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## 6. Comparability of the Internet Panels

This chapter compares the two internet panels based on responses to attitudinal questions and demographic characteristics. We received 3,277 completed surveys: 2,335 from the ANES panel and 942 from the FFRISP panel. In this chapter we present summary statistics for attitudinal and demographic questions for the two panels (Sections 6.1 and 6.2, respectively). We then compare the two panels' responses and the pooled sample responses to those from two independent nationally representative samples. For each section, we present summary statistics for each panel, the pooled sample, and the nationally representative sample.

### 6.1 Attitudinal Questions

As described in Chapter 4, the survey presents respondents with questions from the GSS to evaluate potential attitudinal differences between the respondents to our survey and respondents to the GSS. We also use responses to these questions to evaluate potential differences across the two panels. The questions ask, "We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. Below are some of these problems. For each one, please indicate if you think we are spending too much money on it, about the right amount, or too little money on it." The categories are space exploration, the environment, health, assistance to big cities, law enforcement, drug rehabilitation, and education.

Following the format used in the GSS, respondents in our survey were presented questions using two versions, referred to in the GSS as the standard version and the variant version. The variant wording asks the same question but with slightly longer category names. The versions were randomized across surveys, with each respondent being asked the question with either the standard or variant wording, and the categories were presented in random order within each version.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 present summary statistics for responses to these questions for the two panels, the pooled sample, and the GSS for both the standard and variant wording questions, respectively.<sup>1</sup> A column of differences between the pooled sample and the GSS is also presented. Responses across the two panels are similar. Compared to the GSS, the pooled sample has fewer respondents answering "too little" across all categories and versions; many of these differences are significant. Responses in the pooled sample differed most from the GSS in respondents' attitudes toward spending on the environment, with 26.4% and 19.1% fewer respondents answering "too little" for the standard and variant wording versions, respectively.

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1. Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100%.

**Table 6.1. Comparison of responses to attitudinal questions across the two panels, the pooled sample, and the GSS – standard wording (%)**

	ANES	FFRISP	Pooled	GSS	Pooled – GSS
<b>The space exploration program</b>					
Too little	11.5	13.4	12.1	13.6	–1.5
About right	52.7	47.2	51.1	50.9	0.2
Too much	35.8	39.3	36.9	35.5	1.4
<b>Improving and protecting the environment</b>					
Too little	41.2	41.4	41.2	67.6	–26.4***
About right	43.5	45.8	44.2	24.5	19.7***
Too much	15.4	12.8	14.6	7.9	6.7***
<b>Improving and protecting the nation’s health</b>					
Too little	56.3	57.3	56.6	77.1	–20.5***
About right	32.4	33.7	32.8	18.1	14.7***
Too much	11.2	9.0	10.6	4.8	5.7***
<b>Solving the problems of the big cities</b>					
Too little	28.8	33.0	30.1	48.5	–18.5***
About right	51.5	51.4	51.5	38.6	12.9***
Too much	19.6	15.6	18.4	12.9	5.5***
<b>Halting the rising crime rate</b>					
Too little	42.3	42.1	42.2	61.7	–19.5***
About right	51.6	50.7	51.4	31.5	19.9***
Too much	6.1	7.2	6.4	6.8	–0.4
<b>Dealing with drug addiction</b>					
Too little	38.1	41.7	39.2	57.3	–18.1***
About right	47.4	44.0	46.4	32.6	13.8***
Too much	14.4	14.2	14.4	10.1	4.3***
<b>Improving the nation’s education system</b>					
Too little	64.1	68.5	65.5	70.8	–5.4**
About right	25.7	23.1	24.9	23.3	1.6
Too much	10.2	8.4	9.7	5.8	3.8***

\*\*\* Indicates significance at the 99% confidence level.

\*\* Indicates significance at the 95% confidence level.

\* Indicates significance at the 90% confidence level.

**Table 6.2. Comparison of responses to attitudinal questions across the two panels, the pooled sample, and the GSS – variant wording (%)**

	ANES	FFRISP	Pooled	GSS	Pooled – GSS
<b>Space exploration</b>					
Too little	12.9	6.8	11.2	15.1	–3.9**
About right	41.5	44.7	42.3	43.1	–0.7
Too much	45.7	48.5	46.4	41.8	4.6*
<b>Environment</b>					
Too little	49.5	43.9	48.0	67.1	–19.1***
About right	36.9	43.3	38.6	23.4	15.2***
Too much	13.6	12.9	13.4	9.6	3.8**
<b>Health</b>					
Too little	60.4	63.9	61.3	75.4	–14.1***
About right	24.8	24.0	24.6	13.4	11.2***
Too much	14.8	12.1	14.1	11.2	2.9*
<b>Cities</b>					
Too little	11.6	15.1	12.5	21.9	–9.3***
About right	48.1	43.6	46.9	45.1	1.7
Too much	40.3	41.3	40.6	33.0	7.6***
<b>Crime</b>					
Too little	41.2	37.7	40.2	53.9	–13.7***
About right	51.1	50.3	50.9	37.0	13.9***
Too much	7.7	12.0	8.9	9.1	–0.3
<b>Drugs</b>					
Too little	30.3	35.3	31.6	49.5	–17.9***
About right	51.5	48.8	50.8	37.6	13.2***
Too much	18.2	15.9	17.6	12.9	4.7***
<b>Education</b>					
Too little	68.3	70.2	68.8	76.5	–7.7***
About right	24.2	26.3	24.7	18.6	6.1***
Too much	7.5	3.5	6.5	4.9	1.5

\*\*\* Indicates significance at the 99% confidence level.

\*\* Indicates significance at the 95% confidence level.

\* Indicates significance at the 90% confidence level.

Both of these differences are significant at the 99% confidence level. These results suggest that respondents in the pooled sample collected in 2009 are less willing to increase public spending than the U.S. population represented in the 2008 GSS survey.

## 6.2 Demographic Questions

In this section, we compare the demographic characteristics for each of the two panels, the pooled sample, and the 2006–2008 ACS, which is administered by the Census between the decennial census. Each survey firm collected demographic characteristics during the recruitment process and used these to weight the two panels to be representative of the U.S. population.<sup>2</sup>

Table 6.3 presents demographic characteristics for each panel, the pooled sample, and the ACS. A column of differences between the pooled sample and the ACS is also presented. In general, the demographic characteristics follow similar patterns across the two samples, with a few exceptions. The distributions of household income and marital status differ across the two panels. However, the distributions of most other variables are similar. Differences between the pooled dataset and ACS are mostly significant, though many of the differences are small in absolute terms.

**Table 6.3. Comparison of demographic characteristics across the two panels, the pooled sample, and the ACS (%)<sup>a</sup>**

Category	ANES	FFRISP	Pooled	ACS	Pooled – ACS
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	52.7	53.0	52.8	51.4	1.5
Male	47.3	47.0	47.2	48.6	–1.5
<b>Age</b>					
15 to 19 years	5.5	3.8	5.0	9.0	–4.0***
20 to 24 years	5.8	6.2	5.9	8.7	–2.8***
25 to 34 years	12.5	17.9	14.1	16.7	–2.6***
35 to 44 years	20.2	18.7	19.8	17.9	1.8**
45 to 54 years	21.2	21.1	21.2	18.2	2.9***
55 to 59 years	9.4	10.6	9.7	7.6	2.2***
60 to 64 years	6.5	7.7	6.9	6.0	0.9*
65 to 74 years	12.6	11.3	12.2	8.1	4.1***
75 to 84 years	4.7	2.6	4.1	5.5	–1.5***
85 years and over	1.6	0.2	1.2	2.2	–1.0***

2. See Appendix C for more information on sample weighting.

**Table 6.3. Comparison of demographic characteristics across the two panels, the pooled sample, and the ACS (cont.)**

Category	ANES	FFRISP	Pooled	ACS	Pooled – ACS
<b>Education</b>					
Less than 9th grade	0.6	0.8	0.7	6.4	–5.7***
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	8.9	10.7	9.4	9.1	0.4
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	31.1	30.6	30.9	29.6	1.4
Some college, no degree	21.6	22.2	21.8	20.1	1.7*
Associate’s degree	9.0	8.8	9.0	7.4	1.5***
Bachelor’s degree	19.2	15.5	18.2	17.3	0.8
Graduate or professional degree	9.5	11.4	10.1	10.1	0.0
<b>Annual household income</b>					
Less than \$9,999	2.7	4.0	3.1	7.2	–4.0***
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.0	4.0	3.3	5.5	–2.2***
\$15,000 to \$19,999	2.8	4.3	3.2	5.3	–2.1***
\$20,000 to \$24,999	5.3	7.2	5.9	5.3	0.6
\$25,000 to \$29,999	4.9	5.7	5.2	5.3	–0.1
\$30,000 to \$34,999	3.9	3.7	3.8	5.3	–1.5***
\$35,000 to \$39,999	11.1	12.3	11.4	4.9	6.5***
\$40,000 to \$49,999	7.6	8.6	7.9	9.3	–1.4**
\$50,000 to \$59,999	10.3	7.2	9.3	8.4	1.0
\$60,000 to \$74,999	13.2	11.6	12.7	10.4	2.3***
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.4	14.6	14.5	12.5	2.0**
\$100,000 to \$124,999	8.2	6.7	7.7	7.8	0.0
\$125,000 to \$149,999	4.8	3.7	4.5	4.5	0.0
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7.8	6.4	7.4	8.5	–1.1*
<b>Marital status</b>					
Married	66.7	60.6	65.0	50.2	14.8***
Widowed	17.0	3.0	13.0	6.3	6.6***
Divorced	8.4	13.3	9.8	10.6	–0.8
Separated	4.0	1.9	3.4	2.2	1.2***
Never married	4.0	21.2	8.9	30.8	–21.9***

**Table 6.3. Comparison of demographic characteristics across the two panels, the pooled sample, and the ACS (cont.)**

Category	ANES	FFRISP	Pooled	ACS	Pooled – ACS
<b>Household size</b>					
1	9.4	14.0	10.7	27.5	–16.8***
2	36.5	35.5	36.2	33.2	2.9***
3	20.5	19.4	20.1	15.9	4.2***
4	18.4	17.0	18.0	13.6	4.4***
5	9.5	7.2	8.8	6.2	2.6***
6	3.8	3.9	3.8	2.2	1.6***
7+	1.9	3.0	2.4	1.3	1.0***

\*\*\* Indicates significance at the 99% confidence level.

\*\* Indicates significance at the 95% confidence level.

\* Indicates significance at the 90% confidence level.

a. The differences between the ACS and the individual and pooled datasets can be explained by the different weighting methodology used for the ANES and FFRISP datasets. First, each panel was weighted using a different representation of the U.S. population; ANES responses were weighted using the Current Population Survey (CPS) and FFRISP responses were weighted using the ACS. Second, the set of demographic variables used to generate the weights differed between the two panels. For example, FFRISP included housing status, presence of children, and household size, whereas ANES did not. Third, some of the variables used by both panels to generate the weights were categorized differently. For example, ANES used four age categories (18- 29, 30- 44, 45- 59, and 60 and older), while FFRISP only used three (18- 34, 35- 54, and 55 and older). Given these differences in weighting methodology, the pooled weighted sample is not directly comparable to either the ACS or CPS.

## 6.3 Summary

Responses to the attitudinal GSS questions in the two panels are similar across each panel, with one exception: for all categories of spending, the pooled dataset had fewer respondents indicating that “too little” money was being spent, as compared to the national GSS sample. A comparison of the demographic information across the two panels shows more variation (Table 6.3). Many differences between the pooled dataset and ACS are statistically significant, though the datasets match reasonably well on gender and education.

The remainder of this report presents results using the pooled dataset. Appendix D provides model results by individual dataset along with the likelihood ratio tests (LRTs) that compare model estimates using several combinations of the underlying datasets.