Rachel Dicke, Ted Masthay, Andy Philips, Stella-Leonie Wancke and Murat Yildirim.

2.4 Data Availability

We believe that this is the largest collection of individual-level dataset of MIP responses. It offers considerable variation in problem importance across survey houses (Table 1), sponsoring organizations (Table 2), interview methods (Table 3), election cycles (Table 4), presidential administrations (Table 5), presidents (Table 6), and party (Table 7).

Table 1: Distribution of Available Data across Survey Houses

Value	Survey House	# Surveys	N	MIP N^\dagger
1	= ABC News	5	5,306	5,121
2	= ABC/ <i>Washington Post</i>	10	13,437	12,863
3	= ANES	20	37,072	29,214
4	= Associated Press	1	1,499	970
5	= CBS News	73	78,857	72,985
6	= CBS News/ <i>New York Times</i>	118	148,512	133,241
7	= CCFR	1	1,507	1,461
8	= Chilton Research Services	23	35,564	33,290
9	= Decima Research	1	1,000	977
10	= Harris Interactive	1	1,003	921
12	= International Communications Research	3	4,977	4,656
13	= Ipsos	5	5,036	2,429
14	= <i>Los Angeles Times</i>	36	63,068	59,027
16	= NORC	1	2,564	2,344
17	= <i>New York Times</i>	4	6,071	5,606
18	= Princeton Survey Research Associates	49	69,318	42,275
20	= Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas	2	2,011	1,902
21	= Social Science Research Solutions	6	6,168	5,971
22	= Stony Brook University	6	4,992	4,683
23	= The Gallup Organization	313	438,989	409,041
25	= <i>The Washington Post</i>	4	3,662	3,544
26	= Yankelovich Partners, Inc.	4	4,559	4,201

Note: \dagger : number of non-missing MIP observations.

Table 2: Distribution of Available Data across Sponsoring Organization

Value	Survey House	# Surveys	N	MIP N^\dagger
1	= 60 Minutes/Vanity Fair	5	5,267	5,108
2	= ABC News	7	7,696	7,449
3	= ABC News/Nightline	1	537	516
4	= ABC News/ <i>Washington Post</i>	30	46,074	43,309
5	= ANES	20	37,072	29,214
6	= Associated Press	6	6,535	3,399
7	= Bloomberg News	1	1,321	1,309
8	= CBS News	72	77,722	71,879
9	= CBS News/ <i>New York Times</i>	120	150,548	135,210
10	= CNN/Knight Ridder	1	1,387	1,344
11	= CNN/ <i>USA Today</i>	18	18,926	17,775
12	= Kaiser Family Foundation	12	14,793	7,144
13	= Kaiser/Agency	1	1,216	543
14	= Kaiser/Harvard	3	3,695	2,711
15	= Kaiser/Harvard/ <i>Washington Post</i>	2	3,343	2,646
16	= Kaiser/NPR/Harvard	1	1,557	1,366
17	= <i>Los Angeles Times</i>	35	61,747	57,718
19	= McLean's	1	1,000	977
21	= NCSC	1	1,502	699
22	= NORC	1	2,564	2,344
23	= <i>New York Times</i>	4	6,071	5,606
24	= Newsweek	2	3,715	3,680
25	= Pew	27	40,961	26,502
27	= Stony Brook University	6	4,992	4,683
28	= The Gallup Organization	289	409,161	380,603
29	= Time Magazine	2	2,011	1,902
30	= Time Magazine/CNN	5	5,562	5,122
31	= Times Mirror Center	5	10,451	8,438
32	= Times Mirror/Harvard	1	1,021	979
33	= <i>USA Today</i>	3	3,063	3,003
34	= <i>The Washington Post</i>	4	3,662	3,544

Note: † : number of non-missing MIP observations.

Table 3: Interview Methods

Value	Method	# Surveys	N	MIP N^\dagger
1	= Telephone: landline	356	456,422	398,218
2	= Telephone: landline + cell	126	138,737	129,960
3	= Face-to-Face	197	326,313	298,157
4	= Face-to-Face + Telephone	7	13,700	10,387

Note: \dagger : number of non-missing MIP observations.

Table 4: Distribution of Available Data across Presidential Election Cycles

Cycle	# Surveys	N	MIP N^\dagger
1936-1940	4	15,176	11,739
1940-1944	3	8,004	7,274
1944-1948	12	31,585	28,045
1948-1952	14	26,897	24,355
1952-1956	13	21,932	18,404
1956-1960	27	43,566	40,244
1960-1964	18	25,729	23,898
1964-1968	28	39,802	38,171
1968-1972	18	24,815	21,769
1972-1976	16	21,854	20,641
1976-1980	30	44,298	39,225
1980-1984	41	64,662	56,400
1984-1988	32	52,770	49,279
1988-1992	55	76,232	72,708
1992-1996	57	76,180	70,197
1996-2000	66	79,080	66,590
2000-2004	43	50,013	38,888
2004-2008	92	102,762	87,710
2008-2012	80	86,322	81,461
2012-2016	37	43,493	39,724

Note: \dagger : number of non-missing MIP observations.

Table 5: Distribution of Available Data across Presidential Administrations

Value	Administration	# Surveys	N	MIP N^\dagger
1	= Roosevelt II	4	15,176	11,739
2	= Roosevelt III	3	8,004	7,274
3	= Roosevelt IV	1	2,798	2,477
4	= Truman I	12	31,802	28,420
5	= Truman II	13	23,882	21,503
6	= Eisenhower I	13	21,932	18,404
7	= Eisenhower II	27	43,566	40,244
8	= Kennedy	10	14,201	13,352
9	= Johnson I	8	11,528	10,546
10	= Johnson II	24	32,815	31,553
11	= Nixon I	23	33,092	29,636
12	= Nixon II	6	7,791	7,428
13	= Ford	9	12,773	11,964
14	= Carter	30	44,298	39,225
15	= Reagan I	42	66,196	57,852
16	= Reagan II	32	52,769	49,257
17	= H.W. Bush	59	81,341	77,763
18	= Clinton I	56	74,488	68,301
19	= Clinton II	57	69,133	57,651
20	= W. Bush I	51	58,182	45,558
21	= W. Bush II	94	104,754	90,465
22	= Obama I	78	84,377	79,509
23	= Obama II	34	40,274	36,601

Note: † : number of non-missing MIP observations.

Table 6: Distribution of Available Data across Presidents

Value	President	# Surveys	N	MIP N^\dagger
1	= Roosevelt	8	25,978	21,490
2	= Truman	25	55,684	49,923
3	= Eisenhower	40	65,498	58,648
4	= Kennedy	10	14,201	13,352
5	= Johnson	32	44,343	42,099
6	= Nixon	29	40,883	37,064
7	= Ford	9	12,773	11,964
8	= Carter	30	44,298	39,225
9	= Reagan	74	118,965	107,109
10	= Bush I	59	81,341	77,763
11	= Clinton	113	143,621	125,952
12	= Bush II	145	162,936	136,023
13	= Obama	112	124,651	116,110

Note: † : number of non-missing MIP observations.

Table 7: Distribution of Available Data across Presidential Party

Value	Party	# Surveys	N	MIP N^\dagger
0	= Republican	356	482,396	428,571
1	= Democrat	330	452,776	408,151

Note: † : number of non-missing MIP observations.

3 Data Appendix

3.1 Sources

We identified every survey that is representative of the adult (18 and over) population of the United States from 1939-2015 that had individual-level data available and that asked the “most important problem” question. We gathered these data exclusively from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

For those few surveys that polled both adults and youths (such as ABC News August 1986, which also polled 16- and 17-year olds; Gallup/Newsweek February 1987 which polled all those 13 and over), we only select those respondents 18 years and older.

3.2 Interview Mode

In the post-World War II era commercial polling firms transitioned from personal interviews to telephone-administered surveys. The interview modes for those surveys included in the manuscript, with the included surveys in parentheses, are presented in Table 8:

Table 8: Interview Modes across Polling Agencies

Abbreviation	Polling Agency	Interview Mode
ABC	ABC and ABC/ <i>Washington Post</i>	Telephone: landline (1981-Sep. 2008) Telephone: landline + cell (Oct. 2008-present)
ANES	American National Election Survey	Face-to-Face (1960-1982) FtF + Telephone (1984-2000)
AP	Associated Press	Telephone: landline (2006)
CBS	CBS and CBS/ <i>New York Times</i>	Telephone: landline (1976-2008) Telephone: landline + cell (2009-present)
CCFR	Chicago Council on Foreign Relations	Face-to-Face (1998)
CRS	Chilton Research Services	Telephone: landline (1981-1994)
DR	Decima Research	Telephone: landline (1989)
GALLUP	The Gallup Organization	Face-to-Face (1939-1987, except for 1971m8) Telephone: landline (1988-2007) Telephone: landline + cell (2008-present)
HI	Harris Interactive	Telephone: landline (2002)
ICR	International Communications Research	Telephone: landline (2000-2007)
Ipsos	Ipsos	Telephone: landline (2007-2008)
LATIMES	<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	Telephone: landline (1980-2006)
NORC	National Opinion Research Center	Face-to-Face (1944)
NYT	<i>New York Times</i>	Telephone: landline (1985-2000)
PSRA	Princeton Survey Research Associates	Telephone: landline (1992-2008) Telephone: landline + cell (2009-present)
SB	Stony Brook	Telephone: landline (2003-2005)
SRB	Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas	Telephone: landline (2004-2006)
SSRS	Social Science Research Solutions	Telephone: landline + cell (2013-2014)
WP	<i>Washington Post</i>	Telephone: landline (1990-1995)
YPI	Yankelovich Partners, Inc.	Telephone: landline (1990-2000)

3.3 Response Rates

Response rates are often unavailable for surveys from commercial polling companies, particularly earlier than 2000. Response rates were requested from all polling agencies; those surveys without response rates listed below are either unavailable or did not respond to the request (e.g., Gallup and LATIMES). The various response rates are calculated based on the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) guidelines.

ABC: 12/01, 12%; 12/06, 16%; 1/07, 14%; 12/08, 16% (L) 7% (C) (AAPOR RR1: response rates were unavailable for surveys prior to 1999)

CBS: 11/93, 40%; 6/01, 20%; 8/01, 16%; 1/5-6/02, 19%; 1/21-24/02, 16%; 5/02, 16%; 7/02, 18%; 10/02, 12%; 1/03, 17%; 5/03, 15%; 7/03, 18%; 11/04, 13%; 1/05, 18%; 2/05, 9%; 7/13-14/05, 12%; 7/29-8/02/05, 14%; 8/05, 11%; 9/05, 12%; 10/05, 11%; 12/05, 17%; 1/06, 17%; 2/06, 13%; 3/06, 15%; 4/6-9/06, 13%; 4/28-30/06, 8%; 5/06, 12%; 6/06, 11%; 7/06, 14%; 8/06, 14%; 9/06, 15%; 10/06, 12%; 12/06, 12%; 1/07, 13%; 2/07, 13%; 3/07, 13%; 4/07, 13%; 5/07, 13%; 7/07, 15%; 8/07, 14%; 9/4-9/07, 14%; 9/14-16/07, 10%; 12/07, 14%; 1/9-12/08, 15%; 1/30-2/2/08, 15%; 2/08, 16%; 3/08, 11%; 5/08, 13%; 1/09, 13%; 4/09, 10%; 6/09, 10%; 7/09, 9%; 9/09, 9%; 10/09, 8%; 12/09, 11%; 1/10, 12%; 2/10, 10%; 4/10, 10%; 6/10, 6%; 7/10, 8%; 8/10, 8%; 9/10, 9%; 10/10, 10%; 1/11, 9%; 2/11, 8%; 3/11, 8%; 4/11, 10%; 6/3-7/11, 10%; 6/24-28/11, 8%; 9/10-15/11, 11%; 9/28-10/2/11, 8%; 12/11, 8%; 1/12, 13%; 3/12, 9%; 4/12, 8%; 5/12, 66%; 8/12, 11%; 12/12, 9% (AAPOR RR1: response rates were unavailable for surveys prior to 2001)

PEW: 11/97, 38%; 5/98, 36%; 4/03, 27%; 1/04, 24%; 7/04, 25%; 1/05, 24%; 5/05, 23%; 11/05, 17%; 1/06, 23%; 9/06, 21%; 1/07, 17%; 9/07, 20%; 1/9-13/08, 18%; 2/08, 20%; 10/08, 18% (12% cell); 8/09, 13% (10% cell); 2/10, 18% (7% cell); 1/11, 15% (9% cell); 5/11, 11% (6% cell); 12/11, 10% (7% cell); 3/12, 11% (7% cell) (AAPOR RR3: response rates were unavailable for surveys between 1999-2002)

PSRA: 7/01, 49%; 2/03, 33%; 4/03, 32%; 6/03, 30%; 8/03, 30%; 10/03, 32%; 12/03, 29%; 1/04, 30%; 2/04, 30%; 4/04, 29%; 8/04, 27%; 12/04, 34%; 12/05, 32%; 4/06, 34%; 8/06, 32%; 3/07, 28%; 5/07, 19%; 8/07, 20%; 11/07, 21% (AAPOR RR3: response rates were unavailable for surveys prior to 2001)

SB: 2/04, 20%; 6/04, 19% (AAPOR RR1: response rates were unavailable for surveys not listed)

4 Description of Variables

This section describes each of the variables in the MIPD. For each variable, we provide a short description, various question wordings, coding rules, number of available surveys, and temporal availability. If the alternative question wording demands different coding rules, these are provided.

4.1 Most Important Problem

The question wording for the “most important problem” has been remarkably consistent over this time period (especially since around 1957). In fact, the vast majority (79.4%) of the questions are variations on the conventional wording (see #1 below). Nevertheless, there are some minor differences in question wording and the number of questions offered to produce the “most” important problem (most notably the 37,072 responses from the ANES). Here we provide the differences in question wording, along with a couple of examples from actual surveys. We also list the numeric code for each broad question wording (from the `mipid` variable), and subcategories for important variations (such as 1.1 or 1.2).

4.1.1 Question Wording

1. “What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?”
 - *Survey examples:* Gallup March 1948
 - *Variations:*
 - “What do you think is the most important problem facing the nation today?”
 - “What do you think is the most important problem facing the entire country today?”
 - “What’s the most important problem facing this country today?”
 - “What would you say is the most important problem facing the United States today?”
 - “In your opinion, what do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?”
 - “What do you think is the most important problem facing this country?”
 - “Which of the following do you think is the most important problem facing the country today?”
 - “What do you feel is the most important problem facing this country today?”
 - 1.1: “What do you think are the two or three most important problems facing the country today?”
 - 1.2: “What do you think are the most important problems today?”
2. “What do you regard as the most important problem before the American people today?”

- *Survey examples:* Gallup January 1939
 - *Variations:*
 - “What do you think is the most important problem facing the American people today?”
3. “What do you think is the most important problem facing this section of the country today?”
- *Survey examples:* Gallup May 1956
 - *Variations:*
 - “What do you think is the most important problem facing this section of the country—that is, the [name of geographical region] today?”
 - “What do you consider your community’s single most urgent problem?”
4. Empty
5. “Aside from winning the war, what do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?”
- *Survey examples:* Gallup December 1942-Gallup March 1945
6. “What issue or problem would you say is most important for the next president to address?”
- *Survey examples:* *Los Angeles Times* August 2004
7. Empty
8. Empty
9. “What would you personally feel are the most important problems the government should try to take care of when the new president and congress take office in January? Can you think of any other problems important to you?”
- *Note:* Most, second most, and third most important problem responses are coded for these variables (if available).
 - *Survey examples:* ANES: 1960-1964
10. “What do you personally feel are the most important problems which the government in Washington should try to take care of? (Any others?)”
- *Note:* Most, second most, and third most important problem responses are coded for these variables (if available).
 - *Survey examples:* ANES: 1966, 1968, 1970
11. “In your opinion, what is the most important problem the United States government must solve in the next year?”

- *Survey examples:* Gallup January 1947
12. “What do you personally regard as the most important problem which should be discussed in the coming November election campaign?”
- *Survey examples:* Gallup July 1950
 - *Variations:*
 - “What do you think is the most important problem which should be debated (discussed) in the coming presidential campaign?”
 - 12.1: “What do you personally regard as the most important issue which should be discussed in the coming November election campaign?”
13. “What do you think will be the most important problem facing this country during the next year?”
- *Survey examples:* Gallup June 1946
14. “What is the most important problem the government must solve in the next few months?”
- *Survey examples:* Gallup February 1946
15. “What do you regard as the biggest issue or problem facing the government in Washington today?”
- *Survey examples:* Gallup June 1955
 - *Variations:*
 - “What issue or problem would you say is most important for the next president to address?”
 - “What do you think is the single most important problem for the federal government to address today?”
16. “What is the most important problem you would like to see Congress take up in the new year?”
- *Survey examples:* Gallup November 1953
 - *Variations:*
 - “What is the most important problem you would like to see Congress take up in the new session starting in January?”
 - “What would you say is the one most important problem you would like to see Congress deal with next year?”
 - “What is the most important problem you would like to see the new Congress take up in the new session starting in January?”
17. “What do you think is the single most urgent problem facing the country today?”

- *Survey examples: Los Angeles Times December 1989*
18. “What do you think is the single most important problem for the government—the President and Congress—to address in the coming year?”
- *Survey examples: CBS News Poll July 1999*
 - *Variations:*
 - “Which of the following do you think is the single most important problem for the government—that is, the President and Congress—to address in the coming year?”
 - “What do you think is the single most important issue or problem the President and the new Congress should try to accomplish in the next year?”
 - “What would you say is the most important problem you would like to see [President and the Congress] deal with this year?”
 - “What do you think is the most important problem for the government to address?”
19. “What do you expect to be one of the most important problems facing this country in the next four years?”
- *Survey examples: NORC 1944*
20. “What do you think is the most important problem facing Congress today?”
- *Survey examples: Gallup March 1947*
21. “What do you personally regard as the most important issue before the country today?”
- *Survey examples: Gallup March 1947*
22. “What do you think is the biggest problem facing this country today?”
- *Survey examples: Gallup February 1959*
 - *Variations:*
 - “What do you feel are the two or three biggest problems facing the country today?”
23. “What is the most important problem that you and your family face today?”
- *Survey examples: Gallup March 1951*
 - *Variations:*
 - 23.1: “What would you say is the most urgent problem facing you and your family in [year]?”
24. “Of all the problems facing the nation, which one do you think the [president] should give most attention to?”
- *Survey examples: Gallup April 1969*

25. “What do you think are the most important problems facing this country?[...]Of all you’ve told me, what would you say is the single most important problem the country faces?”
- *Note:* This is a two-part question, and only the *most* important problem (i.e., the response to the second question) is coded. Therefore, there no values for the second and third problems identified.
 - *Survey examples:* ANES 1972-1978, 1984-2000
 - *Variations:*
 - “Of those problems you’ve mentioned, what would you say is the single most important problem the country faces?”
 - “Of these problems you’ve mentioned, which one is the most important?”
26. “What do you personally feel are the most important problems the government in Washington should try to take care of?[...]Of those you’ve mentioned, which would you say is the single most important problem the government in Washington should try to take care of?”
- *Note:* This is a two-part question, and only the *most* important problem (i.e., the response to the second question) is coded. Therefore, there no values for the second and third problems identified.
 - *Survey examples:* ANES: 1980-1982
27. “In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing the United States today... in other words, the one that concerns you the most?”
- *Survey examples:* Decima February 1989
28. Empty
29. “Thinking about the next five years, what do you think will be the most important problem facing this country?”
- *Survey examples:* *Los Angeles Times* March 1991
30. “What do you think is the main problem facing the country today?”
- *Survey examples:* *Time* January 1996
31. “What do you think will be the most important problem facing this country in the 21st Century?”
- *Survey examples:* CBS News March 1998
 - *Variations:*
 - “What do you think is the single most important problem for the next generation of Americans to solve?”
99. Any other question wording that substantially deviates from those listed above.

4.1.2 Most Important Problem Codes

We coded responses into a wide variety (58 at a maximum) of problem categories that match issue classifications provided by Matthew Singer (2011), Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MARPOR, previously the Comparative Manifesto Project) (Volkens, et al. 2014), and the Comparative Agendas Project (Baumgartner and Jones 2002). We provide these codes in Tables 9-11.

We went to great lengths to code each open-ended MIP response into the appropriate problem category using the various coding schemes. Nonetheless, there are a few categories where there is some slippage between categories in the coding schemes. First, we code all domestic economic issues as simply “economic issues”, whereas the CAP scheme differentiates between “macroeconomic” issues and “domestic commerce” issues. We have coded “natural disasters” and problems of overpopulation as issues of domestic commerce in the CAP scheme because those issues are coded as issues of domestic commerce per the CAP codebook. Secondly, we did not code issues of technology as a distinct category in either the Singer or MARPOR schemes and forego the “Technology” issue in the CAP coding scheme. We also coded issues of space technology and the militarization of space as “Defense Spending” issues in the Singer coding scheme, whereas the CAP coding scheme codes space issues as problems of “Technology”. Finally, we did not code “Public Lands” as a distinct problem type in either the Singer or MARPOR coding scheme, though it is a distinct problem type in the CAP scheme. We coded issues related to “Public Lands” as a miscellaneous problem type in both the Singer and MARPOR coding schemes previously, and forgo this “Public Lands” coding category in the CAP variable.

Users who would like to match our dataset with CAP data may be worried that excluding these issue areas is problematic. To see if these issues would make our dataset incompatible with the CAP, we examined the CAP’s annual “Gallup’s Most Important Problem” dataset to see how frequently these issues arose in the CAP coding scheme as the most important problem from 1946 through 2012. “Domestic commerce” issues were never coded as the most important problem for more than 1.9% of responses (2005), and for 51 of the 66 years available, domestic commerce issues are coded as 0% of all responses to the MIP question. Responses for “Technology” never amount to more than 3.8% of responses (1958), and registers as 0% of all responses in 43 of 66 years. Finally, “Public Lands” never registers as the MIP for more than 0.01% of all responses (1979), and is coded as 0% of all responses to the MIP question in 63 of 66 years.

Altogether, we can see that while there is some loss of data in translating the Singer scheme into the CAP scheme, but these losses are very minor and do not amount to significant incompatibilities because the omitted categories are so rarely used.

Table 9: “Most Important Problem” Responses and Categories: MARPOR (Volkens et al. 2014)

MARPOR[†]	MIP Responses
External Relations	Foreign policy (general), defense spending, military spending, arms control, proliferation, nuclear weapons, military readiness, draft, conscription, terrorism, Osama bin Laden, war (general), specific wars, peace, civil war, globalization, foreign trade, jobs moving overseas, foreign aid, Marshall Plan, too much spent in other countries, regional integration, NAFTA, trade agreements, foreign affairs, foreign policy, specific countries, international status, communism, reputation
Freedom and Democracy	Women’s rights, ERA, equal rights, equal pay, civil liberties, gender rights, gender and racial discrimination, racism, same-sex marriage, same-sex rights
Political System	Partisan conflict (general), problems with institutions (president, congress, courts, judges, etc), parties (Democrats or Republicans), specific politicians, corruption, scandals, trustworthy politicians, domestic communism, incumbent’s competence, ability, leadership, federalism, state/national authority, and democratic reforms
Economy	Economy (general), stock market, jobs, unemployment, inflation, prices, oil prices, energy costs, cost of living, making ends meet, growth, recession, depression, economic outlook, consumer confidence, low wages, labor policy, strikes, automation, poverty, income inequality, poor, class strife, class warfare, infrastructure, budget deficit, too much spending, and taxes
Welfare and Quality of Life	Social policy (general), social spending, hunger, welfare, AFDC, food stamps, education, schools, vouchers, financial aid, school loans, health policy, Obamacare, health insurance, Medicaid, prescription drug coverage, Medicare, Social Security, pensions, retirement, old age, lack of housing, homelessness, support for disabilities, ADA, transportation, busing, global warming, climate change, pollution, acid rain, energy sources, oil dependence, energy shortage, general mentions of the environment, parks, and child care
Fabric of Society	Problems with youth, generational divide, riots, protests, unrest, crime, violence, school violence, gangs, drugs, guns, gun control, national values, morals, unity, kindness to others, abortion, pro-life, lack of religion, prayer in school, family, parenting, children, child abuse, and homosexuality
Social Groups	Immigration policy, immigrants, refugee, asylum, asylum-seekers, farming, agricultural support, and youth
Other	Other country-specific issues and natural disasters

Note: [†] Volkens et al. 2014.

Table 10: “Most Important Problem” Responses and Categories: Singer (2011)

Singer (2011)	MIP Responses	Singer (2011)	MIP Responses
Economy (general)	Economy, stock market, consumer confidence, infrastructure	Corruption	Corruption
Unemployment	Jobs, unemployment	Scandals	Any mention of specific scandals
Inflation	Inflation rate, prices, oil prices, energy costs, cost of living, make ends meet	Trustworthy politicians	Trustworthiness, domestic communism
Growth/recession	Growth, recession, depression, economic outlook	Democratic reforms	Electoral reforms
Wages	Low wages	Incumbent’s competence	Competence, ability, leadership
Industrial policy	Labor policy, strikes, automation	Riots and protests	Riots, protests, unrest
Poverty/inequality	Poverty, income inequality, economic inequality, poor	Crime	Crime, violence, school violence, gangs, drugs, guns, gun control
Class	Class strife, class warfare	Immigration policy	Immigration, immigrants, quotas (Rarely used)
Social policy (general)	Social spending, helping others, hunger	Rights of citizens abroad	Refugees
Welfare	Welfare, AFDC, food stamps	Refugees	Refugees
Education policy	Education, schools, vouchers, financial aid, school loans	Asylum	Asylum, asylum-seekers
Health policy	Health care, Obamacare, health insurance, Medicaid, prescription drug coverage	Cultural clashes with new citizens	Assimilation
Old age/pensions	Medicare, Social Security, pensions, retirement, old age	Climate change	Global warming, climate change
Gender rights	Women’s rights, ERA, equal rights, equal pay	Pollution	Pollution (air and water), acid rain
Housing	Lack of housing, no access to housing, projects, homelessness	Energy sources	Energy sources, oil dependence, energy shortage
Support for disabilities	ADA	Environment	General mentions, clean air and water, parks
Transportation	Transportation, busing	Taxes	Tax policy, taxes
Civil liberties	Civil rights, gender and racial discrimination, racism, same-sex marriage	Farming	Farming, farmers, agriculture
Youth	Problems with youth, generational divide	Agricultural support	Subsidies, farm support
Defense spending	Defense spending, military spending, arms control, proliferation, nuclear weapons, military readiness, draft, conscription	Region/center politics	Federalism, state/national authority
Terrorism	Terrorism, terrorists, Osama bin Laden, 9/11	National values/culture	National values, morals, values, unity, kindness to others, socialism
War	Specific wars (WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf, Afghanistan, Iraq), peace	Abortion	Abortion, pro-life
Civil war	Civil war	Religion	Lack of religion, prayer in school, no religious values (Rarely used)
Globalization	Globalization, foreign trade, jobs moving overseas	Euthanasia	Family, parenting
Aid	Foreign aid, Marshall plan, too much spent in other countries	Family	Children, child care, child abuse
Regional integration	NAFTA, trade agreements	Children	Homosexuality
Foreign policy	Foreign affairs, foreign policy, specific mentions of countries, crises, international status, communism, reputation	Homosexuality	
Budget deficit	Deficit, debt, too much spending	Domestic ethnic tensions	Race riots, unrest
Natural disasters	Disasters, Katrina, overpopulation	Partisan conflict	Republicans, Democrats, Congress, courts, judges, specific mentions of politicians
Country-specific issues	AIDS, SARS, stem cell		

Table 11: “Most Important Problem” Responses and Categories: CAP (Baumgartner and Jones 2002)

CAP [†]	MIP Responses
Macroeconomy	Economy, stock market, consumer confidence, infrastructure, jobs, unemployment, inflation rate, prices, oil prices, energy costs, cost of living, making ends meet, growth, recession, depression, economic outlook, low wages, deficit, debt, too much spending, tax policy, taxes, class strife, class warfare
Civil Rights	Women’s rights, ERA, equal rights, equal pay, civil rights, gender discrimination, racial discrimination, racism, race riots, same-sex marriage, religion, abortion
Health	Health care, Obamacare, health costs, health insurance, Medicaid, prescription drug coverage
Agriculture	Farmers, agriculture, subsidies, farm support
Labor	Labor policy, strikes, automation
Education	Education, schools, vouchers, financial aid, school loans
Environment	Global warming, climate change, pollution (air and water), acid rain, environment, clean air and water
Energy	Energy sources, oil dependence, energy shortage
Immigration	Immigration, immigrants, quotas, refugees, culture clashes with new citizens, assimilation
Transportation	Transportation, busing
Crime	Riots, protests, unrest, crime, violence, school violence, gangs, drugs, guns, gun control, family, family values, parenting, children, child care, child abuse, problems with youth, generational divide
Social Welfare	Poverty, income inequality, economic inequality, poor, social spending, helping others, hunger, welfare, AFDC, food stamps, Medicare, Social Security, pensions, retirement, old age, ADA
Housing & Development	Lack of housing, no access to housing, projects, homelessness
Domestic Commerce	Disasters, Katrina, overpopulation
Defense	Defense spending, military spending, arms control, proliferation, nuclear weapons, military readiness, draft conscription, specific wars, wars (in general), peace, civil war
Science & Technology	(Rarely used)
Foreign Trade	Globalization, foreign trade, jobs moving overseas, regional integration, NAFTA, trade agreements
International Affairs	Terrorism, Osama bin Laden, 9/11, foreign aid, Marshall plan, too much spent in other countries, foreign affairs, foreign policy, specific mentions of countries, crises, international status, communism, reputation
Government Operations	Corruption, any mention of specific scandals, scandals in general, trustworthiness of politicians, domestic communism, electoral reforms, competence, ability, leadership, federalism, state/national authority, states’ rights
Public Lands	(Rarely used)
Culture	National values, morals, values, unity, kindness to others, socialism
Other	Homosexuality, Republicans, Democrats, Congress, courts, judges, specific mentions of politicians, AIDS, SARS, stem cell

Note: [†] Baumgartner and Jones (2002)

4.2 Observation Identifiers and Survey Information

The following variables provide unique identifiers for respondents and surveys. There are no missing values (except for `weight`, where a value of 1 replaces the missing values in the aggregate analysis).

- `studyid`: a string identifying each survey uniquely. These identification tags come from the polling agencies (e.g., Gallup, CBS) themselves and uniquely identify the files on the Roper Center's iPoll service.
- `id`: a numeric identifier for each respondent in each survey. This is not a unique identifier for every respondent in the dataset but it is a unique identifier for each respondent within a given survey.
- `prev_ts`: indicates the date of the previous presidential election in Stata's *dmy* format (e.g. 06nov2012).
- `next_ts`: indicates the date of the next presidential election in Stata's *dmy* format (e.g. 08nov2016).
- `fw_start`: the date that the field work for the survey began in Stata's *dmy* format (e.g. 04apr2013).
- `fw_end`: the date that the field work for the survey ended in Stata's *dmy* format (e.g. 11apr2013).
- `surveyorganization`: string variable containing the survey organization, according to the Roper Center.
- `survey`: numeric codes for the various survey organizations (see Table 1).
- `sponsororganization`: string variable containing the sponsoring organization, according to the Roper Center. If there is no sponsoring organization, we list the survey organization here.
- `sponsor`: numeric codes for the various sponsoring organizations (see Table 2).
- `oversamplefull`: full description of the oversample (if requested) provided by the Roper Center.
- `oversample`: binary variable coded 1 if the survey contained an oversample. Population weights are available in all of the surveys containing an oversample.

- `sample_size`: continuous variable that provides the overall sample size (not effective size).
- `sample`: variable denoting the sample used in the survey. The vast majority of respondents were selected from a national sample of adults (98.5%), three surveys are of registered voters, and the remainder are from national adult samples with recalls or youth components. For aggregate analysis, scholars will want to exclude those surveys that are based on registered voters. Though some surveys are denoted *National Adult + Youth*, the youths (<18) are excluded from the dataset.
- `question`: this string variable provides the exact question wording of the MIP question (excluding preamble material).
- `mipid`: this numeric variable groups the questions based on their wording into two dozen categories (see the *Question Wording* section for more details).
- `short`: these surveys are coded 1 if the “most important problem” question *did* allow open responses, but the responses were grouped into 8-12 broad categories. For example, any mention related to “Soviet Union, World Peace, War or Defense” was coded into one category in the CBS/*New York Times* April 1981 poll.
 - 68 surveys total were coded as *short*, predominantly Gallup, CBS News/*New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, Chilton Research Services, and Schulman, Ronca and Bucvalas.
- `openended`: these surveys are coded 0 if the “most important problem” question *did not* allow open responses, but instead respondents were asked to identify which one out of 6-10 problems was the “most important”. One should be cautious about using closed or “short” questions (see below) in either of the more fine-grained coding schemes (Singer and CAP) because the broad categories are not appropriate.
 - The following *Los Angeles Times* surveys were coded as *closed*: December 1985, July 1986, March 1987, July 1988, April 1989, July 1989, November 1989, December 1990, January 1991. One CBS/*New York Times* survey (January 1980) was coded as *closed*.
- `weightavail`: binary variable coded 1 if the population weight was available.
- `weight`: population weight, if available. In the aggregate analysis, if a weight is not available, then all of the respondents are treated as equally likely to be chosen from the population.

- For some Gallup surveys in the 1960s, a peculiar weighting scheme was utilized. Instead of providing a numeric value that reflects the population weight, Gallup produced duplicate observations of those observations that required more weight. In some instances, an observation might have upwards of 10 duplicate observations. The September 1959 survey, for example, had 5,778 observations, and only 1,639 were not duplicates.

While this is effective in portraying a population weight, it becomes a problem if one is interested in analysis of the individual-level data. As a result, we eliminate these duplicate observations and generate a simple weight that represents the number of duplicates + 1. For example, if an observation did not have any duplicates, it is given a weight of 1; an observation with 7 duplicate observations is given a weight of 8. This includes the nearly every Gallup survey from 1960-1967 with the following exceptions:

- `interviewmethod`: this variable provides the interview method used in the survey (see Table 3).

4.3 Demographics

These questions ascertain various demographic characteristics of the respondent, and as such, each has different coding practices.

age: respondent's age

- *Question wording*: "How old are you?"
- *Alternative question wording*: some surveys (e.g., CBS/*New York Times* July 1977) do not provide the actual age, but values representing age categories. For these variables, we use the following coding convention:

18 = 18-29
30 = 30-44
45 = 45-64
65 = 65 and over
. = Don't Know; Refused; Less than 17

- *Availability*: 1939-1942, 1944-2015
- *Number of surveys*: 673

black: any respondent who is "black" is coded as 1

- *Question wording*: see coding convention for white
- *Availability*: 1939-1942, 1944-2015
- *Number of surveys*: 479

church_attend: how often does respondent attend church or synagogue

- *Question wording*: "Would you say you attend religious services every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never?" (CBS/*New York Times* April 1981).
0 = Never or Inappropriate
1 = Once or Twice/Month or Few Times a Year
2 = Almost every week
3 = Every week
. = Don't Know; Refused
- *Alternative question wording*: "(If some church preference): Would you say to go to church regularly, often, seldom or never?" (ANES 1960)

Never/Inappropriate = Never; No Religious Preference
 Once or Twice/Month or Few Times a Year = Seldom
 Almost every week = Often
 Every week = Regularly
 . = NA

- *Alternative question wording*: “About how many times a month do you go to church?” (Gallup June 1962)

Never/Inappropriate = 0 Times
 Once or Twice/Month or Few Times a Year = 1-3 Times
 Almost every week = 4-7 Times
 Every week = 8-36 Times
 . = NA

- *Alternative question wording*: “How often do you attend religious services at your local house of worship? Do you almost never attend services, or do you go several times a year, or do you attend about once a month, or about once a week, or do you go to religious services more often than once a month?” (*Los Angeles Times* July 2004)

Never/Inappropriate = Almost Never; Not Sure
 Once or Twice/Month or Few Times a Year = Several Times/Year; About once a week
 Almost every week = About once a week
 Every week = More often than once a week
 . = Don’t Know; Refused

- *Availability*: 1944, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980-1982, 1984-1986, 1988-1990, 1992-1996, 1998-2001, 2004-2015

- *Number of surveys*: 179

class: respondent’s self-identified socioeconomic class

- *Question wording*: “Would you say that the head of your household belongs—or used to belong to—the working class or middle class?” (*Los Angeles Times* October 1980)

1 = Lower (Working or Lower Class; Never was in the work force)
 2 = Middle (Middle or upper class)
 . = Don’t Know; Refused

- *Alternative question wording*: “If you were asked to use one of these five names for your social class, which would you say you belong in: upper class, upper-middle class, middle class, working class, or lower class?” (CBS July 2010)

Lower = Working; Lower
 Middle = Middle
 Upper = Upper-middle; Upper
 . = Don’t Know; Refused

- *Alternative question wording:* “Which of the following describes your household?” (Pew January 2006)
 - Lower = Struggling family/household; Working class
 - Middle = Professional or business class
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused; None apply; More than one applies
- *Alternative question wording:* Summary measure of the following questions: “Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to one of these classes? (If Yes): Which one? (If No): If you had to make a choice, would you call yourself middle class or working class? Would you say that you are about average middle class, or that you are in the upper part of the middle class? Would you say that you are about average working class, or that you are in the upper part of the working class?” (ANES 1980)
 - 1 = Lower (lower class; average working; working; upper working)
 - 2 = Middle (average middle; middle)
 - 3 = Upper (upper; upper-middle)
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused
- *Availability:* 1946-1952, 1954, 1955, 1957-1960, 1964, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980-1996, 2000, 2006, 2007, 2009-2012, 2014
- *Number of surveys:* 98

edulevel: respondent’s highest *completed* level of schooling

- *Question wording:* “What is the last grade or class that you completed in school? (If College/University Graduate or More) Do you have any post-graduate education beyond a 4-year bachelors degree?” (Gallup January 1996)
 - 1 = No High School
 - 2 = Some High School
 - 3 = High School
 - 4 = College
 - 5 = Post-Graduate
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused
- *Alternative question wording:* “What was the last grade (or year) you completed in school?” (NORC October 1944)
 - No High School = No Schooling; 1-4 Years Grammar; 5-7 Years Grammar; Completed Grammar
 - Some High School = Some High School
 - High School = Completed High School; Some College
 - College = Completed College
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused

- *Alternative question wording:* “What was the last grade (or year) you completed in school?”
 - No High School = None, or Grades 1-4; Grades 5-7; Grade 8
 - Some High School = High School Incomplete (Grades 9-11)
 - High School = High School Graduate; Technical, Trade or Business; College Incomplete
 - College = College Graduate (BS, BA or other 4-Year Degree)
 - Post-Graduate = Post-graduate training or professional schooling (MD, PhD, JD, etc)
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused
- *Availability:* 1944-2015
- *Number of surveys:* 678

income_quartile: household’s income as a quartile for that survey (if the household is not available, then the individual’s income is used). For each survey, we code the discrete categories into quartiles based on the distribution of income. The four categories may not perfectly reflect quartiles, especially for those surveys where the original income variable has fewer categories (i.e., 5-7 categories).

- *Question wording:* “Last year what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes?” (PSRA June 2003)
 - 1 = Lower Quartile (0-25th Percentile)
 - 2 = Second Quartile (25-50th Percentile)
 - 3 = Third Quartile (50-75th Percentile)
 - 4 = Upper Quartile (75-100th Percentile)
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused; NA
- *Availability:* 1960-2015
- *Number of surveys:* 596

male: respondent’s gender (either self-reported or via interviewer’s observation in face-to-face interview)

- *Question wording:* gender
 - 0 = Female
 - 1 = Male
 - . = Refused
- *Availability:* 1939-1942, 1944-2015
- *Number of surveys:* 680

married: respondent's marital status

- *Question wording*: "Are you married, divorced, separated, widowed, or never been married?" (Pew February 2003)
 - 0 = Not Married (Single; Divorced; Widowed; Common Law Marriage; Never Been Married)
 - 1 = Married
 - . = Don't Know; Refused; NA
- *Availability*: 1942, 1946, 1947, 1949, 1951-1953, 1960, 1964-1966, 1968, 1970-1974, 1976-2015
- *Number of surveys*: 410

other_race: any race that is not "white" or "black" is coded as 1.

- *Question wording*: see coding convention for `white`
- *Availability*: 1958-1972, 1974, 1976-2015
- *Number of surveys*: 415

own_home: does the respondent own their home?

- *Question wording*: "Do you own or rent your home?" (Pew February 2003)
 - 0 = Do Not Own (Rent; Public Housing; Other Arrangement)
 - 1 = Own
 - . = Don't Know; Refused; NA
- *Availability*: 1940, 1944, 1950, 1956-1960, 1962-1972, 1974, 1976, 1978-1994, 1996-2001, 2003-2012
- *Number of surveys*: 139

religiosity: respondent's religiosity

- *Question wording*: "Would you say you are very religious, somewhat religious, or not very religious at all?" (ABC/*Washington Post* October 1991)
 - 1 = Not religious at all
 - 2 = Not very religious
 - 3 = Somewhat religious
 - 4 = Very religious
 - . = Don't Know; Refused; NA

- *Alternative question wording:* “In general, how religious would you say you are—very, fairly, or not at all?” (Gallup May 1973)
 - Not religious at all = Not at all
 - Not very religious =
 - Somewhat religious = Fairly (or somewhat)
 - Very religious = Very
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused; NA
- *Alternative question wording:* “How important would you say religion is in your own life—would you say very important, fairly important, or not very important?” (Gallup May 1981)
 - Not religious at all = Not very important
 - Not very religious =
 - Somewhat religious = Fairly important
 - Very religious = Very important
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused; NA
- *Availability:* 1973, 1981, 1982, 1984-1987, 1989-1995, 1998-2000
- *Number of surveys:* 32

south: does respondent live in the south? The first preference is to use the Census region (if available). If not, then use the regional designation provided by the survey house (see below). If those aren’t available, then use the state designation to replicate the Census region codes:

- *Coding:* Census coding convention: South includes the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, D.C., Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.
 - 0 = Not South (Northeast; North Central; West)
 - 1 = South
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused
- *Coding:* ABC News coding convention: South includes the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.
 - 0 = Not South (East; Mideast; West)
 - 1 = South
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused
- *Coding:* Gallup coding convention: South includes the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

- 0 = Not South (New England; Middle Atlantic; East Central; West Central; Rocky Mountain; Pacific)
- 1 = South (Southeast; Southwest)
- . = Don't Know; Refused
- *Coding: Los Angeles Times coding convention: South includes the following states:*
 - 0 = Not South (New England; Middle Atlantic; Industrial Midwest; Midwest Farm; Mountain/Desert; Pacific)
 - 1 = South (New South; Deep South)
 - . = Don't Know; Refused
- *Availability: 1939-1942, 1944-2015*
- *Number of surveys: 624*

unemployed: respondent is unemployed (either identified as unemployed or unemployed and looking for work or temporarily laid off)

- *Question wording: "Which one of the following best describes your current situation?" (Gallup January 1996).*
 - 0 = Not Unemployed (Employed full-time or part-time; Retired; Homemaker; Student; Disability; Unemployment but not looking for work)
 - 1 = Unemployed (Unemployed; Unemployed but looking for work)
 - . = Don't Know; Refused
- *Availability: 1945, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980-2001, 2003-2015*
- *Number of surveys: 242*

union: someone in the household belongs to a labor union

- *Question wording: "Does anyone living in the household belong to a labor union?" (CBS/New York Times July 1977)*
 - 0 = No
 - 1 = Yes
 - . = Don't Know; Refused
- *Alternative question wording: "Are you, or is your husband/wife, a member of a labor union?" (Gallup July 1980)*
 - 0 = No (neither are)
 - 1 = Yes (Yes, respondent is; Yes, spouse is; Yes, both are)
 - . = Don't Know; Refused; No Answer
- *Availability: 1940, 1941, 1944-1950, 1952-1962, 1964-2001, 2003-2008, 2010-2014*

- *Number of surveys: 259*

urban: urbanization variable

- *Coding: City resident (Gallup August 1964)*
 - 0 = Not Urban (Farm resident; Open country, non-farm; places under 499,999)
 - 1 = Urban (500,000-999,999; 1,000,000 and over)
 - . = Refused; No Answer
- *Coding: Urbanity code (CBS/New York Times July 1977)*
 - 0 = Not Urban (Rural; Minicity; Suburban)
 - 1 = Urban
 - . = Refused; No Answer
- *Coding: Urbanity code (CBS/New York Times June 1979)*
 - 0 = Not Urban (Rural; Suburbs; Small City)
 - 1 = Urban (Large City)
 - . = Refused; No Answer
- *Coding: Primary sampling unit size (ANES 1972)*
 - 0 = PSU < 350,000
 - 1 = PSU > 350,000
 - . = Refused; No Answer
- *Alternative question wording: “Would you describe the area in which you live as [...]?” (ABC/Washington Post October 1991)*
 - 0 = Not Urban (Suburb of a large city; small town; rural area)
 - 1 = Urban (Large City)
 - . = Refused; No Answer
- *Availability: 1939-1942, 1944-2014*
- *Number of surveys: 532*

white: respondent’s race.

- *Note: while the question wording has not changed over time (it is often self-reported or assigned by the interviewer in face-to-face interviews), the available responses have grown over time. From 1939-1958, a typical question would only have the following responses:*
 - 0 = Black (Black; Colored; Negro)
 - 1 = White
 - . = Refused; No Answer

- *Alternative Coding*: From 1959-1994, the responses were expanded to include an “Other” category:
 - 0 = Non-White (Black; Negro; Other)
 - 1 = White
 - . = Refused; No Answer
- *Alternative Coding*: From 1995 to the present, there are typically a number of race options provided:
 - 0 = Non-White (Black; Asian; White-Hispanic; Black-Hispanic; Other)
 - 1 = White
 - . = Refused; No Answer
- *Availability*: 1939-1942, 1944-2015
- *Number of surveys*: 674

4.4 Politics

These questions ask about political behavior, and as such, each has different coding practices.

party_id: party identification

- *Question wording*: “In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?” (Gallup January 1982)

-2 = Democrat
0 = Independent (Other; Neither; Don’t Identify with Party; Apolitical)
2 = Republican
. = Don’t Know; Refused

- *Alternative question wording*: “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as [Republican, Democrat, Independent, or What]? (If Republican): Would you call yourself a [Strong Republican, or a Not Very Strong Republican]? (If Democrat): Would you call yourself a [Strong Democrat or a Not Very Strong Democrat]? (If Independent, or What): Do you lean more towards the [Republican Party, or Democratic Party, or Neither]?” (ABC/Washington Post March 1985)

-3 = Strong Democrat
-2 = Democrat (Not Very Strong Democrat)
-1 = Weak Democrat (Independent but Lean Democrat)
0 = Independent (Other; Neither; Don’t Identify with Party; Apolitical)
1 = Weak Republican (Independent but Lean Republican)
2 = Republican (Not Very Strong Republican)
3 = Strong Republican
. = Don’t Know; Refused

- *Alternative question wording*: “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as [Republican, Democrat, Independent, or What]? (If Independent or Don’t Know): Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic party?” (CBS/New York Times January 1985)

-2 = Democrat
-1 = Closer to Democrat
0 = Independent (Other; Neither)
1 = Closer to Republican
2 = Republican
. = Don’t Know; Refused

- *Availability*: 1940, 1944-2015

- *Number of surveys*: 665

ideology: political ideology

- *Question wording*: “How would you describe your views on most political matters? Generally, do you think of yourself as liberal, moderate, or conservative?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 1985)
 - 1 = Liberal
 - 2 = Moderate
 - 3 = Conservative
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused
- *Alternative question wording*: “Would you say your views in most political matters are very liberal, liberal, moderate, conservative, or very conservative—or don’t think of yourself in those terms?” (ABC/*Washington Post* October 1987)
 - 1 = Liberal (Including Very Liberal)
 - 2 = Moderate (Including Don’t Think in those Terms)
 - 3 = Conservative (Including Very Conservative)
 - . = Don’t Know; No Opinion; Refused
- *Alternative question wording*: “We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven’t you thought much about this?” (ANES 1990)
 - 1 = Liberal (Including Extremely Liberal, Liberal, and Slightly Liberal)
 - 2 = Moderate (Including Middle of the Road; Haven’t Thought Much)
 - 3 = Conservative (Including Very Conservative, Conservative, and Slightly Conservative)
 - . = Don’t Know; No Opinion; Refused
- *Availability*: 1947, 1948, 1950, 1970, 1972, 1974-2015
- *Number of surveys*: 457

prevvote: respondent’s vote in the previous election, coded based on the Comparative Manifesto Project’s party codes

- *Question wording*: (If voted in the previous election): “Which one did you vote for in the [year] presidential election?” (ANES 1990)
 - 61320 = Democratic Candidate
 - 61620 = Republican Candidate
 - 99999 = Other Candidate (Specific Candidate Mentioned, Voted but Won’t Say Whom, or “Other”)
 - . = Didn’t Vote; Wasn’t Eligible; Can’t Remember; Refused
- *Availability*: 1939-1942, 1944-1962, 1964-1970, 1972, 1976-2013
- *Number of surveys*: 350

voteint: vote intention at the next presidential election

- *Question wording*: “If the 2008 election for President were being held today, would you probably vote for the Republican candidate or would you probably vote for the Democratic candidate?” (CBS/*New York Times* March 2007)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which would you rather see as the next president—a Republican or a Democrat?” (Gallup January 1939)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which party would you live to win the Presidential election in 1940?” (Gallup April 1939)
- *Alternative question wording*: “If Roosevelt runs for President in 1944 on the Democratic ticket, against Willkie on the Republican ticket, which man would you favor?” (Gallup December 1942)
- *Alternative question wording*: “If the presidential election were being held today, which candidates would you vote for—Nixon and Lodge or Kennedy and Johnson?” (Gallup September 1960)
- *Alternative question wording*: “If the 1996 election were being held today, would you be inclined to vote for Clinton or the Republican nominee for president?” (ABC/*Washington Post* February 1994)
 - 61320 = Democratic Candidate (Undecided, Leans toward Democrat)
 - 61620 = Republican Candidate (Undecided, Leans toward Republican)
 - 99999 = Other Candidate (Specific Candidate Mentioned, Depends, or “Other”)
 - . = Won’t Vote; Not Eligible; Refused
- *Availability*: 1939, 1940, 1942, 1944-1954, 1956-1960, 1962, 1964-2012
- *Number of surveys*: 270

voteint_congress: vote intention at the next Congressional election

- *Question wording*: “If the elections for Congress were being held today, which party would you like to see win in this Congressional district, the Democratic party or the Republican party?” (Gallup January 1982)
- *Alternative question wording*: “If the election for US House of Representatives were held today, would you vote for the Democratic or Republican candidate in your congressional district?” (Associated Press October 2006)
 - 61320 = Democratic Party
 - 61620 = Republican Party
 - 99999 = Other Party (Specific Party Mentioned or “Other”)
 - . = Undecided; Won’t Vote; Not Eligible; Refused
- *Availability*: 1985, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2014

- *Number of surveys:* 53

interest: respondent's interest in politics

- *Question wording:* "Generally speaking, how interested are you in politics—a great deal, somewhat, or not at all?" (ANES 1960)

Yes = A great deal
 Not particularly = Somewhat
 Not at all = Not at all
 . = Don't Know; Not Applicable

- *Alternative question wording:* "Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?" (ANES 1982)

Yes = Most of the time
 Not particularly = Some of the time; Only now and then
 Not at all = Hardly at all
 . = Don't Know; Not Applicable

- *Availability:* 1950, 1960, 1966, 1970-1972, 1974, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2006, 2007

- *Number of surveys:* 28

attention: respondent's level of attention to political campaigns this year.

- *Question wording:* "Some people don't pay much attention to the political campaigns. How about you, would you say that you were very much interested, somewhat interested, or not interested in following the political campaigns this year?" (ANES 1960)

Yes = Very much interested
 Not particularly = Somewhat interested
 Not at all = Not much interested
 . = Don't Know; Not Applicable

- *Alternative question wording:* "Some people don't pay much attention to the political campaigns. How about you, were you very interested in the campaign, fairly interested, just slightly interested, or not interested at all in it?" (ANES 1964)

Yes = Very interested
 Not particularly = Fairly interested; Slightly interested
 Not at all = Not at all interested
 . = Don't Know; Not Applicable

- *Availability:* 1946, 1960, 1966, 1968, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986-1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998-2000, 2002-2004, 2006-2008, 2010-2014
- *Number of surveys:* 103

4.5 Economic Evaluations

These questions ask the respondent to evaluate various aspects of the economy (overall, unemployment, inflation) from a national and personal perspective, relative to previous conditions, and anticipating future conditions.

The major coding differences are not across sociotropic and egotropic, or retrospective and prospective, but across economic characteristics. For the traditional question addressing the state of the economy (or, equivalently, the respondent's "personal financial situation"), we code the following:

- 1 = Better (including Much Better)
- 2 = Stay the Same
- 3 = Worse (including Much Worse)
- . = Don't Know; Refused

For some cases (e.g., *Los Angeles Times* June 2006) respondents are asked to evaluate the state of the current economy instead of evaluating the change in economic conditions. For those questions, we code the following:

- Better = Fairly well; Very well
- Worse = Fairly badly; Very badly
- . = Not Sure; Refused

For other cases (e.g., *Los Angeles Times* June 2006) respondents are asked to evaluate the state of their personal finances instead of evaluating the change in personal finances. For those questions, we code the following:

- Better = Fairly secure; Very secure
- Worse = Fairly shaky; Very shaky
- . = Not Sure; Refused

For unemployment, we code the following:

- 1 = Lower (including Much Lower)
- 2 = Stay the Same
- 3 = Higher (including Much Higher)
- . = Don't Know; Refused

For inflation, we code the following:

- 1 = Lower (including Much Lower)
- 2 = Stay the Same
- 3 = Higher (including Much Higher)
- . = Don't Know; Refused

retnat: national retrospective economic evaluations.

- *Question wording*: "Would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?" (ANES 1982)

- *Alternative question wording*: “Generally speaking, do you think the nation’s economy these days is going very well, or fairly well, or fairly badly, or very badly?” (*Los Angeles Times* June 2006)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Would you say that at the present time business conditions are better or worse than they were a year ago?” (ANES 1976)
- *Availability*: 1972, 1976, 1977-2014
- *Number of surveys*: 247

retnat_inf: national retrospective inflation evaluations.

- *Question wording*: “Would you say that over the past year, inflation has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?” (ANES 1992)
- *Availability*: 1992
- *Number of surveys*: 1

retnat_unem: national retrospective unemployment evaluations.

- *Question wording*: “Would you say that over the past year, the level of unemployment in the country has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?” (ANES 1992)
- *Availability*: 1992, 1994
- *Number of surveys*: 2

retper: personal retrospective economic evaluations.

- *Question wording*: “Would you say that you are financially better off now than you were a year ago, or are you financially worse off now?” (Gallup June 2013)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Would you describe the state of your own personal finances these days as very secure, fairly secure, fairly shaky, or very shaky?” (*Los Angeles Times* June 2006)
- *Availability*: 1939, 1946, 1949, 1950, 1953, 1960, 1964, 1966, 1968-1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978-2015
- *Number of surveys*: 170

pronat: national prospective economic evaluations.

- *Question wording*: “What about the next 12 months or so? Do you expect the economy to get better, get worse, or stay about the same?” (ANES 1982)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Six months from now, do you expect the nation’s economy will be better than it is now, worse than it is now or about the same as it is now?” (*Los Angeles Times* June 2006)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you think that during the next 12 months we’ll have good times financially, or bad times, or what?” (ANES 1974)
 - Better = Good times; Good times (with qualifications)
 - Stay the Same = Stay the Same
 - Worse = Bad times; Bad times (with qualifications)
 - . = Don’t Know; Refused
- *Alternative question wording*: “And how about a year from now, do you expect that in the country as a whole business conditions will be better or worse than they are at present, or just about the same?” (ANES 1976)
- *Availability*: 1947, 1966, 1968, 1969, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984-1998, 2000, 2002, 2004-2012, 2014
- *Number of surveys*: 68

pronat_inf: prospective national inflation evaluations.

- *Question wording*: “Do you think that prices, in general, will be higher, lower, or about the same six months from now?” (Gallup June 1948).
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which of these do you think is likely to be true of [year]: a year of rising prices or a year of falling prices?” (Gallup November 1971).
 - 1 = Falling Prices
 - 3 = Rising Prices
 - . = Don’t Know; No Opinion; Refused
- *Alternative question wording*: “The inflation rate during 1981 was about 9%. By the end of 1982, what do you think the inflation rate will be?” (Gallup January 1982).
 - >=7% = Better
 - 8-10% = Same
 - 11->20% = Worse
 - . = Don’t Know; No Opinion; Refused
- *Availability*: 1948, 1950, 1955, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1961, 1966, 1968, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1982, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1994, 2004, 2005
- *Number of surveys*: 25

pronat_unem: prospective national unemployment evaluations.

- *Question wording*: “How about people out of work during the coming 12 months—Do you think there will be more unemployment than now, about the same, or less?” (ANES 1976)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which of these do you think is likely to be true of [year]: a year of full or increasing employment or a year of rising unemployment?” (Gallup November 1971).
 - 1 = Full or Increasing Employment
 - 3 = Rising Employment
 - . = Don’t Know; No Opinion; Refused
- *Alternative question wording*: “The current unemployment rate is now 8.4%. By the end of 1982, what do you think the unemployment rate will be?” (Gallup January 1982).
 - 4-6% = Better
 - 7-9% = Same
 - 10-13% = Worse
 - . = Don’t Know; No Opinion; Refused
- *Availability*: 1966, 1971, 1972, 1976, 1982, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1991-1994, 2004, 2005, 2013, 2014
- *Number of surveys*: 24

proper: prospective personal economic evaluations.

- *Question wording*: “Looking ahead, do you expect that at this time next year you will be financially better off than now, or worse off than now?” (Gallup June 2013)
- *Availability*: 1960, 1964, 1966, 1968-1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980-1982, 1984-1994, 1996, 1998-2001, 2005-2008, 2011-2015
- *Number of surveys*: 72

4.6 Approval Questions

4.6.1 General Coding Rules

These questions ask whether the respondent approves of the president's performance in office (as opposed to approving of a policy). The difference is clear by way of example: `approve_race` would include questions asking whether the respondent approves of the president's handling of race relations, but not approval of affirmative action policies.

The vast majority of questions merely asked for whether the respondent approved or disapproved of the president's handling of [policy or problem]. Some questions allowed the *strength* of approval. For all of the approval questions, we followed the following coding convention:

- 0 = Disapprove (including Strongly)
- 1 = Approve (including Strongly)
- . = Don't Know; Neither; Refused

For a few questions (e.g., ANES 1976), rather than asking if they approved of the government's handling of a situation, they asked the respondent to rate the performance. For example, "how about the government's economic policy dealing with unemployment—would you say the government has been doing a good job, only fair, or a poor job?" To convert these into appropriate approval responses, we used the following coding convention:

- Disapprove = Good job; only fair
- Approve = Poor job
- . = Don't Know; Neither; Refused

A couple of questions offered a third response to the approval question (e.g., ANES 1982). We used the following coding convention:

- 0 = Disapprove (including President has no control/responsibility)
- 1 = Approve
- . = Don't Know; Neither; Refused

Other questions (Associated Press April 2008) had a two-part question where respondents initially asked the traditional question about approval of a specific problem, but with a third response of "mixed feelings". A follow-up question asked those with "mixed feelings" to choose whether they leaned more toward approve or disapprove, and those who originally approved or disapproved were asked to denote their strength. We used the following coding convention for those cases:

- Disapprove = Lean toward disapproval; somewhat disapprove; strongly disapprove; still have mixed feelings
- Approve = Lean toward approval; somewhat approve; strongly approve
- . = Don't Know; Neither; Refused

4.6.2 Question Wording

approve: presidential approval

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling his job as president?”
- *Availability*: 1939, 1941, 1945-2015
- *Number of surveys*: 590

approve_Afghan: approval of president’s handling of Afghanistan

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation in Afghanistan?” (Gallup February 2010)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the military attacks led by the United States against targets in Afghanistan?” (CBS January 2002)
- *Availability*: 2002, 2009-2014
- *Number of surveys*: 24

approve_Bosnia: approval of president’s handling of Bosnia

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation in the former Yugoslavian republic of Bosnia?” (Gallup July 1994)
- *Availability*: 1994, 1996
- *Number of surveys*: 4

approve_CAmer: approval of president’s handling of the situation in Central America.

- *Question wording*: “As I read off each problem would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling that problem ... the situation in Central America?” (Gallup May 1985)
- *Availability*: 1983-1985, 1989, 1991
- *Number of surveys*: 7

approve_Cuba: approval of president’s handling of US foreign policy toward Cuba

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation involving the Cuban refugees?” (ABC September 1994)

- *Availability:* 1994
- *Number of surveys:* 2

approve_Gulf: approval of president's handling of US military involvement (or the President's handling of the situation) in the Gulf (Iraq, Kuwait) during the Gulf War.

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way that [president] is handling the situation in the Persian Gulf?" (ABC/*Washington Post* March 1991)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way that [president] is handling this current situation in the Middle East involving Iraq and Kuwait?" (Gallup January 1991)
- *Availability:* 1990, 1991
- *Number of surveys:* 6

approve_Haiti: approval of president's handling of US foreign policy toward Haiti

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation in Haiti?" (Gallup July 1994)
- *Availability:* 1993, 1994
- *Number of surveys:* 5

approve_Iran: approval of president's handling of US foreign policy toward Iran

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation in Iran?" (Gallup February 2010)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the crisis in Iran?" (Gallup March 1980)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation with Iran's nuclear weapons program?" (*Los Angeles Times* June 2006)
- *Availability:* 1980, 2005, 2012, 2013
- *Number of surveys:* 8

approve_Iraq: approval of president's handling of US foreign policy toward Iraq or military involvement in Iraq

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation in Iraq?” (Gallup February 2010)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the Iraq situation in the Mideast?” (*Los Angeles Times* December 1990)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the United States taking military action against Iraq to try to remove Saddam Hussein from power?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2003)
- *Alternative question wording*: “And when it comes to . . . the situation in Iraq, do you approve or disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way [president] is handling that issue?” (Associated Press April 2008)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation with Saddam Hussein in Iraq?” (*Los Angeles Times* January 2003)
- *Availability*: 1991, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2003-2011
- *Number of surveys*: 82

approve_Israel: approval of president’s handling of US foreign policy toward Israel

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling relations with Israel?” (CBS March 2013)
- *Availability*: 2013
- *Number of surveys*: 1

approve_Katrina: approval of president’s handling of Hurricane Katrina

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the response to Hurricane Katrina?” (CBS/*New York Times* September 2005)
- *Availability*: 2005
- *Number of surveys*: 4

approve_Korea: approval of president’s handling of the Korean peninsula crisis.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of President Truman’s decision to send US military aid to South Korea?” (Gallup July 1950)
- *Availability*: 1950

- *Number of surveys:* 1

approve_Kosovo: approval of president's handling of foreign policy toward Kosovo and the Kosovo conflict.

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation in Yugoslavia involving Serbia and Kosovo?" (CBS April 1999)
- *Availability:* 1999
- *Number of surveys:* 3

approve_Mideast: approval of president's handling of various situations involving the Middle East.

- *Question wording:* Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling ... the Middle East situation?" (Gallup October 1981)
- *Alternative question wording:* Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling ... the situation in the Middle East?" (Gallup March 1991)
- *Alternative question wording:* Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling ... the situation in the Middle East between the Israelis and Palestinians?" (Gallup August 2014)
- *Availability:* 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1991, 2014
- *Number of surveys:* 8

approve_NKorea: approval of president's handling of foreign policy toward North Korea.

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation in North Korea?" (Gallup July 1994)
- *Availability:* 1994, 2003, 2005, 2006
- *Number of surveys:* 6

approve_Russia: approval of president's handling of foreign policy toward Soviet Union/Russia.

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling relations with Russia?" (CBS/*New York Times* January 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the current situation in the Soviet Union?" (*Los Angeles Times* August 1991)

- *Alternative question wording:* “As I read off each problem would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling that problem . . . relations with the Soviet Union?” (Gallup May 1985)
- *Availability:* 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1994, 2014
- *Number of surveys:* 22

approve_Somalia: approval of president’s handling of foreign policy toward Somalia.

- *Question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation in Somalia?” (ABC/*Washington Post* November 1993)
- *Availability:* 1993
- *Number of surveys:* 1

approve_Syria: approval of president’s handling of foreign policy toward Syria.

- *Question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation in Syria?” (CBS/*New York Times* September 2013)
- *Availability:* 2013
- *Number of surveys:* 2

approve_Vietnam: approval of president’s handling of the Vietnam War (or engagement).

- *Question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is dealing with the situation in Vietnam?” (Gallup August 1965)
- *Availability:* 1965-1973
- *Number of surveys:* 21

approve_Yugo: approval of president’s handling of the foreign policy toward Yugoslavia.

- *Question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation involving the former Yugoslavian republics of Serbia and Bosnia?” (ABC/*Washington Post* February 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the situation in what used to be Yugoslavia?” (CBS/*New York Times* April 1994)
- *Availability:* 1994

- *Number of surveys:* 3

approve_budget: approval of president's handling of the budget.

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the balancing of the national budget?" (ANES 1982)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the federal budget?" (*Los Angeles Times* January 2003)
- *Availability:* 1982, 1984, 2003, 2011, 2012
- *Number of surveys:* 8

approve_controlspend: approval of president's handling of controlling spending.

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling . . . controlling federal spending?" (Gallup September 1993)
- *Availability:* 1993, 1995
- *Number of surveys:* 2

approve_crime: approval of president's handling of crime.

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the issue of crime in this country?" (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the problem of crime?" (CBS/*New York Times* January 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling . . . crime?" (Gallup March 1991)
- *Availability:* 1991, 1993-1996, 1999
- *Number of surveys:* 16

approve_defense: approval of president's handling of providing for a strong defense.

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling . . . national defense?" (Gallup October 1981)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the nation's defense?" (CBS/*New York Times* July 1977)

- *Availability*: 1977, 1981-1983, 1994, 2012
- *Number of surveys*: 9

approve_deficit: approval of president's handling of reducing the deficit.

- *Question wording*: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the federal budget deficit?" (Gallup February 2010)
- *Alternative question wording*: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling ... the federal government's budget deficit?" (Gallup February 1994)
- *Availability*: 1984-1987, 1989-1991, 1994-1996, 2010-2014
- *Number of surveys*: 29

approve_disarm: approval of president's handling of nuclear disarmament.

- *Question wording*: "As I read off each problem would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling that problem ... the nuclear disarmament negotiations with the Soviet Union?" (Gallup May 1985)
- *Alternative question wording*: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling nuclear arms control?" (ANES 1982)
- *Availability*: 1982, 1983, 1985-1987
- *Number of surveys*: 7

approve_domestic: approval of president's handling of domestic affairs/policy.

- *Question wording*: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling problems here at home?" (*Los Angeles Times* January 1992)
- *Alternative question wording*: "In general, do you approve or disapprove of the president's policies at home?" (Gallup November 1941)
- *Alternative question wording*: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling our domestic problems—that is, our problems here at home?" (Gallup September 1965)
- *Alternative question wording*: "And when it comes to ... domestic issues (such as health care, education, the environment and energy), do you approve or disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way [president] is handling that issue?" (Associated Press April 2008)
- *Availability*: 1941, 1965, 1980, 1981, 1991, 1992, 2006-2008

- *Number of surveys:* 14

approve_drug: approval of president's handling of drug policy.

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the illegal drug problem?" (ABC/*Washington Post* January 1990)
- *Alternative question wording:* "In general, do you approve or disapprove of [the president's] proposals for fighting the drug problem?" (CBS/*New York Times* September 1989)
- *Alternative question wording:* "As I read off each problem would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling that problem . . . the drug problem?" (Gallup November 1989)
- *Availability:* 1989-1991
- *Number of surveys:* 7

approve_economy: approval of president's handling of the economy.

- *Question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the economy?" (Gallup February 2010)
- *Alternative question wording:* "As I read off each problem would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling that problem . . . economic conditions in this country?" (Gallup May 1985)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling . . . economic conditions in this country?" (Gallup October 1981)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the nation's economy?" (ABC/*Washington Post* November 1993)
- *Alternative question wording:* "And when it comes to . . . the economy, do you approve or disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way [president] is handling that issue?" (Associated Press April 2008)
- *Alternative question wording:* "Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] has handled the economy during his four years in office." (Gallup January 1993)
- *Availability:* 1971, 1977, 1979-2015
- *Number of surveys:* 279

approve_education: approval of president's handling of education policy.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling education?” (Gallup February 2010)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling . . . education policy?” (Gallup March 1991)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] has handled education during his four years in office.” (Gallup January 1993)
- *Availability*: 1989, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2007, 2011-2014
- *Number of surveys*: 14

approve_energy: approval of president’s handling of energy policy.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling energy policy?” (Pew March 2012)
- *Alternative question wording*: Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling . . . the energy situation?” (Gallup October 1981)
- *Availability*: 1979-1981, 1983, 1991, 2003-2006, 2008, 2010-2014
- *Number of surveys*: 17

approve_environment: approval of president’s handling of the environment.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the environment?” (Gallup July 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the protection of the environment?” (ANES 1982)
- *Alternative question wording*: “As I read off each problem would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling that problem . . . environmental issues?” (Gallup November 1989)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] has handled the environment during his four years in office.” (Gallup January 1993)
- *Availability*: 1981-1984, 1989-1991, 1993, 1994, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2012, 2014
- *Number of surveys*: 23

approve_fp: approval of president’s handling of foreign policy/foreign affairs.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling foreign policy?” (CBS/*New York Times* April 2009)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling foreign affairs?” (Gallup February 2010)
- *Alternative question wording*: “As I read off each problem would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling that problem ... foreign policy?” (Gallup May 1985)
- *Alternative question wording*: “In general, do you approve or disapprove of [president’s] foreign policies?” (Gallup November 1941)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling our foreign policy—that is, our relations with other nations?” (Gallup September 1965)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] has handled foreign affairs during his four years in office.” (Gallup January 1993)
- *Availability*: 1939, 1941, 1965, 1979-2015
- *Number of surveys*: 232

approve_health: approval of president’s handling of health care/health policy.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling health care policy?” (Gallup February 2010)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the nation’s health care system?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling health care reform?” (CBS/*New York Times* September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling health care?” (CBS November 2013)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling ... the availability of health care?” (Gallup March 1991)
- *Availability*: 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2002-2005, 2008-2014
- *Number of surveys*: 56

approve_immigration: approval of president’s handling of immigration policy.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the issue of immigration?” (CBS March 2014)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling ... immigration?” (Gallup June 2013)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling ... the nation’s immigration policy?” (Pew December 2014)
- *Availability*: 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012-2014
- *Number of surveys*: 17

approve_inflation: approval of president’s handling of controlling inflation.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling ... inflation?” (Gallup October 1981)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Would you say the government has been doing a good job, only fair, or a poor job ... controlling inflation?” (ANES 1976)
- *Availability*: 1976, 1978, 1980-1983
- *Number of surveys*: 10

approve_jobs: approval of president’s handling of job creation.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling creating jobs?” (Gallup February 2012)
- *Availability*: 2011, 2012
- *Number of surveys*: 4

approve_medicare: approval of president’s handling of Medicare.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling Medicare?” (Gallup January 1996)
- *Availability*: 1996, 1999
- *Number of surveys*: 2

approve_poverty: approval of president’s handling of reducing poverty/homelessness.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling ... the problems of the poor?” (Gallup January 1994)

- *Alternative question wording:* “As I read off each problem would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling that problem . . . poverty and homelessness?” (Gallup November 1989)
- *Availability:* 1989, 1991, 1994, 1999
- *Number of surveys:* 4

approve_race: approval of president’s handling of issues of race/race policy.

- *Question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling race relations?” (Gallup July 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way [president] has handled race relations during his four years in office.” (Gallup January 1993)
- *Availability:* 1991, 1993, 1994, 1999, 2013, 2014
- *Number of surveys:* 8

approve_socsec: approval of president’s handling of Social Security.

- *Question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling Social Security?” (Pew May 2005)
- *Availability:* 1999, 2005
- *Number of surveys:* 3

approve_tax: approval of president’s handling of reducing taxes/tax policy.

- *Question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling taxes?” (Gallup July 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling . . . tax policy?” (Pew December 2014)
- *Availability:* 1985, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2010-2014
- *Number of surveys:* 15

approve_terror: approval of president’s handling of terrorism.

- *Question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling terrorism?” (Gallup February 2010)

- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the threat of terrorism?” (CBS March 2014)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the campaign against terrorism?” (CBS April 2005)
- *Alternative question wording*: “And when it comes to . . . the war on terrorism, do you approve or disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way [president] is handling that issue?” (Associated Press April 2008)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling the war on terrorism?” (*Los Angeles Times* June 2006)
- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling terrorist threats?” (Pew May 2005)
- *Availability*: 2010-2014
- *Number of surveys*: 82

approve_trade: approval of president’s handling of trade policy.

- *Question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling . . . foreign trade?” (Gallup September 1993)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling international trade issues?” (Pew July 2004)
- *Availability*: 1993, 1994, 2004, 2012
- *Number of surveys*: 4

approve_unemployment: approval of president’s handling of reducing unemployment.

- *Question wording*: Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling . . . unemployment?” (Gallup October 1981)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Now how about the government’s economic policy dealing with unemployment—would you say the government has been doing a good job, only fair, or a poor job?” (ANES 1976)
- *Availability*: 1976, 1978, 1980-1986
- *Number of surveys*: 13

approve_welfare: approval of president’s handling of welfare reform.

- *Question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling . . . the welfare system?” (Gallup January 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [president] is handling welfare?” (Gallup January 1996)
- *Availability:* 1994, 1996
- *Number of surveys:* 3

4.7 Party Competency

4.7.1 General Coding Rules

These questions ask the respondent to identify the best party at dealing with some particular issue or a broad policy domain. For all of the party competency questions, we used the following coding convention (party codes are based on the MARPOR):

- 61320 = Democrat Party
- 61620 = Republican Party
- 99999 = Other Party; Neither; Both
- . = Don't Know; Refused

In a few cases (e.g., Gallup September 1980), if the *party* competency question was not asked but a *leader* competency question was asked, we used the latter. The coding convention is similar:

- 61320 = Democratic Nominee
- 61620 = Republican Nominee
- 99999 = Other Party Nominee
- . = Undecided; Don't Know; Refused

Other cases (e.g., ABC December 2006) compared the president to those from the other major party in Congress. For example, “Who do you trust to do a better job handling [issue], President Bush or the Democrats in Congress?” We used the above coding conventions.

4.7.2 Question Wording

`mip_party`: party that can best handle the “most important problem” identified by the respondent.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party do you think can do a better job of handling the problem that you just mentioned—the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?” (Gallup April 1983)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Overall, which party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years?” (ABC/*Washington Post* March 1991)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Who do you trust to do a better job coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years?” (ABC December 2006)
- *Availability*: 1944-1948, 1950, 1952, 1955-1968, 1970-2000, 2002-2014
- *Number of surveys*: 232

`Afghan_party`: party that can best handle the war in Afghanistan.

- *Question wording:* “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . making wise decisions about what to do in Afghanistan?” (Pew August 2009)
- *Availability:* 2009
- *Number of surveys:* 1

Iran_party: party that can best handle the Iran situation.

- *Question wording:* “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . handling the Iranian situation?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Availability:* 1980
- *Number of surveys:* 1

Iraq_party: party that can best handle the war in Iraq.

- *Question wording:*
- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . making wise decisions about what to do in Iraq?” (Pew July 2004)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Who do you trust to do a better job handling . . . the situation in Iraq?” (ABC December 2006)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make the right decisions about the war in Iraq?” (CBS January 2006)
- *Availability:* 2004-2007
- *Number of surveys:* 19

Mideast_party: party that can best handle the situation in the Middle East.

- *Question wording:* “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . dealing with the Arab-Israeli situation?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording:* “In your opinion, which candidate will be best at . . . handling problems in the Middle East?” (*Los Angeles Times* October 1980)
- *Availability:* 1980

- *Number of surveys:* 2

Russia_party: party that can best handle Russia/Soviet Union.

- *Question wording:* “Which political party do you think can do a better job of dealing with the Soviet Union?” (Gallup September 1978)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . dealing with Russia?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording:* “In your opinion, which candidate will be best at . . . standing up to the Russians?” (*Los Angeles Times* October 1980)
- *Availability:* 1978, 1980
- *Number of surveys:* 3

Vietnam_party: party that can best handle the war in Vietnam.

- *Question wording:* “Which candidate do you think can do a better job of dealing with the Vietnam situation?” (Gallup September 1972)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which party do you think is more likely to do what you want [in Vietnam], the Democrats, the Republicans, or wouldn’t there be any difference between them?” (ANES 1966)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which political party do you think is better able to end the war in Vietnam?” (Gallup October 1967)
- *Availability:* 1966, 1967, 1970, 1972
- *Number of surveys:* 5

budget_party: party that can best handle balancing the budget.

- *Question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make the right decisions about balancing the federal budget?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2002)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Sometimes one man does a better job of handling certain problems than another man. Do you think [candidate] or [candidate] would do a better job of . . . balancing the budget?” (NORC October 1944)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to create a budget that is fair to all people?” (*New York Times* December 1985)

- *Availability:* 1944, 1985, 2002, 2007, 2011
- *Number of surveys:* 6

business_party: party that can best handle helping business.

- *Question wording:* “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems best . . . keeping business profits high?” (Gallup June 1952)
- *Alternative question wording:* “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems better . . . encouraging new businesses to start up?” (Gallup March 1947)
- *Availability:* 1947, 1952
- *Number of surveys:* 2

civilrights_party: party that can best handle civil rights.

- *Question wording:* “Looking ahead for the next few years, which political party do you think will do the best job of . . . seeing that everyone—Negroes and others—have equal rights?” (Gallup march 1956)
- *Availability:* 1956, 1957
- *Number of surveys:* 2

corrupted_party: party that can best handle corruption.

- *Question wording:* “Who do you trust to do a better job of handling . . . political corruption?” (Associated Press October 2006)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party has higher ethical standards?” (CBS January 2006)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party comes closer to sharing your moral values?” (CBS/*New York Times* May 2006)
- *Availability:* 2006
- *Number of surveys:* 4

crime_party: party that can best handle crime.

- *Question wording:* “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [handling the crime problem]?” (ABC September 1994)

- *Alternative question wording*: “Which candidate do you think can do a better job of dealing with the problem of crime and lawlessness?” (Gallup September 1972)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which [party] do you think would do a better job of . . . dealing with the crime problem?” (ANES 1996)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which candidate do you think would do a better job on each of the following issues . . . crime?” (Time March 2000)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to reduce crime?” (CBS/*New York Times* August 1995)
- *Availability*: 1970, 1972, 1988, 1990-1992, 1994-1996, 1998, 2000
- *Number of surveys*: 14

crisis_party: party that can best handle crisis.

- *Question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party would do a better job of handling a national security crisis?” (CBS April 2006)
- *Availability*: 2006
- *Number of surveys*: 1

defense_party: party that can best handle providing a strong defense.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [maintaining a strong national defense]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . strengthening national defense?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely sure the US military defenses are strong?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2002)
- *Availability*: 1980, 1985, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1994, 2002, 2003
- *Number of surveys*: 14

deficit_party: party that can best handle reducing the deficit.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [reducing federal budget deficit]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which political party can do a better job of reducing federal spending?” (Gallup September 1978)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which [party] do you think would do a better job of . . . handling the budget deficit?” (ANES 1996)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . reducing the federal budget deficit?” (Pew August 2009)
- *Availability*: 1978, 1985, 1990, 1991, 1994-1996, 2009, 2010, 2012
- *Number of surveys*: 13

domestic_party: party that can best handle domestic policy/affairs.

- *Question wording*: “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . domestic affairs?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Availability*: 1980
- *Number of surveys*: 1

drugs_party: party that can best handle drug policy.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job [reducing the problem of illegal drugs]?” (ABC/*Washington Post* March 1991)
- *Availability*: 1990, 1991, 1996
- *Number of surveys*: 3

economy_party: party that can best handle economic policy.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [handling the nation’s economy]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . dealing with the economy?” (Pew July 2004)

- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems ...improving the economy?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Who do you trust to do a better job handling ... the economy?” (ABC December 2006)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party of the Democratic party is more likely to ensure a strong economy?” (CBS/*New York Times* December 2007)
- *Availability:* 1953, 1960, 1980, 1984, 1985, 1990-1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007
- *Number of surveys:* 22

education_party: party that can best handle education policy.

- *Question wording:* “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [improving education and the schools]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which presidential candidate do you think would do a better job at ...improving public education?” (ANES 1996)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which candidate do you think would do a better job on each of the following issues ... education?” (Time March 2000)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to improve education?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2002)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas ... improving the educational system?” (Pew July 2004)
- *Availability:* 1990-1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2002-2004, 2006, 2009, 2010
- *Number of surveys:* 15

energy_party: party that can best handle energy policy.

- *Question wording:* “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas ... dealing with the nation’s energy problems?” (Pew August 2009)

- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . improving the energy situation?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Availability*: 1980, 2009, 2010, 2012
- *Number of surveys*: 4

environment_party: party that can best handle environmental party.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job [protecting the environment]?” (ABC/*Washington Post* March 1991)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to protect the environment?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2002)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . protecting the environment?” (Pew July 2004)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . improving the environment and dealing with environmental issues?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which party do you think would do a better job . . . handling the problem of pollution and protecting the environment?” (ANES 1990)
- *Availability*: 1980, 1990-1991, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2002-2004
- *Number of surveys*: 13

farm_party: party that can best handle agricultural policy/farm support.

- *Question wording*: “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems best . . . keeping farmers’ income high?” (Gallup June 1952)
- *Alternative question wording*: “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems better . . . keeping farmers’ income high?” (Gallup March 1947)
- *Availability*: 1947, 1948, 1952, 1956, 1957
- *Number of surveys*: 5

fp_party: party that can best handle foreign policy/affairs.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [handling foreign affairs]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems better . . . dealing with world affairs?” (Gallup March 1947)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . making wise decisions about foreign policy?” (Pew July 2004)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . foreign relations?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which party do you think would do a better job . . . handling foreign affairs?” (ANES 1990)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which candidate do you think would do a better job on each of the following issues . . . foreign policy?” (Time March 2000)
- *Availability*: 1947, 1948, 1956, 1960, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1990-1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2009
- *Number of surveys*: 21

govtspending_party: party that can best handle spending policy.

- *Question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make the right decisions about how the government should spend taxpayers’ money?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2002)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . spending taxpayers’ money wisely?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Availability*: 1980, 2002
- *Number of surveys*: 2

guncontrol_party: party that can best handle gun control.

- *Question wording*: “Please tell me if you think the Republican party or the Democratic party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . reflecting your views about gun control?” (Pew July 2004)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which candidate do you think would do a better job on each of the following issues . . . guns?” (Time March 2000)

- *Availability:* 2000, 2004
- *Number of surveys:* 2

health_party: party that can best handle health care.

- *Question wording:* “Which candidate do you think would do a better job on each of the following issues . . . health care?” (Time March 2000)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [providing affordable health care]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to improve the health care system?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2002)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . reforming the US health care system?” (Pew July 2004)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Who do you trust to do a better job handling . . . health care?” (ABC December 2006)
- *Availability:* 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2002-2004, 2006, 2009-2012
- *Number of surveys:* 19

immigration_party: party that can best handle immigration policy.

- *Question wording:* “Do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make the right decisions when it comes to dealing with immigration issues?” (CBS April 2006)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . dealing with immigration?” (Pew August 2009)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Who do you trust to do a better job handling . . . immigration issues?” (ABC December 2006)
- *Availability:* 2006, 2007, 2009
- *Number of surveys:* 8

inflation_party: party that can best control inflation.

- *Question wording*: “Do you think inflation would be handled better by the Democrats, by the Republicans, or about the same by both?” (ANES 1982)
- *Alternative question wording*: “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems best . . . reducing the cost of living?” (Gallup June 1952)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job [controlling inflation]?” (ABC/*Washington Post* March 1991)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Do you think inflation would be handled better by the Democrats, by the Republicans, or about the same by both?” (ANES 1976)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . reducing inflation?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording*: “In your opinion, which candidate will be best at . . . stopping inflation?” (*Los Angeles Times* October 1980)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which political party do you think is more likely to keep prices down?” (Gallup October 1967)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which candidate do you think can do a better job of dealing with inflation and the high cost of living?” (Gallup September 1972)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to see to it that gasoline prices are low?” (CBS/*New York Times* May 2006)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Who do you trust to do a better job of handling . . . gas prices?” (Associated Press October 2006)
- *Availability*: 1952, 1953, 1958, 1959, 1966-1968, 1970-1972, 1976, 1978, 1980-1982, 1985, 1990, 1991, 2006
- *Number of surveys*: 26

jobs_party: party that can best handle the creation of jobs.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [creating jobs]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Sometimes one man does a better job of handling certain problems than another man. Do you think [candidate] or [candidate] would do a better job of . . . providing jobs after the war?” (NORC October 1944)

- *Alternative question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to create new jobs?” (CBS/*New York Times* May 2003)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which party could do a better job of . . . improving the job situation?” (Pew March 2012)
- *Availability:* 1944, 1991, 1992, 1994, 2003, 2009-2012
- *Number of surveys:* 11

labor_party: party that can best handle labor issues.

- *Question wording:* “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems best . . . reducing strikes and labor troubles?” (Gallup June 1952)
- *Alternative question wording:* “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems better . . . reducing strikes and labor trouble?” (Gallup March 1947)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Sometimes one man does a better job of handling certain problems than another man. Do you think [candidate] or [candidate] would do a better job of . . . getting business and labor to work together better?” (NORC October 1944)
- *Availability:* 1944, 1947, 1948, 1952
- *Number of surveys:* 4

liberty_party: party that can best protect civil liberties.

- *Question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to protect your civil liberties?” (CBS/*New York Times* May 2006)
- *Availability:* 2006
- *Number of surveys:* 1

medicare_party: party that can best protect Medicare.

- *Question wording:* “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [protecting the Medicare system]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which candidate do you think would do a better job on each of the following issues . . . Medicare?” (Time March 2000)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which party could do a better job of . . . dealing with the Medicare system?” (Pew March 2012)

- *Availability:* 1994, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2012
- *Number of surveys:* 5

middle_party: party that can best help the middle class.

- *Question wording:* “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job [helping the middle class]?” (ABC/*Washington Post* March 1991)
- *Availability:* 1991, 1994
- *Number of surveys:* 2

morals_party: party that has the best morals.

- *Question wording:* “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [encouraging high moral standards and values]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party has higher ethical standards?” (CBS/*New York Times* August 1998)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . improving morality in this country?” (Pew July 2004)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . building trust in government?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Who do you trust to do a better job handling . . . ethics in government?” (ABC December 2006)
- *Alternative question wording:* “In your opinion, which candidate will be best at . . . restoring moral values?” (*Los Angeles Times* October 1980)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans do you trust to do a better job on . . . encouraging high moral standards and values?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Availability:* 1980, 1988, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2004, 2006
- *Number of surveys:* 10

peace_party: party that can best deliver peace.

- *Question wording*: “Looking ahead, do you think the problem of keeping out of war would be handled better in the next four years by the Republicans, or by the Democrats, or about the same by both?” (ANES 1982)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Sometimes one man does a better job of handling certain problems than another man. Do you think [candidate] or [candidate] would do a better job of . . . working with other countries to make a lasting peace?” (NORC October 1944)
- *Alternative question wording*: “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems better . . . working out a lasting peace with other countries?” (Gallup March 1947)
- *Question wording*: “Looking ahead for the next few years, which political party do you think will do the best job of . . . keeping us out of war?” (Gallup march 1956)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Looking ahead, do you think the problem of keeping US out of a bigger war would be handled better in the next four years by the Democrats, by the Republicans, or about the same by both?” (ANES 1972)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [keeping the United States out of war]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which political party do you think would be more likely to keep the United States out of World War III—the Republican party or the Democratic Party?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which [party] do you think would do a better job of . . . keeping US out of war?” (ANES 1996)
- *Availability*: 1944, 1947, 1956-1962, 1964-1966, 1968, 1970-1972, 1974, 1978, 1980-1982, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1989-1991, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006
- *Number of surveys*: 55

poverty_party: party that can best reduce poverty.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [helping the poor]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Regardless of how you vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is . . . more likely to help poor people?” (CBS/*New York Times* April 1981)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job [handling the homeless problem]?” (ABC/*Washington Post* March 1991)

- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . helping the poor and needy?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which [party] do you think would do a better job of . . . handling the problem of poverty?” (ANES 1996)
- *Availability:* 1980, 1981, 1990-1992, 1994, 1996
- *Number of surveys:* 7

prosperity_party: party that can best produce economic prosperity.

- *Question wording:*
- *Alternative question wording:* “Looking ahead for the next few years, which political party do you think will do the best job of . . . keeping America prosperous?” (Gallup march 1956)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Looking ahead the next few years, which political party—the Republican or the Democratic—do you think will do a better job of keeping the country prosperous?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Which candidate do you think would do a better job on each of the following issues . . . maintaining economic prosperity?” (Time March 2000)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make sure the country is prosperous?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2002)
- *Availability:* 1952, 1956-1958, 1960-1962, 1964-1966, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1978, 1980-1982, 1984, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005-2007, 2009-2011
- *Number of surveys:* 59

race_party: party that can best handle race relations.

- *Question wording:*
- *Alternative question wording:* “Sometimes one man does a better job of handling certain problems than another man. Do you think [candidate] or [candidate] would do a better job of . . . settling race problems?” (NORC October 1944)
- *Alternative question wording:* “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . dealing with racial problems?” (Gallup September 1980)

- *Alternative question wording*: “Which [party] do you think would do a better job of . . . improve race relations?” (ANES 1996)
- *Availability*: 1944, 1956, 1964, 1971, 1980, 1996, 2000
- *Number of surveys*: 7

socsec_party: party that can best protect Social Security.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job [protecting the social security system]?” (ABC/*Washington Post* March 1991)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which candidate do you think would do a better job on each of the following issues . . . Social Security?” (Time March 2000)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make the right decisions about Social Security?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2002)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Who do you trust to do a better job of handling . . . Social Security?” (Associated Press October 2006)
- *Availability*: 1990, 1991, 1998, 2000, 2006
- *Number of surveys*: 5

taxes_party: party that can best handle tax policy.

- *Question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job on [holding taxes down]?” (ABC September 1994)
- *Alternative question wording*: “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems better . . . keeping taxes from getting too high?” (Gallup March 1947)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which political party do you trust to do a better job . . . holding taxes down?” (ABC/*Washington Post* January 1990)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which candidate do you think would do a better job on each of the following issues . . . taxes?” (Time March 2000)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make sure the tax system is fair?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2002)

- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . dealing with taxes?” (Pew August 2009)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Who do you trust to do a better job of handling . . . taxes?” (Associated Press October 2006)
- *Availability*: 1947, 1953, 1956, 1978, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2009
- *Number of surveys*: 17

terror_party: party that can best combat terrorism.

- *Question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make the right decisions when it comes to dealing with terrorism?” (CBS/*New York Times* January 2002)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job in each of the following areas . . . dealing with the terrorist threat at home?” (Pew July 2004)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Who do you trust to do a better job handling . . . the US campaign against terrorism?” (ABC December 2006)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which party do you think can do a better job of handling national security and the war on terrorism?” (*Los Angeles Times* June 2006)
- *Availability*: 2002-2007, 2009, 2010
- *Number of surveys*: 24

trade_party: party that can best reduce the trade deficit.

- *Question wording*: “Regardless of how you vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is better able to handle foreign trade problems?” (*New York Times* December 1985)
- *Availability*: 1985
- *Number of surveys*: 1

unemployment_party: party that can best reduce unemployment.

- *Question wording*: “Do you think the problems of unemployment would be handled better by the Democrats, by the Republicans, or about the same by both?” (ANES 1982)

- *Alternative question wording*: “Which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you trust to do a better job [keeping unemployment down]?” (ABC/*Washington Post* March 1991)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Please tell me which [candidate] you, yourself, feel would do a better job of handling each of the following problems . . . reducing unemployment?” (Gallup September 1980)
- *Alternative question wording*: “In your opinion, which candidate will be best at . . . decreasing unemployment?” (*Los Angeles Times* October 1980)
- *Availability*: 1976, 1978, 1980-1982, 1985, 1990, 1991, 1996
- *Number of surveys*: 12

values_party: party that has the best values.

- *Question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is better at upholding traditional family values?” (CBS/*New York Times* August 1998)
- *Availability*: 1980, 1996, 1998
- *Number of surveys*: 3

wages_party: party that can best increase wages.

- *Question wording*: “As you feel today, which political party can handle each of these problems better . . . keeping wages high?” (Gallup March 1947)
- *Availability*: 1947, 1952, 1953
- *Number of surveys*: 3

war_party: party that can best handle the war effort.

- *Question wording*: “Sometimes one man does a better job of handling certain problems than another man. Do you think [candidate] or [candidate] would do a better job of . . . winning the war?” (NORC October 1944)
- *Availability*: 1944
- *Number of surveys*: 1

welfarereform_party: party that can best handle welfare reform.

- *Question wording*: “Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to reform the welfare system?” (CBS/*New York Times* August 1995)
- *Alternative question wording*: “Which [party] do you think would do a better job of . . . reforming the welfare system?” (ANES 1996)
- *Availability*: 1995, 1996
- *Number of surveys*: 2