

Pre-Analysis Plan Amendments
Entrenched versus Shallow Norms in Foreign Policy:
Evidence on the Chemical and Nuclear Weapons
“Taboos”*

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1 Amendments

We fielded a pilot of 325 respondents on mTurk to verify that our design was performing appropriately. However, we discovered a significant design flaw, which requires correction. We detail our changes below.

First, instead of giving all respondents the list *and* direct questions, going forward, only respondents assigned to the non-sensitive list will be asked the direct question. Although the original design of the experiment was in accordance with recent literature (Aronow, Coppock, Crawford, and Green 2015; Eady 2017), in which list and direct questions are combined, our pilot results indicated that respondents assigned to the sensitive list were significantly more likely to support using [nuclear/chemical] weapons when asked directly, compared to respondents who received the non-sensitive list. This issue was likely caused by a demand effect. When respondents observed that the experiment asked them twice about [nuclear/chemical] weapons – once in the list and once directly – they may have believed that we, the researchers, would like them to express support for using weapons of mass destruction, and adapted their behavior accordingly.

This design modification trades-off our ability to detect misreporting for a more accurate estimate of direct support. We believe this amendment is defensible because the issue of list assignment moving direct question response is a much more fundamental design problem.

Second, we decided to modify the list items and direct question response options in the mTurk study in order to match the list and direct question we utilized in our initial 2016 Qualtrics experiment. These changes help us maintain consistency between the two experiments, and ensure that any differences between the two studies are not due to design. The list now reads as follows, with the sensitive item in red:

- Cut down on military spending.
- Close down Guantanamo Bay prison.
- Send undocumented immigrants back to their country.
- Be willing to use [nuclear/chemical] weapons during war.

The direct question response items are now:

- Yes.
- No.
- Don't Know/Not Sure.

2 References

1. Aronow, Peter M., Alexander Coppock, Forrest W. Crawford, and Donald P. Green. 2015. "Combining List Experiment and Direct Question Estimates of Sensitive Behavior Prevalence." *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology* 3(1): 43-66.
2. Eady, Gregory. 2017. "The Statistical Analysis of Misreporting on Sensitive Survey Questions." *Political Analysis* 25(2): 241-59.