

# ATTACHMENT 10—JUSTIFICATION FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION QUESTIONS

## ***Introduction***

The questions listed below are to be included in the upcoming NLSY79 and YA studies.

The costs of including these questions will be paid for by the National Science Foundation via a grant to the University of Michigan supporting the American National Election Study. BLS is pleased to collaborate with ANES on this joint enterprise, to maximize efficiency and minimize costs.

The history of this collaboration is as follows:

- NSF funded the American National Election Study (ANES) as an extramural grant and explicitly encouraged grantees to propose collaborations with Federal agencies (BLS was specifically mentioned) as part of their applications in order to include questions about political participation on a large-scale federally funded long-term panel study.
- The University of Michigan and Stanford University jointly won the competition for the ANES and have partnered with BLS to sponsor the inclusion of this module on political participation on the upcoming round of the NLSY 1979 collection.
- BLS is proposing to include the political participation module in this round of the NLSY 1979 because of the scientific merit of the ANES proposal and the public good of including this information in the rich dataset of the NLSY; BLS has no intended use of this information.

By including these questions on the NLSY79 and YA surveys, a large community of social scientists studying voting and elections will acquire not only measurements of these variables on large and nationally representative samples of specific cohorts but will also be able to conduct statistical analyses relating those variables to the huge set of demographic, economic, and other variables measured in those surveys during this interview, prior interviews, and subsequent interviews. Likewise, researchers who are primarily interested in economic or demographic subjects will be able to see how political participation affects individuals' activities in these other spheres. The scholarly payoff will be tremendous.

This collaborative venture is cost-saving, because it allows NSF-funded investigators to acquire these data for the scholarly community by paying only the marginal costs of adding a relatively small set of questions to an existing survey, rather than having to mount an equivalent, new stand-alone survey at a startlingly higher total cost.

## ***Relation to NSF's Mission***

The funding of the ANES-BLS partnership was provided by NSF for reasons derived from NSF's core mission.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense..." NSF is the funding source for approximately 20 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America's colleges and universities. In many fields such as mathematics, computer science and the social sciences, NSF is the major source of federal backing.

NSF fulfills its mission chiefly by issuing limited-term grants -- currently about 10,000 new awards per year, with an average duration of three years -- to fund specific research proposals that have been judged the most promising by a rigorous and objective merit-review system. Most of these awards go to

individuals or small groups of investigators. Others provide funding for research centers, instruments, facilities, and large dataset that allow scientists, engineers and students to work at the outermost frontiers of knowledge. NSF's goals--discovery, learning, research infrastructure and stewardship--provide an integrated strategy to advance the frontiers of knowledge, cultivate a world-class, broadly inclusive science and engineering workforce and expand the scientific literacy of all citizens, build the nation's research capability through investments in advanced instrumentation and facilities, and support excellence in science and engineering research and education through a capable and responsive organization. NSF is "where discoveries begin."

NSF's specific goals include:

**A.** Initiate and support, through grants and contracts, scientific and engineering research and programs to strengthen scientific and engineering research potential, and education programs at all levels, and appraise the impact of research upon industrial development and the general welfare.

**B.** Foster the interchange of scientific information among scientists and engineers in the United States and foreign countries.

**C.** Initiate and support scientific and engineering research, including applied research, at academic and other nonprofit institutions and, support applied research at other organizations.

NSF is the only federal agency whose mission includes support for all fields of fundamental science and engineering, except for medical sciences. NSF is tasked with keeping the United States at the leading edge of discovery in a wide range of scientific areas. So, in addition to funding research in the traditional academic areas, the agency also supports "high risk, high pay off" ideas, novel collaborations. And in every case, NSF ensures that research is fully integrated with education so that today's revolutionary work will also be training tomorrow's top scientists and engineers.

Unlike many other federal agencies, NSF does not hire researchers or directly operate their own laboratories or similar facilities. Instead, NSF supports scientists, engineers and educators directly through their own home institutions (typically universities and colleges). Similarly, NSF funds facilities and equipment such as telescopes, through cooperative agreements with research consortia that have competed successfully for limited-term management contracts.

The partnership of ANES with the NLSY and YA surveys fits naturally within this mission. Funding provided by NSF to add questions on civic attitudes and behaviors will help scholars to conduct innovative theory-driven research to develop and refine basic theories of human cognition and behavior, as well as applied accounts seeking to describe and explain interactions of the nation's populace with its government and with each other.

Specifically, the research proposed here is meant to equip social scientists to be able to use well-established tools to gain insight into citizens' thinking and action in the context of U.S. national elections. All of the variables to be measured have long track records in political science and related social sciences. And these variables will allow scholars to test important hypotheses about the causal processes and patterns of action likely to occur.

### ***This Document***

The remainder of this document describes the questions that the American National Election Studies (ANES) would like to place on the next rounds of the NLSY79 and YA studies. We appreciate very much the opportunity to propose these questions to you and to explain the rationales for them.

The remainder of this memo is divided into four sections. We begin by explaining a bit about the history and goals of the ANES, so you know about the "collective good" research program that the new questions would feed. Second, we describe the process by which we selected the items we propose to be included in

your surveys. Third, we provide reassuring information about the respondent burden imposed by the questions we propose – after decades of asking these sorts of questions, we have found that respondents readily answer them. Lastly, we provide specific justifications for each of the questions we propose.

We hope this information is helpful to you as you consider these questions for inclusion in the upcoming NLSY79 and YA surveys. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information.

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## **About the ANES**

Since 1948, the American National Election Studies (ANES) surveys have been conducted every two years to help scholars around the world understand American election outcomes by providing data that permit rich hypothesis testing using a wide array of variables while maximizing methodological excellence and permitting comparisons across people, contexts, and time. The ANES provides researchers with a view of the political world through the eyes of citizens to help us understand the forces that shape their actions, which in turn determine election outcomes and governance of the nation.

ANES conducts national surveys of the American electorate in national election years, and during the other years ANES carries out R&D work through pilot studies that produce and validate new questions, which are then used in subsequent election year surveys. The longevity of the ANES time-series enhances the utility of the data, because measurements can be pooled over time, allowing illumination of long-term trends and the political impact of historic events.

All ANES questionnaires and the resulting public datasets are made available free of charge and without restriction or embargo from the ANES website ([www.electionstudies.org](http://www.electionstudies.org)) to any interested scholars. The ANES Bibliography documents over 5,000 citations resulting from the use of ANES data: [http://www.electionstudies.org/resources/biblio/anes\\_bib.pdf](http://www.electionstudies.org/resources/biblio/anes_bib.pdf)

The questions proposed here, and the entire ANES enterprise, are designed to help Americans to better understand the functioning of their nation and the relation of its citizenry to their government. In a sense, one can think of these questions as a survey of government's "customers," very much in keeping with many federal surveys conducted over the years to gauge public evaluations of federal services provided by the Internal Revenue Service, the Veteran's Administration, and many other agencies. By helping government (and scholars around the world) to understand how American citizens react to political events and evaluate government options, these surveys allow government agencies to be better informed about how to make and implement policy and how to design elections and educational efforts to educate citizens about government activities.

## **Development of the NLS Questionnaires**

Like all other ANES questions, the questions we propose for inclusion in upcoming NLS surveys are the result of an extensive and conscientious peer review process.

The proposed NLS questions were selected in response to feedback received from a large group of scholars who responses to our calls for feedback. These calls were distributed broadly to various communities of scholars during the fall of 2005 and 2006. We received detailed advice and justifications from more than 100 scholars representing over 55 universities and other organizations. The questions that scholars suggested totaled well over 400 minutes of interview time. To develop the final list, we spent many hours reading every e-mail, following up to learn more about issues raised, consulting ancillary materials, and more. Our goal was to select questions that had broad support among the community of scholars, solid theoretical and empirical justifications, and fit the opportunity to facilitate intergenerational and

longitudinal dynamics of electorally relevant phenomena. The questions that we selected address political parties, voter turnout on Election Day, other forms of behavioral participation in politics, and variables that may be useful in explaining turnout and participation. We considered many questions that, in the end, we could not include. Although we looked for consensus among scholars with many interests, we were particularly swayed by arguments based on hard evidence – such as results from previous surveys or strong theory – documenting the value of a proposed question.

Most of the questions that were proposed to us for inclusion in the NLS surveys were drawn from questionnaires that have been used in prior ANES surveys. All previous ANES questions were themselves the product of calls for feedback to the ANES user community and have undergone extensive theoretical and empirical review. The planning and execution of each ANES study takes place during two years prior to conducting the field work and is a collaborative effort involving the Principal Investigators, the ANES Board of Overseers, and the research community. The ANES Board of Overseers is an advisory committee comprised of prominent scholars from across the United States. They come from various disciplines, though a plurality is political scientists. The current membership can be viewed here: [http://www.electionstudies.org/overview/anes\\_board.htm](http://www.electionstudies.org/overview/anes_board.htm)

### **Respondent Burden**

For the lengthy, high response rate surveys ANES conducts, each respondent is interviewed twice during an election period – once before the election and once afterwards. Interview lengths have varied from year to year, with anywhere from 30 to 180 minutes of questions asked of each respondent. Respondent break-offs (partial interviews) are very rare.

We are not aware of any evidence that respondents in past ANES surveys have found any of the proposed NLS questions to be offensive or distasteful. Our interviewers are trained to record such comments about the respondent experience. Respondents have been given information for contacting IRB representatives if they have concerns about our surveys. The IRB reports back to us about such instances, and we are not aware of any IRB reports about concerns regarding the NLS questions we are suggesting.

## Questions for the NLSY79 Main Youth Survey and Young Adult Survey (Ages 15-20)

The questions we propose for the upcoming NLSY79 main youth survey and for age-appropriate respondents in the NLSY79 Young Adult (ages 15-20) survey are a subset of those that were included in the questionnaire for the grant-funded sample in the most recent YA survey. To maximize comparability, we would like to ask that these questions be asked in exactly the same manner (with response choice order randomization where it was done previously) as in the grant-funded sample of the YA 2006 survey (all subsequent references in this memo to the 2006 YA survey apply to the grant-funded sample only). Below each question that follows, a rationale is provided that is supported by the ANES researcher and findings.

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*ATT-POL-77. In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they were sick or they just didn't have time or for some other reason. Which of the following statements best describes you: One, I did not vote in the November 2006 election. Two, I thought about voting in the November 2006 election, but didn't. Three, I usually vote, but didn't vote in the November 2006 election. Or four, I am sure I voted in the November 2006 election.*

- 1. I DID NOT VOTE IN THE NOVEMBER 2006 ELECTION*
- 2. I THOUGHT ABOUT VOTING IN 2006, BUT DIDN'T*
- 3. I USUALLY VOTE, BUT DIDN'T IN 2006*
- 4. I AM SURE I VOTED*

ATT-POL-77 measures turnout in a previous election. It follows the general format developed by the American National Election Studies and used in its production surveys since 1952. The ANES describes turnout as an important measure of civic engagement, and much of what is known about it, including its propensity to change over the life course, is based on versions of ATT-POL-77 asked on the ANES over the past five decades (Miller and Shanks 1996; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980).

Many scholars are concerned that answers to simple and direct voter turnout questions (“Did you vote?”) are subject to a reporting bias: over-reporting of turnout among a small set of people who usually vote but did not in this election (McDonald 2003; Presser and Traugott 1992). The wording of the question proposed by the ANES is designed to minimize this bias. It includes a recitation of common reasons for not voting as a means for reducing over-reporting of turnout. This expansion of the choice set allows a more detailed set of responses than “yes” and “no” – it was first proposed and tested in the 1994 ANES Pilot Study and has been examined experimentally in ANES studies multiple times since then. The new response choice set follows from the “source confusion” perspective in psychology – its purpose is to minimize confusion of memories of having voted in other elections or having planned to vote in this election with memories of actually voting in this election (Belli et al 1994). Respondents who are uncertain about their turnout status, confusing their recent turnout behavior with past or typical turnout behavior, concerned about the social desirability of their response, or prevaricating their response altogether have the option of providing an answer that shows uncertainty without providing an outright “no” in response. The broad set of response choices thus minimizes misreporting.

Experimental comparisons of this question with simple, direct questions have been conducted in multiple ANES surveys, most recently in the 2004 ANES post-election survey. No respondents refused to answer either version of the question. The simple, direct question resulted in 82% “yes (I did vote)” responses and 18% “no (I did not vote)” responses. The new, longer version of the question resulted in 75% “I am sure I voted” responses, 4% “I usually vote, but didn’t this time,” 8% “I thought about voting this time, but didn’t,” and 13% “I did not vote” responses. An analysis of the new choice set using data from an experiment in the 2002 ANES showed an 8% reduction in over-reporting, primarily among those least engaged with politics (Duff et al, 2004). Thus, the long question appears to provide more accurate measurements.

A version of this question, YASR-77, was included in the YA 2006 study, and the distribution of answers was:

[N = 1116]	I did not vote in the 2004 presidential election
[N = 531]	I thought about voting in 2004, but didn't
[N = 143]	I usually vote, but didn't in 2004
[N = 1448]	I am sure I voted
[N = 10]	don't know response
[N = 4]	refusal to answer

Thus, almost no respondents declined to answer.

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*ATT-POL-78. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as {ROT\_PARTY}, an Independent, or what?*

In this question, the placeholder {ROT\_PARTY} is for the terms "Democrat" or "Republican." The order in which these terms appear in the question is rotated randomly to reduce response choice order effects. So, some respondents hear "Republican" first, while others hear "Democrat" first.

*ATT-POL-78A. A strong {party} or a not very strong {party}?*

In this version of the follow up question, respondents who answered "Republican" or "Democrat" are asked about the strength of their partisan attachment.

*ATT-POL-78B. What party?*

In this version of the follow-up question, respondents who did not choose one of the parties in the initial question are given an opportunity to enter another party name.

*ATT-POL-78C. Do you think of yourself as {ROT\_CLOSER}, or equally close to both?*

This version of the follow-up is asked of respondents who indicated no party preference. ROT\_CLOSER is a placeholder for the term "closer to the Democratic party, closer to the Republican party" or its inverse. Again, the order is rotated randomly to reduce response choice order effects.

ATT-POL-78 measures identification with political parties. This variable has been a staple of the American National Election Studies since its inception and has been the focus of numerous landmark studies in political science (e.g., Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Miller and Shanks 1996).

These questions were most recently administered in the 2004 ANES pre-election survey. In response to Question 2, 29% answered Republican, 32% answered Democrat, 33% answered Independent, 1% answered a different party, and 5% indicated no preference. Eight persons answered "don't know" and only two persons refused to answer. Those who indicated a party identification of Republican or Democrat received Question 2A, with 54% answering "strong" and 45% answering "not very strong" – two persons answered "don't know," and one person refused to answer. The 33% of the sample that answered Independent in Question 2 received Question 2C, in which 29% responded feeling closer to the Republican party and 44% volunteered feeling closer to the Democratic party - 26% volunteered that they felt closer to neither, four persons said they didn't know, and no persons refused to answer.

This question, called YASR-78, was included in the YA 2006 study, and the distribution of responses was:

[N = 1234]	Democrat
[N = 510]	Republican

[N = 833]	Independent
[N = 13]	Other party (volunteered)
[N = 471]	No preference (volunteered)
[N = 176]	don't know response
[N = 15]	refusal to answer

In a preliminary YA 2006 distribution, YASR-78A had this distribution:

[N = 694]	Strong
[N = 510]	Not very strong
[N = 11]	don't know response
[N = 0]	refusal to answer

In response to YASR-78B in the YA 2006 study, seven persons were able to name a specific party, whereas six answered "don't know."

YASR-78C was also included in the YA 2006 study, and the distribution of answers was:

[N = 118]	Closer to Republican Party
[N = 297]	Closer to Democratic Party
[N = 517]	Equally Close
[N = 422]	Never (volunteered)
[N = 139]	don't know response
[N = 15]	refusal to answer

*ATT-POL-79. How often do you follow what's going on in politics? Always, most of the time, about half the time, once in a while, or never.*

ATT-POL-79 measures the extent to which people follow politics. Versions of the question have been in use in ANES surveys for decades. The variable is widely used in studies of politics and correlates with measures of turnout and political participation. The wording of this version of the question reflects improvements based on recent developments in questionnaire design. In particular, the response options have been changed to categories for which there is evidence of greater respondent comprehension and differentiation (Krosnick and Fabrigar 2007).

In the 2004 ANES, 296 persons said they follow what's going on in government and public affairs "most of the time," 431 said "some of the time," 238 said "only now and then," and 98 said "hardly at all," with two persons answering "don't know" and one refusing to answer.

This question, called YASR-79, was included in the YA 2006 study, and the distribution of responses was:

[N = 203]	Always
[N = 567]	Most of the time
[N = 658]	About half the time
[N = 1184]	Once in a while
[N = 623]	Never
[N = 8]	don't know response
[N = 9]	refusal to answer

*ATT-POL-80. How often does the federal government do what most Americans want it to do? Always, most of the time, about half the time, once in a while, or never.*

ATT-POL-80 is one of many ANES questions that attempt to measure respondent attitudes about government policy. In 2004, less than one percent of respondents refused to answer this sort of question in our survey. This particular question is included on the NLS battery because it is easily comprehended and can be asked and answered quickly. We expect answers to this question to vary in interesting ways over the adult life cycle.

This question, called YASR-80, was included in the YA 2006 study, and the distribution of responses was:

[N = 34]	Always
[N = 259]	Most of the time
[N = 957]	About half the time
[N = 1194]	Once in a while
[N = 688]	Never
[N = 113]	don't know response
[N = 7]	refusal to answer

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*ATT-POL-84. Generally speaking, how often can you trust other people? Always, most of the time, about half the time, once in a while, or never.*

ATT-POL-84 is a widely used ANES question to measure the extent to which people trust others. The question is particularly relevant to “trusting people we don’t know” (Uslaner 2002). In many studies, trust has been shown to be linked to civic engagement (e.g., Rahn and Transue 1998). People who are less trusting tend to opt out of many civic interactions and tend to be different from others in terms of their views about the range of services that governments can provide to citizens and their evaluations of economic, social and political variables. The ANES expects trust to vary in interesting ways over the adult life cycle.

A similar question has been used in the ANES time series surveys since 1992. In the 2004 ANES post-election interview, 471 persons answered that “most people can be trusted,” and 591 persons answered “you can’t be too careful in dealing with people,” with two don’t know responses and two refusals.

This question, called YASR-84, was included in the YA 2006 study, and the distribution of responses was:

[N = 65]	Always
[N = 813]	Most of the time
[N = 959]	About half the time
[N = 970]	Once in a while
[N = 436]	Never
[N = 5]	don't know response
[N = 4]	refusal to answer

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## Questions for the NLSY79 Young Adult Survey (Ages 21 and Older)

This set of questions is the second contribution to the YA survey. The initial questions, asked of the grant-funded sample during the 2006 wave, established important baseline measurements that are likely to be of great interest to ANES users and to users of the NLS who are interested in interactions between political and other social factors. The list that follows repeats some of our 06 questions, and the remainder replaces questions from the last wave for which measurements in the next YA wave are unlikely to provide new information.

These questions cover the content to be addressed. The questions asked on the previous wave (1-6) should be asked in the identical form in the next wave – with the caveat that the turnout question (1) should refer to the 2006 general election rather than the presidential election of 2004. Regarding the new questions (7-15), we would be grateful for your feedback to help improve wording where you think that could be done.

Since the first four questions and the sixth one here are identical to the five questions proposed for NLS79, justifications are offered only for the remaining questions.

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*YASR-77. In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they were sick or they just didn't have time or for some other reason. Which of the following statements best describes you: One, I did not vote in the November 2006 election. Two, I thought about voting in the November 2006 election, but didn't. Three, I usually vote, but didn't vote in the November 2006 election. Or four, I am sure I voted in the November 2006 election.*

- 1. I DID NOT VOTE IN THE NOVEMBER 2006 ELECTION*
- 2. I THOUGHT ABOUT VOTING IN 2006, BUT DIDN'T*
- 3. I USUALLY VOTE, BUT DIDN'T IN 2006*
- 4. I AM SURE I VOTED*

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*YASR-78. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as {ROT\_PARTY}, an Independent, or what?*

In this question, the placeholder {ROT\_PARTY} is for the terms “Democrat” or “Republican.” The order in which these terms appear in the question is rotated randomly to reduce response order effects. So, some respondents hear “Republican” first, while others hear “Democrat” first.

*YASR-78A. A strong {party} or a not very strong {party}?*

In this version of the follow up question, respondents who answered “Republican” or “Democrat” are asked about the strength of their partisan attachment.

*YASR-78B. What party?*

In this version of the follow-up question, respondents who did not choose one of the parties in the initial question are given an opportunity to enter another party name.

*YASR-78C. Do you think of yourself as {ROT\_CLOSER}, or equally close to both?*

This version of the follow-up is asked of respondents who indicated no party preference. ROT\_CLOSER is a place holder for the term “closer to the Democratic party, closer to the Republican party” or its inverse. Again, the order is rotated randomly to reduce response order effects.

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YASR-79. *How often do you follow what's going on in politics? Always, most of the time, about half the time, once in a while, or never.*

To reduce response order effects, on questions with this set of responses we rotate responses.

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YASR-80. *How often does the federal government do what most Americans want it to do? Always, most of the time, about half the time, once in a while, or never.*

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YASR-81. *How often is politics so complicated that you don't really understand what's going on? Always, most of the time, about half the time, once in a while, or never.*

YASR-81 is described by the ANES as an indicator of political efficacy – the extent to which people feel able to engage in politics successfully. A sense of political efficacy is strongly associated with the behavior of political participation (Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), and efficacy has been measured on the ANES for five decades. While responses to this question correlate with education and income, the correlations are far from perfect. This question serves many purposes in analyses and is considered to capture a distinctive component of why some people who might otherwise be expected to be interested in a range of political, economic, and social matters simply opt out. This is also a factor that the ANES might expect to vary in interesting ways over the adult life cycle.

A variant of this question has been asked in ANES since 1952. In the 2000 ANES study, in regards to the statement “Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can’t really understand what is going on,” 25% of respondents said “agree strongly,” 46% answered “agree somewhat,” 7% answered “neither agree nor disagree,” 13% said “disagree somewhat,” and 9% said “disagree strongly,” with four persons answering “don’t know” and three respondents refusing to answer.

YASR-81 was included in the YA 2006 study, and the distribution of responses was:

[N = 380]	Always
[N = 665]	Most of the time
[N = 757]	About half the time
[N = 993]	Once in a while
[N = 414]	Never
[N = 34]	don’t know response
[N = 9]	refusal to answer

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YASR-84. *Generally speaking, how often can you trust other people? Always, most of the time, about half the time, once in a while, or never.*

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YASR-85A. *For this next question, I will read you 3 statements. Please choose the one that is closest to your opinion about abortion. 1) It should be legal for a woman to get an abortion under all circumstances, 2) it should be legal for a woman to get an abortion only under some specific circumstances, or 3) it should be illegal for a woman to get an abortion under all circumstances?*

- Legal under any circumstances*
- Legal under some circumstances*
- Illegal under all circumstances*

YASR-85AA. “How important is this issue to you personally? *EXTREMELY* important, *VERY* important, *MODERATELY* important, *SLIGHTLY* important or *NOT* important *AT ALL*?”

1. *Extremely important*
2. *Very important*
3. *Moderately important*
4. *Slightly important*
5. *Not important at all*
8. *Don't know*
9. *Refused*
0. *NA*

YASR-85A is designed to measure attitudes on a major political issue. ANES studies have extensive issue coverage. Many members of the user communities have requested coverage of a wide range of issues in the NLS as well. The ANES has recommended abortion because it is a question on which most people have an opinion. Many scholars consider it to be one of the most important – if not the most important – political and social issues of the day.

Moreover, the NLS provides the opportunity to explore the intergenerational transmission of these attitudes. Among women, attitudes on abortion are key determinants of many other attitudes, and they have played a central role in the women’s movement. Understanding how attitudes on abortion are linked across generations, and how they influence women’s political participation, are cutting-edge issues in the field.

A variant of this question has been asked in ANES studies since the 1970s. In the 2004 ANES, respondents were asked to choose among these four alternatives:

- [N = 139] By law, abortion should never be permitted.
- [N = 332] The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger.
- [N = 185] The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established.
- [N = 391] By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice.

Eight additional persons gave a response that could not be coded, six persons answered “don’t know,” and five persons refused the question.

When asked the follow-up question in 2004, 330 persons said the issue was “extremely important” to them personally, 320 said it was “very important,” 317 said it was “somewhat important,” and 75 said it was “not at all important” – with an additional eight persons giving responses that could not be coded, two persons answering “don’t know,” and two persons refusing to answer the question. Further, as the following cross tabulation between these two questions shows, answers to the importance question are well dispersed regardless of how one answers the question on abortion attitude.

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**Cross tabulation: V045132 G7a. Abortion position \* V045133 G7a1. Importance of abortion issue**

V045132 G7a. Abortion position	V045133 G7a1. Importance of abortion issue to R							Total
	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	Don't know	Refused	
By law, abortion should never be permitted	82	41	12	2	2	0	0	139
The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest	85	118	107	19	3	0	0	332
The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape/ incest	26	41	91	23	4	0	0	185
By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion	132	114	105	30	10	0	0	391
Other {Specify} {Vol}	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	8
Don't know	1	2	1	0	0	2	0	6
Refused	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1066</b>

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*YASR-85B. How much tax money do you think is wasted by the federal government? A great deal, A lot, A moderate amount, A little, or None*

The ANES has indicated that question YASR-85B assesses respondents' attitudes about government efficiency. Of particular interest to the ANES is not just how such attitudes vary across the life cycle but also according to over-time changes in government spending priorities. Their research has shown that questions on government efficiency have often been used to explain variations in trust in government, a centrally important construct in contemporary democracy. Indeed, they believe that the notion of government efficiency has been an especially central theme in some past presidential election campaigns (e.g., 1980), so measuring these perceptions are especially useful for scholars who are interested in understanding why some citizens choose to vote in an election while others sit out.

A variant of this question has been asked in ANES surveys since 1958. In the 2004 ANES, 661 respondents answered that the government "wastes a lot" of the money we pay in taxes, 376 persons answered "wastes some," and 18 answered "don't waste very much," with 10 responding "don't know" and one refusing to answer.

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*YASR-85C. How interested are you in information about what's going on in government and politics? Extremely interested, very interested, moderately interested, slightly interested, or not interested at all?*

1. *EXTREMELY INTERESTED*
2. *VERY INTERESTED*
3. *MODERATELY INTERESTED*
4. *SLIGHTLY INTERESTED*
5. *NOT INTERESTED AT ALL*
8. *DON'T KNOW*
9. *REFUSED*

YASR-85C is an ANES question that has been asked many times and measures the extent to which people are interested in information about politics. This question is only modestly correlated with responses to YASR-79 above (how often respondents follow politics). Some respondents are very interested in information but do not follow politics often. From their inception, ANES surveys have included multiple questions measuring the extent to which respondents pursue various kinds of social information. This particular question is included on the NLS battery because it is easily comprehended and can be asked and answered quickly. The ANES expects answers to vary in interesting ways over the adult life cycle.

A version of this question asking about interest in political campaigns has been asked on ANES surveys since 1952. In 2004, 498 persons indicated they were “very much interested,” 528 persons indicated they were “somewhat interested,” and 186 persons indicated they were “not much interested.” No respondents answered “don’t know,” and no respondents refused the question.

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*YASR-85D. Generally speaking, do you believe that you have a duty to vote in every national election, or do you believe that you do not have a duty to vote in every national election?*

Unlike previous questions, YASR-85D has not appeared on previous ANES surveys. YASR-85D was requested by several scholars in our recent call for proposals. It has several motivations. One involves the extent to which people perceive socially valuable acts such as voting as a matter of duty or a matter of choice. Another has to do with the role of economic models of politics. The use of these models is controversial, with their application to the domain of turnout being particularly so. Since any individual voter is incredibly unlikely to affect the outcome of a mass election, some economic models generate the conclusion that voting is a suboptimal behavior. Other models reach different conclusions. One set of models, with the most prominent example being Riker and Ordeshook (1968), predict significant turnout but only after assuming that citizens take certain actions to fulfill a sense of civic duty (i.e., they gain non-instrumental utility). The extent to which respondents feel that an act such as voting is a matter of duty can address both the patriotism and modeling issues. Responses are also likely to vary over the lifecycle.

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*YASR-85E. “Do you ever talk with friends, family, co-workers, or other people about political events?”*

*YASR-85EA. IF YES: “During a typical week, how many days do you talk with anyone about political events?”*

YASR-85E serves multiple purposes. First, it serves some scholars as a measure of civic engagement in the context of communication about political issues. It also reflects the growing interest in social networks. Again, ANES asks an extensive battery of questions to measure how often and to whom people talk about social issues. This single question is likely to capture important variations in the extent to which people present their views to others and are exposed to other worldviews. Such variations, in turn, are likely to affect how people evaluate a wide range of social and political phenomena. The ANES expects answers to vary in interesting ways over the adult life cycle.

Variants of these questions have been asked on ANES studies for decades. In the 2004 ANES post-election survey, 850 persons said they have ever discussed politics with family or friends, 215 said they have never done so, with no persons answering “don’t know” and only one person refusing.

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*YASR-86A. If a person works hard to be successful in life, do you think the person will probably get more rewards than he or she deserves, fewer rewards than he or she deserves, or about the amount of rewards he or she deserves?*

*YASR-86AA. IF MORE: A great deal more, a moderate amount more, or a little more?*

*YASR-86AB. IF LESS: A great deal less, a moderate amount less, or a little less?*

*YASR-87A. Would it be good, bad, or neither good nor bad if the federal government were to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed in life?*

*YASR-87AA. If good: Extremely good, moderately good, or slightly good?*

*YASR-87AB. If bad: Extremely bad, moderately bad, or slightly bad?*

*YASR-88A. Do you think it is a good idea, a bad idea, or neither good nor bad for the federal government to provide financial help to people who have serious financial problems because they lost their job?*

*YASR-88AA. If good: Extremely good, moderately good, or slightly good?*

*YASR-88AB. If bad: Extremely bad, moderately bad, or slightly bad?*

YASR-86A, YASR-87A and YASR-88A address a theme common to previous ANES surveys – equal opportunity and the extent to which the federal government intervenes when inequality occurs. Many national conversations about important domestic policy issues are framed in terms of competing narratives about why inequality occurs. Often linked to particular narratives about the causes of inequality are conclusions about the desirability of governmental action.

These three questions are designed to document respondent perceptions of core themes in a wide range of domestic policy debates. YASR-86A solicits a respondent's views about causes of inequality. YASR-87A gauges opinions about the government ensuring equality. YASR-88A focuses on governmental intervention in a specific circumstance.

These exact questions have not been asked before, but ANES has asked many others like them. Variants of YASR-86A have been asked of ANES respondents for decades. In the 2004 ANES post-election survey, respondents were asked whether they agree with the statement, "It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites." To this statement, 227 respondents replied "agree strongly," 349 said "agree somewhat," 161 said "neither agree nor disagree," 208 answered "disagree somewhat," and 113 said "disagree strongly," with six "don't know" responses and two refusals to answer. In the 1986 ANES, respondents were asked about the statement that "any person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding," with 481 "agree strongly" responses, 446 answering "agree somewhat," 59 saying "neither agree nor disagree," 75 saying "disagree somewhat," and 17 answering "disagree strongly," with only three answering "don't know" and nine refusing to answer or providing responses that could not be coded. In the 1972 ANES, 845 persons thought the statement "becoming a success is a matter of hard work; luck has little or nothing to do with it" was closer to the way they feel than the statement "getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time," with 19 "don't know" responses and 26 refusals or responses that could not be coded.

As to YASR-87A, the 2004 ANES asked respondents their agreement with the statement that "Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed." 624 respondents answered "agree strongly," 317 said "agree somewhat," 68 said "neither agree nor disagree," 36 answered "disagree somewhat," and 19 said "disagree strongly," with one "don't know" and one refusal to answer.

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In the YA 2006 study, to leverage the scholarly potential in linking data from NLS parents and children, the ANES recommended including questions about respondents' perceptions of their parents' partisanship and about how often their parents discussed politics when the respondents were growing up.

The ANES is recommending that questions YASR-89 through YASR-93 be asked of respondents who are asked the political question sequence for the first time in 2008.

Since the ANES do not expect any significant change in responses between 2006 and 2008, these questions need not be asked of respondents who answered these questions in 2006.

*YASR-89. When you were growing up, how often did you hear the adults in your household talking about politics? Always, most of the time, about half the time, once in a while, or never.*

YASR-89 was included in the YA 2006 study, and answers were distributed as follows:

[N = 87]	Extremely often
[N = 202]	Very often
[N = 451]	Moderately often
[N = 1399]	Once in a while
[N = 1091]	Never
[N = 17]	don't know response
[N = 5]	refusal to answer

*YASR-90. When you were growing up, did your mother think of herself mostly as {ROT\_PARTY}, an Independent, or what?*

*YASR-90A. What party?*

YASR-90 (mother) was included in the YA 2006 study, and answers were distributed as follows:

[N = 1163]	Democrat
[N = 493]	Republican
[N = 395]	Independent
[N = 4]	Other party (volunteered)
[N = 242]	No preference (volunteered)
[N = 945]	don't know response
[N = 10]	refusal to answer

In YASR-90A, all four respondents who said "other party" answered "don't know" when asked the name of the party.

*YASR-91. How often did she follow what was going on in politics? Always, most of the time, about half the time, once in a while, or never.*

YASR-91 (mother) was also included in the YA 2006 study, and answers were distributed as follows:

[N = 139]	Always
[N = 418]	Most of the time
[N = 522]	About half the time
[N = 1106]	Once in a while
[N = 611]	Never
[N = 447]	don't know response
[N = 9]	refusal to answer

*YASR-92. Think about your father, stepfather, or someone else who was most like a father to you when you were growing up. Did he think of himself mostly as {ROT\_PARTY}, an Independent, or what?*

*YASR-92A. What party?*

YASR-92 (father figure) was included in the YA 2006 study, and answers were distributed as follows:

[N = 1023]	Democrat
[N = 557]	Republican
[N = 378]	Independent
[N = 5]	Other party (volunteered)
[N = 176]	No preference (volunteered)
[N = 122]	Respondent had no father figure (volunteered)
[N = 982]	don't know response
[N = 9]	refusal to answer

In YASR-92A, of the five respondents who said "other party," one was able to provide a specific party name and the other four answered "don't know."

*YASR-93. How often did he follow what was going on in politics? Always, most of the time, about half the time, once in a while, or never.*

YASR-93 (father figure) was also included in the YA 2006 study, and answers were distributed as follows:

[N = 288]	Always
[N = 531]	Most of the time
[N = 502]	About half the time
[N = 766]	Once in a while
[N = 454]	Never
[N = 579]	don't know response
[N = 10]	refusal to answer

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