

APPENDIX

The Daycare Questionnaire

Introduction

Hello, my name is (NAME), from The Angus Reid Group, a national market research company. We want to assure you we are not selling anything and are only interested in your opinions. For this short study we are speaking to Americans of voting age. Are you 18 years of age or older?

IF NO, ASK TO SPEAK WITH SOMEONE WHO IS, REPEAT INTRO/
WATCH QUOTAS/SKIP TO SCREENER B. IF NOT AVAILABLE, ARRANGE
CALLBACK—RECORD DETAILS

IF YES, WATCH QUOTAS/SKIP TO SCREENER Q.B

WHEN TARGET RESPONDENT IS NOT AVAILABLE: RECORD TIME, DAY
AND DATE OF CONVENIENT TIME TO CALLBACK AND FIRST NAME
OF DESIGNATED RESPONDENT. (MAKE 2 ATTEMPTS TO INTERVIEW
DESIGNATED RESPONDENT. IF NOT AVAILABLE AFTER 2 ATTEMPTS,
DISCONTINUE AND TALLY. GO ON TO NEXT PHONE CALL.)

B. For classification purposes only, what is your age, are you READ LIST.
RECORD ONE ANSWER ONLY.

[DO NOT READ] Under 18 [disqualify]

18–24

25–34

35–44

45–54

55–64

65 and over

[DO NOT READ] REFUSED [disqualify]
[IF REFUSED or UNDER 18, DISCONTINUE. ALL OTHERS CONTINUE.]
[NOTE TO FIELD: WATCH AGE QUOTAS]

C. AREA

New England [NORTH EAST]
Middle Atlantic [NORTH EAST]
East North Central [NORTH CENTRAL]
West North Central [NORTH CENTRAL]
South Atlantic [SOUTH]
East South Central [SOUTH]
West South Central [SOUTH]
Mountain [WEST]
Pacific [WEST]

[NOTE TO FIELD: WATCH REGION QUOTAS—QUOTAS APPLIED ON
FOUR MAJOR CENSUS REGIONS—BOTH TO BE RECORDED]

INTERVIEWER TO RECORD SEX

Male
Female

[NOTE TO FIELD: WATCH SEX QUOTAS.]

We would like to ask you about your opinions on politics and current events. In particular, we would like to hear your opinions on child care.

1. First, do you have any children under 12 years old in your household?

Yes
No
Refused

Baseline

[ASK ALL]

2. Do you think the federal government should spend more, less or the same amount of money on child care programs for low-income and working parents, or don't you think the federal government should play a role here at all?

More
Less
The Same
Government should not play a role
[DO NOT READ] No opinion/nothing/DK/Refused

Competence

“Easy question” and estimated costs

3. President Clinton has proposed having the federal government spend \$22 billion over five years for a new federal daycare program. The program would benefit up to 8 million families. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose this proposal?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- [DO NOT READ] Not sure/depends
- [DO NOT READ] Refused

[ASK ALL]

4. The proposed daycare program will cost \$22 billion over five years.

How much do you think this program would cost the average taxpayer each year?

- [PROBE—“we are just looking for your best guess of the **national average**”]
- [RECORD EXACT DOLLAR AMOUNT VERBATIM]

[ASK ALL]

5. As you know, there is only so much money to go around and choices have to be made on how best to spend taxpayer money. Suppose you were in Congress and your task was to decide how to divide **20 billion dollars** between several options: education, fighting crime, daycare, national defense and cutting taxes.

- [READ LIST][ROTATE]
- How much would spend on [ITEM]?
- And how much would you spend on [ITEM]?

- daycare
- education
- fighting crime
- national defense
- cutting taxes

- [DO NOT READ] DK
- [DO NOT READ] INCOMPLETE/CONFUSED/REFUSED
- [ONLY IF RESPONDENTS INQUIRE: INDICATE TOTAL DOLLARS SPENT—DO NOT PROMPT]

[NOTE: THE TOTAL NEED NOT EQUAL 20 billion dollars—the purpose is not to force respondent choice into the total]

[NOTE: ALLOW DKs and INCOMPLETES BUT TALLY]

[ASK RESPONDENTS CODED 2 OR 9 IN Q.1]

6. How much tax money a year would you, personally, be willing to pay so that families with children under 12 could receive more federal subsidized childcare?

[PROBE—"we are just looking for an estimate"]

[RECORD EXACT DOLLAR AMOUNT VERBATIM; if 'nothing' enter 0]

[ASK RESPONDENTS CODED 1 IN Q.1]

7. Would you be willing to raise your own federal income taxes say \$40 a year to fund government subsidized daycare for your children or would you just prefer to have the money to spend anyway you want? [RECORD ONE ANSWER ONLY]

Yes

No

DK/Refused

[ASK ALL]

8. President Clinton's daycare proposal has drawn some criticism. Can you think of any reason—**other than cost**—why a person might oppose this plan?

[DO NOT READ LIST]

There are other priorities for the government

Families should look after their own expenses

Daycare is not helpful for families

The government would have too much influence

Too much debt in government

Government too large/too many programs already

No reasons but cost

None/No reasons/nothing

9. OTHER [SPECIFY]

[ASK ALL]

9. Federal government subsidized daycare is one of many ways to help families with raising children. Here are some other possibilities for improving childcare. For each one of these options, please tell me which ones you think should be tried. **Choose as many as you like.**

Should we ... [READ LIST] [ROTATE]:

Lower taxes so parents are responsible for their daycare expenses?

Establish national, government-run daycare centers, required for all children?

Expand public schools so that they can also offer free daycare?

Provide more money to government agencies to enforce laws regarding home childcare?

Give parents larger tax deductions for daycare expenses?

Create a national parents training program?

Make it easier to remove children from their home if parents are inadequate?

Create national standards for how parents raise their children?

Have the federal government pay all daycare providers directly as they now pay government employees?

Make quality daycare a constitutionally protected right for all citizens?

YES

NO

[DO NOT READ] DK/REFUSED

Costs and Preferences

[NOTE: RESPONDENTS ARE ASKED *ONE OF 10, 11 OR 12*; ONLY RESPONDENTS CODES 1,2 AT Q.3]

[ASK ONLY OF CODES 1,2 AT Q.3]

Net cost per taxpayer

10. You mentioned that you [ANSWER AT Q.3] the proposed daycare program. If enacted, this daycare program would add approximately 36 dollars per year to the average tax return.

Do you still support this program?

YES [SKIP TO Q.13]

NO [SKIP TO Q.13]

DK/REFUSED [SKIP TO Q.13]

[PROBE—IF RESPONDENT HESITATES, REPEAT FIRST TWO SENTENCES OF Q.3]

Marginal tax increase

[ASK ONLY OF CODES 1,2 AT Q.3]

11. You mentioned that you [ANSWER AT Q.3] the proposed daycare program. If enacted, this would increase the average tax bill from \$6832 to \$6868.

Do you still support this program?

YES [SKIP TO Q.13]

NO [SKIP TO Q.13]

DK/REFUSED [SKIP TO Q.13]

[PROBE—IF RESPONDENT HESITATES, REPEAT FIRST TWO SENTENCES OF Q.3]

One more program on top of all the others

[ASK ONLY OF CODES 1,2 AT Q.3]

12. You mentioned that you [ANSWER AT Q.3] the proposed daycare program. Both the national government and the states already have multi-billion dollars daycare assistance programs, especially for the poor and disadvantaged.

Do you still support the new program?

YES [CONTINUE]

NO [CONTINUE]

DK/REFUSED [CONTINUE]

[PROBE—IF RESPONDENT HESITATES, REPEAT FIRST TWO SENTENCES OF Q.3]

Support when considering possible downside

[ASK ALL CODES 1,2 AT Q.3]

13. President Clinton's daycare proposal has been criticized on non-cost grounds. Would you support this program if there were a *reasonable* chance that this federal assistance would:

[READ ITEM] [ROTATE]

Would you support if it might [READ ITEM]?

reduce the daycare options available to parents

put out of business small, independent neighborhood programs

reduce parental control over how daycare are run

encourage non-working parents to take jobs

make it difficult for daycare centers to offer religious activities

increase the authority of the federal government at the expense of state officials

YES

NO

[DO NOT READ] DK/REFUSED

[IF RESPONDENT ASKS, A REASONABLE CHANCE IS 50%]

Non-governmental alternatives

14. President Clinton's federal assistance is one way that the government can assist parents needing additional child care help. I am now going to read you a list of other proposals to assist families with children. Please tell me whether you think they are **better** or **worse** than the proposal to spend 22 billion on a new childcare program.

[ROTATE]

[READ ITEM] Is this a better or worse idea than the childcare proposal?

reducing taxes so people have more discretionary income

increasing the tax deduction of parents for childcare expenses

eliminating government rules to facilitate more low-cost options for childcare

giving businesses incentives to provide workers with childcare

permit parents greater freedom to hire childcare help from overseas

Better
Worse
[DO NOT READ] The Same/DK
[DO NOT READ] Refused

NOTE: CODE REFUSALS SEPARATE FROM DKs

[ASK ALL]

Demographics

Now I have just a few more questions for classification purposes only.

Marital Status

15. What is your marital status? Are you...? [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER ONLY.]

Single
Married
Living common-law
Divorced or separated
Widowed
[DO NOT READ] Refused

Education

16. What is the highest level of education you have completed? [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER ONLY.]

Some High School or Less
High School Graduate
A Technical Diploma
Some College
College Graduate
Post Graduate Degree
[DO NOT READ] REFUSED

Occupation

17. Which of the following best describes your current employment situation? [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER ONLY.]

Work full-time (30 hours or more per week)
Work part-time (less than 30 hours per week)
Self-Employed
Full time homemaker
Student
Retired

Unemployed and not looking for work

Unemployed and looking for work

[DO NOT READ] REFUSED

Income

18. Which of the following categories best represents your total household income last year before taxes? Just stop me when I reach the proper category. [READ LIST]

Less than \$20,000

\$20,000 to under \$30,000

\$30,000 to under \$40,000

\$40,000 to under \$50,000

\$50,000 to under \$60,000

\$60,000 to under \$70,000

\$70,000 to under \$80,000

\$80,000 to under \$90,000

\$90,000 to under \$100,000

\$100,000 or more

[DO NOT READ] Refused

[DO NOT READ] DK

Race

19. In which of the following groups would you place yourself? [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER ONLY.]

White or Caucasian

Black or African American

Asian, Oriental or Pacific Islander

Native American or American Indian

Other (specify)

[DO NOT READ] Refused

20. And, are you of Hispanic or Latino origin? [DO NOT READ LIST]

Yes

No

Refused

THANK AND CONCLUDE INTERVIEW:

TIME STARTED:

TIME ENDED:

TOTAL TIME:

Notes

1 *Public Opinion, Polling, and Politics*

1. Richard Wirthlin who ran these polls also developed a “speech pulse” technique by which respondents could indicate exactly which words and phrases of the president’s speech evoked positive or negative reactions. Speeches could thus be fine-tuned, with “bad” ideas eliminated and “good” phrases recycled.
2. Verba’s speech is remarkable for its painless conflation of politics with empirical social science, a merging once virtually unthinkable in a discipline supposedly priding itself on dispassionate objective inquiry. Here, the adroit sampler differs not from the get-out-the-vote partisan activist. By pleading for more inclusiveness in the sample and raising the survey up as the supreme voice of popular sovereignty, Verba *de facto* advances aggrandizing the welfare state. It would be a miracle if these freshly recruited, once ignored respondents did not insist on more government programs to help the downtrodden. His views on the social scientist as the handmaiden of enlightened democracy ironically recall “old-fashioned” normative political science.
3. Those unfamiliar with political science as a discipline may not appreciate the significance of Brady’s words. That this paean appeared in *PS* (the official journal of the American Political Science Association) suggests an almost official certification of this idea within the profession. Brady also acknowledges the help of several disciplinary notables in crafting this essay, further credence to the idea that this “polls-assist-democracy” relationship is now disciplinary dogma.
4. Organizations advocating reduced welfare spending are obscure players in poll-driven public discourse, but they do exist. Predictably given question drafting leeway, these results paint a picture quite different from the more familiar “we-want-it-all” outcomes offered by mainstream polling organizations. Over the years, for example, polls sponsored by the National Taxpayers Union find widespread public resistance to tax hikes to expand entitlement programs. Repeatedly, citizens here favor rolling back the Welfare State, for example, constitutionally imposed spending limits. In principle, this is the identical public who elsewhere clamors for big government.
5. Our argument is essentially indirect—the poll-fabricated consensus defines policy “reasonableness.” A stronger argument would show that these polls *physically*

infiltrate decision making and are carefully heeded, if not decisive. A superb investigation of the survey's roll in foreign policy during the 1970s and 1980s strongly suggest this more direct impact. Robert Mattes (1992, especially Chapters Six and Seven) recounts that all presidents during this period spent lavishly on polling, and these results daily accompanied specific policy recommendations. Top officials also sought these data, sending aides daily to the White House to obtain this information. More telling, poll results were absolutely integral to executive branch and legislative debates, often being decisive in close, contentious situations. Here officials used polls to calculate damage control for taking controversial stands. Repeatedly, few public figures evidenced a "Profiles in Courage" willingness to buck poll delineated majority sentiment. Of course, whether this tendency strictly applies to social welfare is an empirical matter. Still, we suspect that hefty majorities on matters such as Social Security or childcare easily cower doubters.

6. A particularly important aspect of this agenda-building lies within the polls conducted by government agencies that rarely see the light of day. This can sometimes be viewed as "test marketing" public policies. Brehm's (1993, 8–12) overview of government run poll finds that in Fiscal Year 1991, the government itself conducted some 1.5 million interviews. Some were directed on behalf of congressional committees looking into specific problems. How these polls shaped legislative initiatives is, unfortunately, unknown.
7. Creating this putative entitlement consensus often occurs via selectively publicizing polls that, predictably, reveal public desires for Washington supplied "good things." For example, a November 15, 1999 *New York Times* op-ed column by Princeton University professor Sean Wilentz asserts that the public appetite in the 1960s for expansive social welfare has returned (if it vanished at all) despite all the government cutbacks and downsizing talk. Data from two polls are tersely noted yet, says Wilentz, the evidence shows that politics "... is moving for universal health care and federal financing to hire 100,000 new teachers." These well-hidden data are evidently deemed authoritative. Liberalism is back, moreover, despite contrary signs—even welfare cutbacks demonstrate this resurgent liberalism for these prove that government can be effective. The Reagan-Bush era is over, concludes, Wilentz ("For Voters the 1960s Never Died," *New York Times*, November 16, 1999). By contrast, a National Taxpayer Union poll conducted almost simultaneously reports that a majority of voters want the federal budget slashed by at least 5 percent. (<http://www.ntu.org/P9911newspendingpoll.htm>). Both polls are suspect, no doubt, but what is notable is that the pro-welfare poll-based story reached a huge audience via the prestigious *Times*, while the NTU was distributed largely to conservative cognoscenti.

2 From Wishes to Hard Choices

1. Our discussion obviously simplifies the immense obstacles that inhere in translating individual preferences into collective choices in institutional settings with

varied rules. Analysts with a mathematical bent have shown that the possible nonobvious outcomes abound, especially where actor preferences are not strictly orderly. Our point is the very modest one that institutional outcomes are not mere aggregations of individual first choices.

2. In 1995, the per capita state and local tax burden for education was \$1006 (*U.S. Statistical Abstract 1998*, Table 500). What the precise percentage figure was in 1999, when the poll was conducted, is unknown at this moment, but 50 percent hike for education seems plausible. This poll was sponsored by National Public Radio, the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, all organizations capable of doing the simple arithmetic. One might hypothesize that withholding the baseline figures had more to do with soliciting this generosity than technical insufficiency.
3. The strategy adopted by Wilson (1983) takes this approach. Citizens in two cities were quizzed regarding expanding services. Only after stating their position was the payment issue raised. Most citizens were consistent and thus received the label “sincere.” Obviously, however, a gap still remains between verbal support and writing the check.
4. This connection between the proliferation of surveys and the legitimization of participatory democracy can be reversed: polling reduces citizens to passive spectators cheering on factions within government. Simple-minded answers to simple questions replace serious public discourse. The poll is thus an easy escape from more demanding citizenship responsibilities. This argument is developed in detail by Dryzek (1988), and we shall return to it in Chapter 5.

3 Civic Competence

1. Educators, predictably, have sought to associate virtually every type of instruction with “civic competence.” One listing includes ecological attentiveness, awareness of global issues, familiarity with social problems, being a skilled consumer, knowing how to act morally, participating in social change, possessing critical skills, and being patriotic, among other virtues (Remy and Turner 1979). Morse (1989) would add a faculty for talking, judgmental capacity, the courage to act, and a knack for reflection, among others. Without doubt, a careful compilation of such admonishments might well exceed a hundred “worthy” traits essential for civic competence.
2. As this Converse-influenced literature developed, multiple terms were employed to capture cognitive dexterity: ideological thinking, rationality, political sophistication, and the like. Clearly, terminological distinctions here are important, but for the present, we can assume that all centrally touch on “civic capacity.”
3. A notable example of this tenacious conflation of structure with dexterity can be found in Gastil and Dillard (1999). What makes this exemplar remarkable is that it commences with the question of whether bringing citizens together for an information-intensive series of assemblies (the so-called Deliberative Poll) will

yield “... better public decisions” (3). And how is this “better” assessed? The answer is by examining the interconnectedness and differentiation of resultant, post discussion preferences. In other words, the statistical form of one’s views is, definitionally, equated with good judgment. Logically, this is a non sequitur. We offer this exemplar only to illustrate that thirty-five years of post-Converse scholarly rumination does not guarantee thoughtfulness.

4. Justifying this joining of Medicare, education, and highways into one question receives only a few Appendix lines plus a footnote sentence. It inescapably seems *ad hoc* (the chief rationale seems that all involve lots of money). Needless to say, each policy represents distinct constituencies, and positions on one need not predict stands elsewhere. Indeed, highways and education may itself be a tradeoff. Remarkably, thousands of words explore methodological nuances, while actual policy choices are nearly neglected entirely. Recall earlier comments regarding pollster familiarity with real world politics.
5. A further complication is that we do not know the amounts involved in these spend-cut exercises. What may appear entirely logical may, in fact, be nonsensical if the dollar amounts do not balance. For example, cutting defense by a dollar and rising social spending by ten dollars hardly demonstrates “competence” yet this would be construed as such in this research design.
6. We should likewise reiterate that in those few polls where shouldering a tax burden is seemingly assessed, the questionnaire masks what it truly being solicited. Recall Chapter Two’s examples whereby majorities “agree” to pay \$500 a year more in local taxes for improved education. This would be approximately a 50 percent increase per capita in education spending, a message hardly drawing even the most proeducation office seekers. Shades of the “pennies-per-day” tactic to fleece the gullible.
7. A remarkable feature of this analysis is its neglect of hard data on tax referenda. Here the public clearly has an opportunity to increase its tax burden and, as it is well known, the collective answer is often “no.” Recent research relating voting to budgetary expansion also cautions us against a picture of public generosity. Peltzman (1998, ch. 5) in his analysis of both national and state data from 1950 to 1988 finds that incumbents at both levels are electorally punished for expanding government spending. This is particularly true for social welfare spending. Of course, there is no inherent contradiction here since the voting and the public opinion universe are not identical.
8. The effort here to let people escape the onus of ignorance is ingenious. In one chain of reasoning, cognitive skills are depicted as a function of education and this, in tern, is said to be determined by cultural and structural factors (271). This casual linkage is patently open to multiple, and far more plausible interpretations—for example, educational attainment flows from native ability and cannot be boosted by cultural manipulation (an interpretation on which substantial hard empirical evidence exists). The important point is that this rush to flattering judgment almost unthinkingly disregards credible rival hypotheses. This issue of conquering civic incompetence via remediation will be discussed at length in Chapter Six.

9. Delli Carpini and Keeter's odd reasoning is hardly unique. Verba, Scholozman and Brady (1995, ch. 11) take a similar approach to civic skill—individual capacity is merely a function of access to resources. Those at the bottom are there *only* because they have limited access to skills such as language proficiency, job-related expertise, or organizational membership. Being proficient thus resembles shopping—if you want a product you have to go where the product is available, and anybody can acquire the goods if they only know where to shop and have the money. Logically, then, inserting the untalented into an environment awash with enrichment would do the equalizing trick. Untold educational failures speak loudly to the foolishness of this reasoning.
10. Contrast this social policy resourcefulness to similarly ascertained race-related opinions. Here “bad opinions,” that is, negative views of blacks, are reactively dismissed as defective, nonrational, and even a sign of mental illness. Imagine the outcry if researchers sought to redeem these disapproving views as investigators now rescue cravings for social welfare enhancement.
11. It is exceedingly difficult in today's contented environment to affirm the greatness of this loyalty and legal obedience accomplishment. To appreciate it fully, one is well advised to read early critics of Republicanism for they assumed, with ample reason that a Republic such as ours could not count on the affection of citizens. For them, only the glory of a monarchy or force could bind citizens to a government of humdrum men like themselves. It was asserted that such a Republic would inevitably degenerate into anarchy (see Wood 1969, 65–70, for this account).

4 *Public Opinion I: Policies and Questions*

1. While the Tennessee experiment (Student–Teacher Achievement Ratio, or “STAR” in acronym language) is always heralded as the Great Hope, skeptical studies have been relegated to academic obscurity. Among other STAR study deficiencies, each grade had a 20 to 30 percent drop out rate, often concentrated among lower performing students; no pretests were used to establish a legitimate benchmark to assess future test score gain; and neither the schools or classrooms were selected randomly. Teachers and administrators also were given incentives for increased performance. Mention should also be made of pundits who have conflated “statistical significance” with “educationally significant” (see Hanushek 1999 and Hoxby 1999 for an overview of these limitations).
2. Lurking below the surface in these discussions is the touchy issue of student discipline. It is difficult to teach effectively if students run wild. This fact may well explain why students in Japan or Korea excel in classes of forty-five plus students—they are better behaved. Unfortunately, disciplining miscreants is a “hot button” political issue given commonplace disparities across different groups.
3. The escalation of costs is seldom grasped by smaller class advocates. Harvard economics professor Caroline Hoxby (1999) finds that costs and class size tend to be proportional across the entire range. To reduce classes from twenty pupils

to eighteen, raises costs ten percent; going from ten to nine similarly adds a ten percent increase. In other words, the marginal cost of each reduction grows as class size diminishes.

4. The hidden heavy burdens on inner-city schools are easily swept aside in this rush for a miracle cure. Not only are construction costs exceedingly high here (and these include extra security measures), but teacher salaries must also be larger to reflect cost-of-living differences and physical riskiness. In one 1984 survey of Los Angeles teachers, some forty percent indicated that they would resign rather than accept an inner-city school assignment in a dangerous neighborhood (cited in Ross 1999). A detailed analysis of classroom size reduction in California reports that poorer school districts cannibalize other remedial programs to free up funds to reduce student–teacher ratios (Stecher and Bohrnstedt 1999). Simply allocating funds according to poverty levels does not capture this gap since many impoverished areas are lower-cost rural localities. Again, Clinton’s assistance plan is little more than a gesture and may well nourish appetites for vastly greater outlays.
5. An especially troubling question concerns administrative flexibility. If the class ratio is legally mandated at, say, 18:1, and the class has eighteen students, and a single new student arrives, must an entire new class be created? This may entail additional construction and hiring a new teacher, all for a single student! Local administrators might also quietly manipulate district boundaries or how students are classified to secure federal funds.
6. Our analysis does not intend to equate “uncertified teacher” with “bad teacher.” In fact, it is often argued that the certification process itself, with its emphasis on irrelevant pedagogical theory, often discourages good instructors from education careers. Still, it is doubtlessly risky to suddenly open the schoolhouse doors to those who would not otherwise prefer teaching jobs.
7. For example, classroom size can be artificially reduced by reclassifying administrators or paraprofessionals as teachers or mixing in highly specialized small-scale instruction with normal education. Some Massachusetts school districts solved the space limitation by dividing classes in half with coteachers. Minnesota has attempted to address the lure of chicanery with strict definitions of “teacher,” but, interestingly, it still allows social workers to be counted in teacher/student ratios. A few legislators have even coined the term “class-size police” in this uproar over student–teacher ratios. The important point is that fakery is not unknown in educational data, and it would surely be encouraged if funds were narrowly tied to usage and performance.
8. In fact, a 1998 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll asked respondents to choose *one* item from an array of twelve that would best improve schools in their community. “More teachers” received the endorsement of 10 percent of the respondents as the first choice. “Stricter discipline” was slightly more popular but no one idea received majority endorsement.
9. Official Census data collected in 1993 showed that monthly cost varied by income group, with those below the poverty line spending 17.7 of their monthly income on child care; only those with incomes below \$1,200 spent a quarter of their

- income on childcare, the highest percentage. The average was 7.5 percent but, and this is critical, 61 percent of those with incomes below \$1,200 received childcare *without* any payment (figures are from “Greenbook” 1998, 671).
10. Research on daycare is predictably highly politicized and the same “facts” can be given entirely different meanings. Much depends on assumptions regarding “good” social policy, for example, whether it is indeed admirable to encourage more women to enter the workforce or to stay at home. Our analysis, admittedly, stresses government-funded daycare’s possible drawbacks, given that such consideration is absent in polls. For an account that stresses the positive side of government intervention, especially assistance directed by professionals, see the articles in “The Silent Crisis in U.S. Child Care” 1999, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* ed. Suzanne W. Helburn 563: 8–219. Note the term “silent” in the title, a descriptor suggesting public indifference to this “crisis.”
 11. The federal government’s own Consumer Price Index data for urban areas showed that between 1982/84 and 1997, the price of daycare and nursery school rose some 34 percent compared to 60 percent for all items. In particular, daycare increases lagged far behind food, housing and medical care (*U.S. Statistical Abstract 1998*, Table 773).
 12. Indeed, recall that in 1993 about 60 percent of the very poor paid *nothing* for their childcare, although we must be cautious that such reports may reflect a fear of the IRS or represents a bartered exchange of services (data are from “Greenbook” 1998, 671).
 13. As in the classroom size issue, the underlying science here is uncertain. Day care professionals insist that their version of “quality” impacts positively on children. The evidence is, alas, not nearly as conclusive. Consider the by-now well-demonstrated fact that intensive early intervention programs like Head Start do not produce the hoped for long-term cognitive gains among the economically disadvantaged. The issue is not one of daycare versus no daycare but what, exactly, should this intervention entail (some of these impact data are summarized in Olsen 1997).
 14. This religious issue in government subsidized daycare is a legal nightmare waiting to happen. No doubt, untold popular daycare center activities might be viewed as “religious” by those insisting on strict church-state separation, for example, celebrating Christmas or before meal prayers. The comingling of funds—as when the minister also serves as a childcare administrator—might also prove troublesome in a court case. Under Public Law 104-103, this issue is partially sidestepped by permitting religious training if the funds come from parents, not the state directly. Uncertainty abounds here and at least some religion-based childcare centers have mixed emotions about greater federal aid (see Davis 1994).
 15. The ripple effects of government required “quality” can be surprising. For example, “quality” almost always means larger enterprises, and these may collide with zoning restrictions against businesses in residential areas, hardly a trivial fact for

the poor needing close-at-hand assistance. Size also means required compliance with numerous employment rules that hinder scheduling flexibility, another relevant factor for single parents and the working poor. Again, the convenient, sympathetic relative may be the superior choice though this option is deplored by professionals.

16. The public, in fact, seems to be of a divided mind when this “biological family knows best” issue is interjected in the debate. On the one hand, government financial assistance for daycare is immensely popular. On the other hand, according to January 1, 1999 Lou Harris poll, only 15 percent favored giving government primary responsibility in ensuring family access to childcare. Sixty percent said “families themselves” while another 23 percent said employers. Even more troubling to advocates of government assisted daycare, an October 1999 Princeton Survey Research/Pew poll found an overwhelming majority endorsing the proposition that “too many children are being raised these days in daycare centers these days.” Perhaps the term “ambivalent” is best applied to this situation (though some might also add “guilty” to this mood).
17. The family financial hardships of returning to a single breadwinner family are deceptively complicated. Over and above childcare expenses, working entails many other costs (e.g., clothing, transportation) and some of the income loss is made up by lowered taxes. For a parent to quit the workforce due to lack of available low-cost daycare may not therefore be as financially burdensome as imagined. The choice to work also can transcend monetary calculations and thus may be pursued regardless of daycare expenses.
18. Although the Angus Reid Group is relatively unknown to those working with off-the-shelf political data sets, it is a major worldwide survey firm doing in 1999 some \$50 million in bookings. It also has conducted academic surveys and, as a matter of policy, does not perform “political polls.”

5 Public Opinion II: Fervent Desires

1. The education questions concerned hiring thirty thousand teachers in grades 1–3 and drew a figure of 83 percent in favor. The childcare question was the traditional “more/same/less” type. Here, 53 percent favored more federal money, 4 percent less, 19 percent the same, and 20 percent stating that the federal government should not play a role. The data come from the national Angus Reid “Express” poll conducted March 3–5, 2000.
2. Analysis emphasizes competency among those supporting the Clinton initiative, but we certainly do not imply that opponents are thereby excused from these requirements. Rejecting entitlement lures is hardly a sign of greater wisdom. As we shall see, policy proficiency differences between supporters and opponents tend to be modest and nonsystematic.
3. This figure was arrived at by estimating the number of future individual income tax return at 120,000,000. The most recent exact figure was 116,060,000 from

- 1996, and this “120” figure seemed a reasonable extrapolation based on the previous pattern of slow, but steady growth in the number of taxpayers.
4. It is worth noting, however, that this “spend whatever necessary” is not unknown in the polling industry. Between 1981 and 1989, the CBS/New York Times Poll asked on six separate occasions whether protecting the environment is so important that improvement should be pursued “regardless of costs.” On five instances, the “yes” response was the majority, often overwhelmingly. One can only wonder what the questionnaire drafter had in mind. Cited in “Willing to Pay,” *Congressional Quarterly Special Report*, January 20, 1990, p. 142.
 5. Recent presidential campaigns easily confirm that office seekers find the sorry state of public education a useful topic for duplicitous rhetoric. Every candidate vies for the title of “the education president” with such unproven schemes as putting computers in every classroom, national student achievement tests, or massive federal subsidies to boost reading scores. This effort resembles the hawking of “surefire” medical cures to the desperate and, as in medicine, the real public policy debate damage may be in obscuring real, though modest, improvement designs. After all, why strive to improve school discipline when wiring every classroom to the Internet will (supposedly) bring instant improvement.
 6. In a situation that might be labeled “politics imitating research,” observers of the 2000 presidential context noted that Democratic contender Al Gore displayed a clear penchant for calling George W. Bush’s ideas “risky schemes.” In one Florida speech, for example, Gore invoked “risky scheme” a dozen times to describe Bush’s tax proposal. One of Gore’s press releases used eight “risky scheme” mentions. *The Weekly Standard*, April 17, 2000, p. 2.
 7. Not unexpectedly, both here and in the hiring more teachers exercise even numbers such as ten, fifty, one hundred, even a thousand were very popular.

6 *Bestowing the Democratic Mantle*

1. The huge expense of polling has important implications if it is to serve as a “popular” counterforce to elite domination. In this research’s preliminary stages, a prominent survey organization was approached for a one-shot poll involving five hundred face-to-face in a single metropolitan area. The estimated cost was about \$160,000, hardly a sum available to “ordinary” citizens. Regularly running polls on various topics would easily exceed a half million dollars a year.
2. The penetrability of surveys to political influence is impossible to gauge accurately, but the financial nexus between pollster and client surely encourages such attentiveness. Those drafting questionnaire items can also easily “sneak in” ideologically tainted items given the laxity of supervision in organizations conducting numerous polls. A particular striking example is given by Sommers (1994, 251–253) of a radical feminist using the well-respected Harris Poll to provide a scientifically inaccurate picture of depression among married women. Such manipulation seldom goes detected given the general assumption of research professionalism.

3. The willingness of survey analysts to simultaneously rely on polls to “guide” public decisions while elsewhere acknowledging gross inaccuracy is a fascinating subject. In fact, improving survey performance is a major preoccupation among practitioners. The poll’s shortcomings are evidenced in the failure of preelection polls to forecast accurate vote outcomes despite enormous technological advances. One commentator (Barone 1996) even argues that the 1996 preelection polls fared *worse* than the notorious 1948 polls that declared Dewey the winner over Truman.
4. Historically, the polling industry has strenuously resisted regulation. Yet, paradoxically, if polls are to be granted immense new authority, this regulation is virtually inevitable. This new insistence on quality will probably sharply reduce industry numbers since smaller operators will be unable to pass along increased overhead costs to customers. The parallel is the auto industry, where tough safety and emission standards drove marginal competitors from the marketplace.
5. Analysis skips those arguments asserting that even under ideal circumstances, the initiative hinders the popular will given its vulnerability to manipulation plus its incapacity to prioritize. In this context, what its defenders label “success” would truly be democratic failure (see Clark 1998 for this countervailing perspective).
6. This indeterminacy partly flows from the inherent contradictions of protecting minority rights versus heeding the majority will. The majority’s victory is not always certified as “democratic” if it violates what is judged to be substantively democratic. For example, when a majority of voters reject policies helping certain favored minorities (e.g., gays, blacks), analysts may score this action as “undemocratic.” Yet, if a majority thwarts a business lead effort to pass “progrowth” legislation, this triumph is scored as “democratic.” With decision rules derived entirely from who wins and loses, confusion is inevitable.
7. In 1994, proponents of the five major California ballot propositions spent an average of \$7 million per measure. And, most attempts fail despite ample campaigns (Gerber 1998).
8. Those unfamiliar with “new and improved democracy” cannot possibly imagine the proliferating schemes to augment elections. Carson and Martin (1999) detail a plethora of putative advisory bodies: citizen juries, planning cells, neighborhood policy juries, citizen survey panels, and similar contrivances.
9. The paucity of hard evidence regarding the collective outcome’s wisdom is hardly surprising if one closely scrutinizes the device’s theoretical foundations. The alleged connection between collective discourse and superior outcomes is seldom empirically well demonstrated. Clichés regarding truth emerging from the “marketplace of ideas” is *not* proof. Groups are just as capable of folly as are isolates, and the phenomena of mob hysteria is commonplace. Once again, hope triumphs over an awkward reality. The shaky value of the marketplace of ideas to extract truth is discussed further in Weissberg (1996).
10. Public officials can also be perplexed regarding this electronic citizen feedback. In the Cube experiment, for example, officials often disagreed over how to treat citizen guidance and, most critically, there were no legal strictures. Reactions

seemed to be *ad hoc* and situational, a far cry from rule by law. Hollander (1985, ch. 2) depicts this confusion in detail.

11. The cause of death was not always resource insufficiency. One particular example deserves special mention—"Anticipatory Democracy." This device engaged thousands of ordinary citizens, supplemented with polls and other feedback mechanisms, to (ostensibly) help governments overcome gridlock. Popular in the 1960s, it instigated over forty projects and took ample credit for various policy innovations. It has, apparently, vanished (Baker 1978).
12. A revealing feature of this system was the lack of participation by elected officials and its relative domination by combative computer enthusiasts. Moreover, interchanges often resembled normal conversation with people one might not normally encounter, not new information seeking. Anonymity also spawned extensive personal abuse, a notable reason why elected officials avoided participation.
13. Even if intervention programs were successful, this does not prove that inequalities can be overcome. Bestowing educational enrichment on the disadvantaged will close the gap *only* if "the have's" are denied similar measures. Moreover, even if intelligence was entirely environmentally determined, successfully manipulation not guaranteed. Jensen's (1998) overview suggests that environmental factors are exceedingly complex, difficult to specify, and may be beyond systematic control.
14. The classic examples are the European Socialist parties. Here, ordinary citizens, thanks to expert party leadership, are able to impose extensive social welfare systems that are the envy of American workers. These parties, unlike the Democrats with their infatuation with "openness" and diversity, judge their effectiveness on substantive outcomes, not process.
15. The disdain for hard evidence in this oft-made appeal is impossible to exaggerate. Only one notable example must suffice to demonstrate this irresponsibility. In Barber's plea from "strong democracy" he expressly addresses the possibility of mass foolishness. He offers several assurances, including quotes from Machiavelli and Roosevelt plus the pledge that new empowered citizens will undoubtedly exercise self-control if only awarded these fresh responsibilities (Barber 1984, ch. 7). Not a shred of hard, scientific evidence is offered.
16. Our fear is hardly unique. When Ross Perot unveiled his 1992 Electronic Town Meeting scheme, numerous political commentators vehemently criticized its totalitarian possibilities. This reproach frequently came from notable liberals. Anthony Lewis in the *New York Times* (1992) evoked images of Mussolini and Fidel Castro plus end-runs around the Constitution. Sidney Blumenthal, another well-known liberal, blasted the proposal as facilitating demagogic manipulation, calling it "the Geraldo system" (1992).

7 Conclusions

1. Perhaps this disproportionate attention is ideologically rooted. Specifically, campaign contributions come from wealthy business groups, while poll elucidation is

- the domain of journalists and academics. Campaign gifts thus help “the rich,” while polls help “ordinary citizens.” One could only imagine what might transpire if the polling industry were suddenly dominated by conservative analysts.
2. Even that punishment is rare. Our excursion into the twisted quest for “citizen competence” in Chapter Three should be recalled. Professional etiquette suggests subdued disagreement, not sharp rebuke. Even gross misrepresentation of data is seldom punished, unless, perchance, the fraud involves federal money. Truly egregious misinterpretations are generally chastised with nonpublication though, to be frank, this gatekeeping activity is often intertwined with judgments having little to do with accuracy.
 3. A more complex (and perhaps more important) argument here concerns the relationship between the polling industry as a rival of political parties. Information gathering was once central to the party’s purpose, and this is often rendered obsolete by the for-hire pollster. Similarly, survey data analysts now perform functions once executed by party officials, for example, appealing to distinct demographic groups.
 4. This image of being glued to the polls is, of course, empirically correct. Chapter One noted, for example, that the Reagan White House spent a million dollars yearly on polls and that these data were integral to the information given daily to the president. This vigilance has by now become routine, even institutionalized, thanks to modern technology.
 5. This is not quite true. In the televised debate among Republican candidates prior to the February 2000 South Carolina primary, Bush, McCain, and Keyes were asked how they would treat polling, if they were president. Each strongly denounced poll pandering on matters of national importance. Yet, at least the first two candidates extensively used polls in their campaign and would surely consult them if elected.
 6. Our analysis consciously avoids that one issue lurking in the background—what Kuran (1995) calls “preference falsification” or misrepresenting one’s true opinion in more plain-Jane language. We strongly suspect that this is common in the public’s social welfare pronouncements given the “respectability” of this form of public compassion. Since everybody already knows that this pro-welfare position is the public norm, disagreement might reflect an odious deviancy. The poll’s redefinition of “compassion” as endorsing state intervention (as opposed to private efforts) is a Pandora’s Box subject and surely does an inquiry beyond what we here can offer.
 7. Our assessment of the Deliberative Poll, an instrument allegedly overcoming these deficiencies, should be recalled. To repeat, this “upgrade civic competency” task is side-stepped when the instrument is evaluated. At best, respondents might emerge “better” informed, but better does not mean competent. Perhaps this “bait and switch” tactic is understandable given the hazy nature of “civic competence” and, speculatively, the dreary outcomes. No wonder, then, that analysis typically centers on peripheral issues like attitude change or increased attitude coherence.

8. Our example is not hypothetical. Prior to Ford launching its Windstar van, its market research inquired into three-door versus four-door preferences. The poll verdict was “stay with three-door models.” When initially marketed against the new Chrysler four-door models, however, the Windstar fell flat. It cost Ford nearly half a billion dollars to retool their assembly line to correct this marketing misjudgment. What happened to those offering bad advice is unknown, however.
9. Interestingly, bits and pieces of the existing public opinion literature offer ample confirmation of this point, though the implication for plebiscitary democracy is not made explicit. Here, analysis discovers that responses can vary immensely by question details or the nature of supporting/opposing arguments (see, for example Lau, Smith, and Fiske 1991; Zaller and Feldman 1992; and others). Left unsaid is that this variability bestows greater power to those controlling the questionnaire. Perhaps this implication embarrasses those claiming scientific disinterest.

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