

EVALUATIONS OF CONGRESS AND VOTING IN HOUSE ELECTIONS REVISITING THE HISTORICAL RECORD

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Abstract The literature portrays the congressional voter of the 1950s through the early 1970s as having been unwilling or unable to hold Congress electorally accountable for its collective legislative performance. In contrast, recent literature has demonstrated that in elections from 1974 onward, voters have regularly used congressional performance evaluations as part of their voting decisions. Specifically, poor evaluations of Congress lower support for candidates from the ruling majority party, all else being equal. This research note hypothesizes that Americans in the earlier era were willing and able to hold Congress electorally accountable for its collective performance in the same partisan fashion as today's voters are, but that this behavior was obscured from previous researchers because they lacked access to appropriate empirical data. Using survey data largely unavailable to scholars of the earlier era, I find evidence supporting this hypothesis.

The literature portrays the congressional voter of the 1950s through the early 1970s as having been unwilling or unable to hold Congress electorally accountable for its collective legislative performance. Stokes and Miller (1962) argue that “few judgments of legislative performance are associated

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with the parties,” and therefore that poor legislative performance “is unlikely to bring down electoral sanctions on the ineffective party” (545). Mayhew (1974) finds that “there has been no direct relation in recent years between voter disapproval of congressional performance and voter inclination to deprive incumbents of their seats” (165). Fenno (1978) argues that Americans “cannot conceptualize [Congress] as a collectivity” (245) and that “it is easy for each congressman to explain to his own supporters why he cannot be blamed for the performance of the collectivity” (167).¹

In contrast, recent research finds that in elections from 1974 onward, voters have regularly used congressional performance evaluations as part of their voting decisions. These studies show that, just as voters hold congressional candidates from the party in power in the White House accountable for presidential performance, they are similarly willing and able to hold candidates from the party in control of Congress accountable for congressional performance (e.g., Hibbing and Tiritilli 2000; Jones and McDermott 2009; Patterson and Monson 1999). All else being equal, voters who are less approving of Congress have been less likely to vote for majority-party candidates, and those who are more approving have been more likely to do so. Such behavior is found to hold true across multiple decades, extending as far back as 1974 and continuing through the election of 2006 (Jones and McDermott 2009).

In an effort to reconcile the divergent conclusions reached for each period, this study explores the hypothesis that, contrary to previous claims, Americans in the earlier era were in fact able and active in holding Congress electorally accountable for its collective performance in the same partisan fashion as today’s voters, but that this behavior was obscured from previous research due to problems with the availability of appropriate empirical data.

Survey data on congressional performance that were available to scholars studying the earlier era were strikingly inferior to the data available to scholars studying the more recent period. In particular, the American National Election Studies (ANES) did not begin asking a direct question about Congress’s job performance until 1974. While commercial survey organizations such as Gallup and Harris occasionally asked respondents about congressional job performance during the earlier period, at the time often only the marginal results reported in news outlets were readily available to scholars, not the individual-level data necessary for more detailed analysis. As a result, scholars writing in the earlier era were unable to perform the type of direct, individual-level, quantitative analyses that can be performed with relative ease for elections from 1974 onward. Stokes and Miller (1962) conduct an individual-level analysis, but because they use pre-1974 ANES data, their analysis has no direct measure of public evaluations of Congress. Mayhew (1974, 166) employs actual congressional approval ratings compiled by Harris but, with access only to aggregate figures, his analysis is limited to four data points tabulated

1. Similar views continued to be expressed in the literature up until the most recent decade.

alongside four aggregate election results. Fenno (1978) draws his conclusions from his personal observations of members in their constituencies, not from any quantitative analysis of survey data. Put simply, because of significant data restrictions in the past, there has been no systematic analysis of the relationship between public opinion of Congress and voting in congressional elections prior to the 1974 election.

Data

Archives at the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research and the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science now provide access to raw data from many older commercial surveys that were unavailable at the time the earlier studies were written. Between these commercial surveys and a useful indirect question on the 1972 ANES, I identified six surveys conducted between 1954 and 1972 appropriate for this analysis.² They cover a variety of political contexts, including three midterm elections (1954, 1958, 1970) and three elections coinciding with a presidential contest (1964, 1968, 1972), one instance of unified Republican government (1954), two instances of unified Democratic government (1964, 1968), and three instances of divided government with a Democratic Congress and a Republican president (1958, 1970, 1972).

The appendix contains details on the question wording and coding for all variables used in the analysis.³ In each case, the dependent variable is a respondent's support for the majority-party candidate as opposed to the minority-party candidate in the House election that year.⁴ The central independent variable is a respondent's evaluation of Congress's job performance. I test whether, consistent with the literature analyzing elections in recent decades, more positive evaluations of Congress's job performance increase voting for candidates from the majority party in Congress.

To test this hypothesis, the analysis employs appropriate controls, where available, for other variables thought to have a causal effect on House voting.⁵ Compatible with the analysis of recent data found in Jones and McDermott (2004), these controls include evaluations of the president (all six surveys),

2. To merit inclusion in the analysis, a survey had to be conducted within three months of a House election, ask respondents their vote preference in that election, and ask respondents to rate the recent job performance of Congress.

3. To conserve cases in the commercial surveys, I have coded missing data on the independent variables as neutral responses. The results of the analysis are substantively similar if these cases are either replaced with the sample mean or dropped.

4. None of the vote-choice questions mentions candidate names. Box-Steffensmeier, Jacobson, and Grant (2000) note that the ANES measure became less accurate when it began to provide candidate names in 1978.

5. In addition to the causal variables, I also tried estimating the models with standard demographic controls (age, gender, race, education, income), but these variables were generally insignificant and did not substantively affect the results of the analysis and so were left out.

evaluations of the economy (1954, 1958, 1972), partisanship (all), ideology (1964, 1970, 1972), incumbency⁶ (1972), and candidate quality (1972).⁷

The data carry two main caveats. First, the 1972 ANES is the only survey that includes all of these control variables, but this is not necessarily problematic for this study's purposes. As long as the controls missing from some models are not ones whose absence increases the effects of congressional evaluations, this does not bias the results in favor of confirming the study's hypothesis. Additional analysis suggests no such bias. First, using the full 1972 model as a starting point, I tested to see whether removing variables that are unavailable in each of the other models ever increased the effect of congressional evaluations in the 1972 data. None of the abbreviated models produced an estimated effect of congressional evaluations that was significantly different from its estimated effect in the full 1972 estimation.⁸ Second, using a replication of the analysis of post-1972 ANES data presented in Jones and McDermott (2009) as a starting point, I once more tested the removal of variables unavailable in the commercial surveys.⁹ Again, the estimated effect of congressional evaluations in the abbreviated models was not significantly different from its estimated effect in the replication of the full model. These findings suggest that even if the other controls were available in all the models, the results for the congressional evaluations variable would not appreciably differ.

The second caveat is that question wording differs slightly among the surveys. This means one cannot compare the size of any variable's coefficients across the models for each election year. However, the goal here is simply to test the hypothesis that positive evaluations of Congress increase support for majority-party candidates against the null hypothesis represented by the existing literature on this earlier period. This goal can be accomplished by focusing on the variable's statistical significance in each model, which should not be affected by question wording in the way that relative coefficient size would be. In fact, if the analysis finds that congressional evaluations have a statistically significant effect across different elections *despite* different question wordings, this would increase confidence in the validity of the results.

Analysis

Table 1 presents logistic regression analyses of each model. Contrary to the conclusions reached by existing literature on this early period, and largely con-

6. None of the surveys asks respondents to evaluate incumbent job performance. However, the literature suggests that the presence or absence of this variable does not substantively affect the relationship between congressional evaluations and House voting (Jones and McDermott 2004). For additional evidence, see the appendix.

7. None of the commercial surveys includes data on candidates or on the respondent's congressional district.

8. Based on confidence intervals calculated in logistic regression for $\exp(\beta)$.

9. The replication follows the coding presented in that work's methodological appendix.

Table 1. Coefficients from Logistic Regression Models Estimating the Effect of Evaluations of Congress on Voting for a Majority-Party Candidate (standard errors in parentheses)

Independent Variable	House Election					
	1954 (Gallup) (<i>n</i> =1007)	1958 (Gallup) (<i>n</i> =865)	1964 (Harris) (<i>n</i> =928)	1968 (Harris) (<i>n</i> =976)	1970 (Harris) (<i>n</i> =735)	1972 (ANES) (<i>n</i> =604)
Evaluation of Congress	0.491* (0.190)	0.098 (0.211)	0.173* (0.100)	0.181* (0.083)	0.158* (0.094)	0.207* (0.125)
Evaluation of president	0.740* (0.208)	-1.021* (0.185)	0.433* (0.090)	0.244* (0.069)	-0.374* (0.084)	-0.014* (0.006)
Evaluation of economy	0.410 (0.327)	-0.442 (0.342)				-0.395* (0.116)
Party identification	2.413* (0.132)	3.215* (0.211)	2.168* (0.130)	1.848* (0.110)	1.705* (0.128)	1.389* (0.148)
Ideology			0.301* (0.160)		0.413* (0.160)	0.091 (0.169)
Incumbency						1.324* (0.225)
Candidate quality difference						-0.065 (0.228)
Constant	-1.800* (0.446)	0.349 (0.482)	0.698* (0.380)	-0.199* (0.100)	-0.460 (0.311)	2.256* (0.567)
Nagelkerke R^2	0.785	0.820	0.687	0.563	0.564	0.598

NOTE.—The dependent variable is a vote for the candidate from the majority party (1) or minority party (0) in the House. Table entries are logistic regression coefficients. Because of question-wording differences, coefficients are not necessarily comparable across surveys. All tests are one-tailed. * $p < 0.05$.

Table 2. Probabilistic Effect of Congressional Approval and Other Variables on Voting for the Majority-Party Candidate

Independent Variable	House Election					
	1954 (Gallup)	1958 (Gallup)	1964 (Harris)	1968 (Harris)	1970 (Harris)	1972 (ANES)
Evaluation of Congress	0.21	0.04	0.15	0.18	0.15	0.15
Evaluation of president	0.28	-0.37	0.38	0.24	-0.34	-0.31
Evaluation of economy	0.18	-0.19				-0.52
Party identification	0.83	0.92	0.79	0.72	0.69	0.59
Ideology			0.13		0.19	0.04
Incumbency						0.58
Candidate quality difference						0.03

NOTE.—Based on models in Table 1, entries represent the difference in the probability of voting for the majority-party candidate if a respondent has the highest as opposed to the lowest value for that variable, holding all other variables constant at their average value.

sistent with this study's hypothesis (and empirical tests from the post-1972 period), the coefficients for congressional evaluations are positive across all six elections and statistically significant in five out of six.¹⁰ This consistency suggests that the findings are not an artifact of any particular questionnaire wording, model construction, or electoral context. The variable fails to reach standard levels of statistical significance only in the 1958 model—an apparently anomalous result.¹¹

The positive coefficients for evaluations of Congress indicate that, the more favorably voters evaluated congressional performance, the more likely they were to support the candidate from the majority party in Congress. While it is not appropriate to compare effect sizes across these models, translating the results into probabilistic terms gives a general sense of the substantive effect of this variable and others within each election. For each variable, I calculate the difference in the probability of voting for the majority-party candidate if a respondent has the highest as opposed to the lowest value for that variable, holding all other variables constant at their average value. Table 2 presents these results. For evaluations of Congress, a change from the most negative to the most positive evaluation generally increases an average individual's probability of voting for the majority-party candidate by around 0.15. While

10. Since all the variables used in the analysis represent a directional hypothesis, the appropriate tests are one-tailed (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 2007). See the appendix regarding each variable's conventionally expected direction, as found in, for example, Hibbing and Tiritilli (2000), Jacobson (2009), Jones and McDermott (2004, 2009), and McDermott and Jones (2003).

11. The 1958 election does not appear to be an outlier for any of the variables in the model. The economy was bad, but not clearly worse than in 1972. There is some evidence that knowledge of party control of Congress was lower than usual in 1958, but further analysis was unable to definitively confirm whether this or any other factor accounts for the divergent result.

Table 3. Estimated Aggregate Effect of Congressional Evaluations on Voting

	Estimated Aggregate (National) Two-Party Vote for the Majority Party					
	1954	1958	1964	1968	1970	1972
With evaluations 1 s.d. above mean	44.8%	56.2%	63.3%	57.6%	62.4%	59.3%
With evaluations 1 s.d. below mean	42.7%	54.5%	62.6%	53.4%	57.7%	53.4%
Estimated effect (on vote %) ^a	2.1%	1.7%	0.7%	4.2%	4.7%	5.9%
Estimated effect (number of votes) ^b	886,449	770,262	457,769	2,725,608	2,486,441	4,120,812
Estimated effect (number of seats) ^c	20.2	16.3	6.7	40.4	45.2	56.7

NOTE.—Based on models in Table 1. ^aDifference between row 1 and row 2. ^bEstimated effect on vote-percentage effect multiplied by the actual number of two-party votes cast in House elections nationwide. ^cEstimated effect on vote percentage multiplied by swing ratio of 9.6 seats per percentage-point shift in the vote (see footnote 12).

the effect of congressional evaluations is in some cases larger than the effect of other variables, such as the economy (1954), ideology (1964, 1972), or candidate quality (1972), it is generally smaller than the effect of presidential evaluations, party identification, and incumbency. In addition, while it is not possible to test with the data from this era, existing literature on the more recent period suggests that the effect of congressional evaluations may be only about one-tenth as large as the effect of incumbent evaluations (Jones and McDermott 2009).

For many voters, the size of the effect of congressional evaluations is not enough to change their ultimate voting decision from one candidate to the other. For example, a liberal Democrat is unlikely to be deterred from voting Democratic simply because of a different congressional evaluation. Nevertheless, even small probabilistic effects can be decisive for some voters' ultimate decisions, particularly voters who are conflicted. To determine the number of votes that might realistically change in each election as a result of different evaluations of Congress, I use the coefficients from Table 1 to calculate the expected vote for each respondent under two different hypothetical scenarios: one in which each respondent rates Congress one standard deviation above the actual mean for that election, and one in which each respondent rates Congress one standard deviation below the mean (all other variables held at their actual value). For each election, I aggregate these expected-vote results to come up with an estimate of the overall division of the two-party vote under each scenario.

The results in Table 3 show that although many votes do not change, in each election the aggregate division of the two-party vote would indeed have been noticeably different if congressional evaluations had been one standard deviation more positive as opposed to one standard deviation more negative. On average across these elections, the estimated effect is 3.2 percentage points in the national two-party vote. To put this figure in perspective, over the course of these elections, a one-percentage-point shift in the two-party vote produced a shift of approximately 9.6 seats from one party to the other.¹² Overall, congressional evaluations appear to have a meaningful effect not only on voter preference but also on election outcomes.

Discussion

Americans' use of congressional performance as a voting criterion in the 1950s through early 1970s is generally consistent with their use of it in elections since 1974. Just as in the literature on the more recent era, the results here show that positive evaluations tend to increase voting for candidates from the majority party and negative evaluations tend to decrease voting for them.

12. Based on the following regression calculated by the author: majority-party seats = 9.6 * (majority-party vote %) - 2.6 (constant). $R^2 = 0.85$.

These findings are important not simply as a corrective to the historical record regarding congressional voters, but also because they alter the common understanding of the mix of incentives that House members faced in office during this period. Stokes and Miller (1962), Mayhew (1974), and Fenno (1978) all conclude that members lacked the electoral incentives to act in a manner that would benefit the collective. To be sure, a member's primary electoral incentive was, and will continue to be, burnishing his or her own image in the public's mind. Nevertheless, there are numerous situations in which electoral incentives regarding the public image of Congress, demonstrated here, could have a decisive impact on member behavior. For example, consider the common situation in which a legislative vote or action has neither a net positive nor a net negative effect on a member's personal image. This might occur because the member's constituency is divided on the issue, or cares very little about it, or is not paying attention. In such cases, majority-party members would appear to have an electoral incentive to act in a manner that burnishes the reputation of the institution among the public because, at the margin, doing so would at least make it more likely that other members of the party would receive more votes and win election, thereby helping maintain majority status for all party members.¹³

This new understanding of member incentives during this earlier era—expanded to include an electoral incentive to care about the reputation of the collectivity—may help explain empirical observations inconsistent with the previous understanding. In particular, it could help explain why Mayhew (1974, 150) finds, contrary to the thrust of his work, that House members in this earlier era voluntarily allowed control positions in the chamber to be given to “responsible” members. More importantly, it helps explain why, despite the traditional scholarly story of party decline in Congress during the mid-1950s through 1970s (e.g., Rohde 1991), some scholars have nevertheless found evidence of a type of responsible party behavior in the House throughout that period (Cox and McCubbins 2005).¹⁴

Appendix

1954 ELECTION DATA

Gallup Poll #1954-0535: Worries/W. Germany/Communism/1956 Presidential Election: Vote: “If the elections for Congress were being held TODAY, which party would you like to see win in this state—the Republican

13. Members with safe seats, who may not worry as much about their personal popularity, could also have a similar incentive to help their party win majority-party status.

14. Cox and McCubbins (2005) argue that since 1890, and continuing throughout the modern era, members have continued to support a basic set of rules ensuring that no legislative proposal that would be opposed by a majority of the majority party is able to pass on the House floor—even proposals supported by many majority-party members.

Party or the Democratic Party?" 1 = Republican; 0 = Democratic. Mean = 0.43; std. dev. = 0.50. **Evaluation of Congress:** "In general, do you think the present Congress in Washington has done a good job or a poor job?" 1 = good; 0 = fair/don't know/no answer; -1 = poor. Mean = 0.17; std. dev. = 0.70. Expected direction: +. **Evaluation of president:** "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Eisenhower is handling his job as President?" 1 = approve; 0 = don't know/no answer; -1 = disapprove. Mean = 0.48; std. dev. = 0.82. Expected direction: +. **Evaluation of economy:** "What would you say is YOUR biggest worry these days—the thing that disturbs you the MOST?" 1 = no worries; 0 = non-economic worries/no answer; -1 = national economic worries. Mean = 0.05; std. dev. = 0.39. Expected direction: +. **Party identification:** "In politics, as of TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?" [If response was Independent: "As of today, do you lean a little more to the Democratic Party or to the Republican Party?"]¹⁵ 1 = Republican/lean Republican; 0 = Independent/other/no answer; -1 = Democrat/lean Democrat. Mean = -0.12; std. dev. = 0.98. Expected direction: +. **Note:** Survey conducted by Gallup, August 5–10, 1954, using face-to-face interviews with a national sample of 1,626 adults selected using modified probability sampling. Response rates are unavailable for this survey.¹⁶ For data and information on other features of survey design and execution, see <http://roperweb.ropercenter.uconn.edu>. In the absence of an explicit likely voter question, the present analysis is restricted to subjects who reported voting previously in response to both of the following questions: "Have you ever voted in any election, or don't you pay attention to politics?" and "In the election in November 1952, did things come up which kept you from voting, or did you happen to vote?"

1958 ELECTION DATA

Gallup Poll #1958-0603: Russia/Inflation: **Vote:** "If the elections for Congress were being held TODAY, which party would you like to see win in this state—the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?" 0 = Republican; 1 = Democratic. Mean = 0.58; std. dev. = 0.49. **Evaluation of Congress:** "In general, do you think the present Congress in Washington has done a good job or a poor job to date?" 1 = good; 0 = fair/don't know/no answer; -1 = poor. Mean = 0.19; st. dev. = 0.65. Expected direction: +. **Evaluation of president:** "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Eisenhower is handling his job as President?" 1 = approve; 0 = don't know/no answer; -1 = disapprove. Mean = 0.26; std. dev. = 0.90. Expected direction: -. **Evaluation of economy:** "What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?" 1 = no

15. Only the 1954 Gallup and 1972 ANES surveys ask Independents to state the party toward which they lean. Results are substantively similar regardless of how leaners are coded.

16. Personal communication with the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut.

problems; 0 = non-economic problems/no answer; -1 = national economic problems. Mean = -0.16; std. dev. = 0.46. Expected direction: -. **Party identification:** “In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?” 1 = Democrat; 0 = Independent/other/no answer; -1 = Republican. Mean = 0.16; std. dev. = 0.91. Expected direction: +. **Note:** Survey conducted by Gallup, August 20–25, 1958, using face-to-face interviews with a national sample of 1,563 adults selected using modified probability sampling. Response rates are unavailable for this survey.¹⁷ For data and information on other features of survey design and execution, see <http://roperweb.ropercenter.uconn.edu>. In the absence of an explicit likely voter question, the present analysis is restricted to subjects who reported giving at least a little thought to the election when asked, “How much thought have you given to the coming November elections for Congress—quite a lot, or only a little?” and who reported voting previously when asked, “In the election in November 1956, did things come up which kept you from voting, or did you happen to vote?”

1964 ELECTION DATA

Harris 1964 presidential election survey, no. 1386: **Vote:** “In the election for Congress here in this district this year, do you intend to vote for the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate?” 0 = Republican; 1 = Democratic. Mean = 0.61; std. dev. = 0.49. **Evaluation of Congress:** “How would you rate the job Congress has done in the past year—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?” -2 = poor; -1 = only fair; 0 = don’t know/no answer; 1 = pretty good; 2 = excellent. Mean = 0.25; std. dev. = 1.16. Expected direction: +. **Evaluation of president:** “How would you rate the job President Johnson is doing as President—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?” -2 = poor; -1 = only fair; 0 = don’t know/no answer; 1 = pretty good; 2 = excellent. Mean = 0.47; std. dev. = 1.32. Expected direction: +. **Party identification:** “Regardless of how you may vote, what do you usually consider yourself, a Republican, a Democrat, or what?” 1 = Democrat 0 = Independent/other/don’t know/no answer; -1 = Republican. Mean = 0.23; std. dev. = 0.91. Expected direction: +. **Ideology:** “Where would you say each of these people stands politically? ...Yourself.” 1 = liberal; 0 = middle of the road/other/don’t know/no answer; -1 = conservative. Mean = 0.77; std. dev. = 0.71. Expected direction: +. **Note:** Survey conducted by Louis Harris and Associates during October 1964, using face-to-face interviews with a national sample of 1,339 registered voters selected using modified probability sampling. Response rates and exact field dates (other than month and year) are unavailable for this survey.¹⁸ For data and information on other features of survey de-

17. Personal communication with the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut.

18. Personal communication with the Harris organization.

sign and execution, see <http://www.irss.unc.edu>. In the absence of an explicit likely voter question, the present analysis is restricted to subjects who reported voting previously when asked, "Did you vote in the last election for President in 1960 when Nixon and Kennedy ran?"

1968 ELECTION DATA

Harris 1968 presidential election survey, no. 1875: **Vote:** "For Congress this time right here in this district, if you had to choose right now, would you vote for the Democrat or the Republican?" 0 = Republican; 1 = Democratic. Mean = 0.51; std. dev. = 0.50. **Evaluation of Congress:** "How would you rate the job done by this past Congress—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?" -2 = poor; -1 = only fair; 0 = don't know/no answer; 1 = pretty good; 2 = excellent. Mean = -0.31; std. dev. = 1.13. Expected direction: +. **Evaluation of president:** "How would you rate the job Lyndon Johnson has done as President—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?" -2 = poor; -1 = only fair; 0 = don't know/no answer; 1 = pretty good; 2 = excellent. Mean = -0.29; std. dev. = 1.41. Expected direction: +. **Party identification:** "Regardless of how you may vote, do you usually consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or what?" 1 = Democrat; 0 = Independent/don't know/no answer; -1 = Republican. Mean = 0.17; std. dev. = 0.91. Expected direction: +. **Note:** Survey conducted by Louis Harris and Associates during September 1968, using face-to-face interviews with a national sample of 1,322 registered voters selected using modified probability sampling. Response rates and exact field dates (other than month and year) are unavailable for this survey.¹⁹ For data and information on other features of survey design and execution, see <http://www.irss.unc.edu>. In the absence of an explicit likely voter question, the present analysis is restricted to subjects who reported voting previously when asked, "Did you vote in the last election for President in 1964 when Goldwater and Johnson ran?"

1970 ELECTION DATA

Harris 1971 survey on U.S. attitudes toward Japan, no. 2053: **Vote:** "For Congress in 1970 in this district, did you vote for the Democratic or Republican candidate?" 0 = Republican; 1 = Democratic. Mean = 0.57; std. dev. = 0.50. **Evaluation of Congress:** "How would you rate the job this past Congress has done—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?" -2 = poor; -1 = only fair; 0 = don't know/no answer; 1 = pretty good; 2 = excellent. Mean = -0.60; std. dev. 1.14. Expected direction: +. **Evaluation of president:** "How would you rate the job President Nixon is doing as President—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?" -2 = poor; -1 = only fair; 0 = don't know/no

19. Personal communication with the Harris organization.

answer; 1 = pretty good; 2 = excellent. Mean = -0.04; std. dev. = 1.34. Expected direction: -. **Party identification:** “Regardless of how you may vote, what do you usually consider yourself—Republican, Democrat, or what?” 1 = Democrat; 0 = Independent/other/don’t know/no answer; -1 = Republican. Mean = 0.12; std. dev. = 0.90. Expected direction: +. **Ideology:** “In general, what do you consider yourself to be politically?” 1 = liberal; 0 = middle of the road/other/don’t know/no answer; -1 = conservative. Mean = 0.83; std. dev. = 0.68. Expected direction: +. **Note:** Survey conducted by Louis Harris and Associates during January 1971, using face-to-face interviews with a national sample of 1,387 adults selected using modified probability sampling. Response rates and exact field dates (other than month and year) are unavailable for this survey.²⁰ For data and information on other features of survey design and execution, see <http://www.irss.unc.edu>. To ensure that responses represent actual voters, respondents were removed if they answered in the negative when asked, “Are you registered to vote or not?”

1972 ELECTION DATA

American National Election Studies: 1972 Pre-/Post-Election Study: **Vote:** “How about the election for congressman—that is, for the House of Representatives in Washington? Which party’s candidate did you vote for, for congressman?” 0 = Republican; 1 = Democratic. Mean = 0.56; std. dev. = 0.50. **Evaluation of Congress:**²¹ “Which of the parts of government on this list do you think has done the [best/second best/worst] job in the past couple of years: Congress, the Supreme Court, the president, or the political parties?” 2 = Congress best/all best; 1 = Congress second best; 0 = Congress not best, second best, or worst; -1 = Congress worst/all worst. Mean = 0.91; std. dev. = 0.93. Expected direction: +. **Evaluation of president:**²² “Where would you put Richard Nixon on the thermometer?” Respondent’s rating on 0–100 scale. Mean = 67.36; std. dev. = 26.49. Expected direction: -. **Evaluation of economy:** “How do you feel about what our government is doing about the economy—jobs, prices, profits?” -3 = terrible; -2 = unhappy; -1 = mostly dissatisfied; 0 = mixed/neutral/don’t know; 1 = mostly satisfied; 2 = pleased; 3 = delighted. Mean = -0.38; std. dev. = 1.12. Expected direction: -. **Party identification:** “Generally speaking, do you usually consider yourself a

20. Personal communication with the Harris organization.

21. Although this measure is a relative evaluation rather than an absolute one, it is still useful for this study’s purposes if one makes the fairly conservative assumption that those who evaluate congressional performance positively are less likely to rate it as “worst,” and those who evaluate congressional performance negatively are less likely to rate it as “best.”

22. Results of the analysis are substantively similar if the presidential version of the “relative” measure employed for Congress is used instead. However, the thermometer is preferable because the concept the variable is supposed to represent is an absolute rating of the president, not a relative one.

Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" [If response was Independent, no preference, or other: "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?"] 1 = Democrat/lean Democrat; 0 = Independent/other/don't know; -1 = Republican/lean Republican. Mean = 0.10; std. dev. = 0.95. Expected direction: +. **Ideology:** "In general, what do you consider yourself to be politically?" 1 = liberal; 0 = middle of the road/don't know/no answer; -1 = conservative. Mean = -0.07; std. dev. = 0.73. Expected direction: +. **Incumbency:** 1 = Democratic incumbent running; 0 = open seat; -1 = Republican incumbent running. Mean = 0.19; std. dev. = 0.89. Expected direction: +. **Candidate quality difference:** [Appended data; Source: Gary Jacobson] 1 = only the Democratic candidate has held previous elected office; 0 = neither or both of the candidates have held previous elected office; -1 = only the Republican candidate has held previous elected office. Mean = 0.20; std. dev. = 0.83. Expected direction: +. **Note:** Survey conducted by the Center for Political Studies, September 1–November 6, 1972 (pre-election wave) and November 7, 1972–February 13, 1973 (post-election wave), using face-to-face interviews with a national sample of adults selected using modified probability sampling. Two forms were administered in each wave. The analysis utilizes questions asked only on Form 2 (maximum $N=1,109$). ANES reports a 75.1% response rate²³ for the pre-election wave and an 84.4% re-interview rate for the post-election wave. For data and information on other features of survey design and execution, see <http://www.electionstudies.org>.

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23. Regarding calculation method, while there are "no extant paper records ... it has generally been the practice at ANES over time to calculate response rates pretty much as RR1 would now be calculated" (personal communication with Patricia Luevano, ANES).

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