



Order Effects and Context Effects in Perspectives of Health Care Reform Polling

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Research Objective

- Describe the findings from a retrospective question order experiment.
- Consider theoretical explanations and possible remedies

Introduction-Previous Findings

- Question order effects discovered early and often
 - 1939 Radio advertising (Sayre)
 - when probed for WTP for no commercials first, believed they heard fewer minutes of commercials on radio
 - 1950 Communist journalist (Hyman and Sheatsley)
 - when asked about American journalists allowed in communist areas first, support communist journalist in US.
 - 1992 Party identification (Heath and Pierce)
 - when party asked first, more discrepancy with electoral choice
 - 2010 Interracial prejudice (Wilson)
 - when in-group asked first, greater prejudice of out-group

Study Design

- Series of questions added to an ongoing survey
 - Surveys of Consumers
 - University of Michigan Survey Research Center
 - ~500 respondent/month
 - Stratified, one-stage, equal probability, list assisted

Study Design

- 2 split ballot experiments (Full factorial)
 - Reference Order (self vs. country)
 - Issue Order (access to health care, finances)
- Subjects randomized into 4 arms (n=3,521)
 - Self first, access first (n=875)
 - Self first, finance first (n=866)
 - Country first, access first (n=899)
 - Country first, finance first (n=881)
- Panel surveyed again 6 months later (n=202)
 - Self first, country first (n=53)
 - Country first, self first (n=56)

Study Design-Questions

- 1) If health care reform is passed, do you think the **country as a whole** would have better **access** to health care coverage, worse access to health care coverage, or just the same as now?
- 2) If health care reform is passed, do you think **you (and your family living there)** would have better **access** to health care coverage, worse access to health care coverage, or just the same as now?
- 3) If health care reform is passed, do you think the **country as a whole** would be better off **financially**, worse off financially, or just the same as now?
- 4) If health care reform is passed, do you think the **you (and your family living there)** would be better off **financially**, worse off financially, or just the same as now?

Results-Question Distribution

(Percent of Col)	<u>Access Question</u>	<u>Finance Question</u>
<u>Impact on Self</u>		
Better	15.7	11.8
Same	55.5	59.7
Worse	28.8	28.5
<u>Impact on Country</u>		
Better	41.5	27.7
Same	27.9	30.2
Worse	30.7	42.0

Results-Reference Order

(Percent of Col)	Access Question		Finance Question	
	Self First	Country First	Self First	Country First
<u>Impact on Self</u>				
Better	14.8	16.5	12.4	11.2
Same	56.0	55.1	58.0	61.4
Worse	29.2	28.4	29.6	27.4
<u>Impact on Country</u>				
Better	44.1	↔ 38.9	31.2	↔ 24.4
Same	24.7	↔ 31.0	24.8	↔ 35.6
Worse	31.2	30.2	44.1	40.0

Results-Reference Order Age and Education

Outcome: 1=More beneficial response for country	Access		Finance	
	<i>B</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Self First	0.500**	1.65**	0.277	1.32
Age 35-49	0.054	1.06	0.094	1.10
Age 50-64	0.093	1.10	0.135	1.14
Age 65+	0.243	1.28	0.256	1.29
Some College	0.091	1.10	0.024	1.02
College Degree	0.414***	1.51***	0.322**	1.38**
Graduate Studies	0.715***	2.04***	0.362**	1.44**
Self First & 35-49	-0.16	0.85	-0.02	0.98
Self First & 50-64	0.022	1.02	-0.143	0.87
Self First & 65+	-0.511**	0.60**	-0.117	0.89
Self First & Some College	-0.197	0.82	-0.204	0.82
Self First & College Degree	-0.048	0.95	0.071	1.07
Self First & Graduate Studies	0.132	1.14	0.201	1.22

note: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Results- Issue Order

(Percent of Col)	Access Question		Finance Question	
	Access First	Finance First	Access First	Finance First
<u>Impact on Self</u>				
Better	16.5	14.8	12.0	11.6
Same	55.9	55.2	60.7	58.7
Worse	27.6	30.0	27.3	29.7
<u>Impact on Country</u>				
Better	42.7	40.2	29.0	26.4
Same	27.2	28.5	29.3	31.2
Worse	30.1	31.3	41.7	42.4

Results: Panel Reference Order

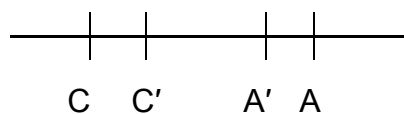
(Percent of Col)	Access Question		Finance Question	
	Self First n=56	Country First n=53	Self First n=56	Country First n=53
<u>Impact on Self</u>				
Better	19.6	22.5	11.2	13.2
Same	51.3	50.6	65.9	62.1
Worse	29.2	26.9	22.9	24.7
<u>Impact on Country</u>				
Better	51.0	38.3	43.2	23.0
Same	20.6	30.8	16.7	36.5
Worse	28.3	30.9	40.0	40.5

Discussion- Theoretical explanations

- Theoretical explanations of question order effects
 - Social Psychology:
 - Contrast and Assimilation (Schwartz)
 - Norm of even-handedness (Schuman and Ludwig)
 - Part-whole (Schuman and Presser)
 - Response formation (Tourangeau)
 - Backfire/Carryover Effects (Martin)
 - Political Science/Economics:
 - Opposing considerations (Zaller and Feldman)
 - Non-separable preferences (Lacy)

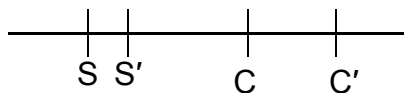
Discussion- Theoretical explanations

- Communist Journalist Results



Increase in C, toward A
Assimilation, Carryover, Norm
of even-handedness

- Self Country Results



Increase in C, away from S
Contrast, Backfire

Discussion-Summary

- Reference order effect present in data
 - shifted “better” responses
 - Cross section (7 points for access, 4 points for finance)
 - Panel (12 points for access, 20 points for finance)
- Issue order effect not observed for access or finance
- Theoretical explanation
 - norm of even-handedness has intuitive appeal but does not strictly explain the effect. Backfire effect is more plausible.
- Mitigating the effect?
 - It may make sense to preface a question set with what is to come. (Willits and Ke)
 - Not tested here.
 - Difficult to apply and compare

Contact Information

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State Health Access Data Assistance Center
Health insurance coverage estimates are a click away at
www.shadac.org/datacenter