Do Response Effects Generalize Across Countries?

3 MC International Conference 2016

Henning Silber, Jon Krosnick, Tobias Stark, and Annelies Blom
Response Effects: Overview

- Acquiescence
- Question Balance
- Question Order
- Question Wording
- No Opinion Response Option
- Response Order
- Some/Other
Variation Across Countries?

- **Satisficing**: Choosing the easiest response because it requires less thinking

- **Culture**: Culture-specific norms and culture-specific response styles

- **Administration Issues**: Visual vs. oral presentation, self- vs. interviewer-administration, sampling method
Data

• 12 Countries
• Mode:
  – Online: Canada, France, Germany 1, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Taiwan, United States of America
  – Face-to-face: Japan
  – Mail: Denmark
  – Mixed mode: Germany 2, United Kingdom
  – Telephone: Portugal
• Probability Samples
• N = 790 to 4,298
• Data collection between 2014 and 2015
Experiments

Experimental Design:
• Independent random assignment
• Two experimental groups
• One question per screen

Questions:
• Acquiescence
  – Individuals vs. social conditions
  – Women in politics
• Question Order
  – Abortion
  – Financial contributions
Acquiescence
Experiment 1: Individuals vs. Social Conditions

Form A

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
Individuals are more to blame than social conditions for crime and lawlessness in this country.

Agree
Disagree

Form B

Which in your opinion is more to blame for crime and lawlessness in this country – individuals or social conditions?

Individuals more to blame
Social conditions more to blame
Experiment 2: Women in Politics

Form A

Do you agree or disagree to this statement?
Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than most women.

Agree
Disagree

Form B

Would you say that most men are better suited emotionally for politics than most women, that men and women are equally suited, or that women are better suited?

Men are better suited
Men and women are equally suited
Women are better suited
Causes of Acquiescence

• **Norms of Conduct**: Be polite and agreeable

• **Status Differential**: Defer to higher status researcher

• **Satisficing**: Choosing the easiest response because it requires less thinking
Question Order
Causes of Question Order Effects

• Perceptual Contrast: Good reasons make weaker reasons seem even weaker.

• Norm of Even-Handedness: Competing parties should be treated equally and have equal opportunities.
Experiment 3: Abortion

Order 1

Do you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain legal abortion if she is married and does not want any more children?

Do you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain legal abortion if there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby?

Order 2

Do you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby?

Do you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain legal abortion if she is married and does not want any more children?
Experiment 4: Financial Contributions

Order 1

Do you think labor unions should be permitted to spend their money to help to elect or defeat candidates for political offices?

Do you think businesses should be permitted to spend money to help to elect or defeat candidates for political offices?

Order 2

Do you think businesses should be permitted to spend money to help to elect or defeat candidates for political offices?

Do you think labor unions should be permitted to spend their money to help to elect or defeat candidates for political offices?
Results:

Acquiescence
Individuals vs. Social Conditions
Schuman and Presser 1981

Difference = 13.2%

P ≤ .05
Individuals vs. Social Conditions
All Countries

Difference = 6.8%

 Agree/Disagree: 60.30%
 Forcéd Choice: 53.50%

P ≤ .05
Women in Politics
Schuman and Presser 1981

Agree/Disagree

47.00%

Forced Choice

33.10%

Difference = 14.9%

P ≤ .05
Women in Politics
All Countries

Difference = 9.9%

P ≤ .05
Results:

Question Order
Abortion: No More Children
Schuman and Presser 1981

Difference = 10.3%

First Question 57.40%
Second Question 47.10%

P ≤ .05
Abortion: Genetic Defect
Schuman and Presser 1981

Difference = 1.0%

84.00%

83.00%
Abortion: No More Children
All Countries

Difference = 9.9%

P ≤ .05
Abortion: Genetic Defect
All Countries

First Question
87.30%

Second Question
88.20%

Difference = 0.9%
Abortion: Genetic Defect

P ≤ .05
Financial Contributions: Businesses
Schuman and Ludwig 1983

Difference = 10.3%

P ≤ .05
Financial Contributions: Businesses All Countries

Difference = 2.2%

First Question 18.10%
Second Question 20.30%

P ≤ .05
Financial Contributions: Businesses

-6% -4% -2% 0% 2% 4% 6% 8%

USA I CAN U.K. ICE NETH SWE NOR DEN GER I TAI GER II

P ≤ .05
Financial Contributions: Labor Unions
Schuman and Ludwig 1980

First Question: 23.20%
Second Question: 16.30%

Difference = 6.9%

P ≤ .05
Financial Contributions: Labor Unions
All Countries

Difference = 0.1%
Conclusion

Lots of expected results.

But some unexpected results.

No obvious patterns of differences across countries.

More to come!