

Analysing the Politics Survey.... Why it is so difficult...

The politics survey had the highest response rate so far in all 2361 responses. 99% were committed Christians but only 87.7% self defined evangelicals (2020)

about 10–15% failed to complete at least some questions.. so the numbers go down and missing data goes up especially near the end of the questionnaire.

1006 of these came from the open web link suggesting they are completely new members to the panel. The demographics of this groups is somewhat different to the established panel... they tend to be younger, more London based, more male, more likely to be from Ethnic minority... and less likely to be self defining as evangelicals ... So if we include everybody (or just all the evangelicals among them in the analysis) we are dealing with a substantially different demographic from all our previous surveys... So we are even less able than usual to say that “x % of evangelicals said.....” and make any assumptions that it’s representative ... or comparable with any of our own earlier findings.

Even more of a problem is the gender balance ... In most of our surveys we get slightly more men... maybe up to 54%.... In this survey 60% of respondents are men.. Does this mean more men than women are interested in politics... or at least in telling us what they think about politics..?

Among our respondents when you look at the raw data there are some very significant differences between the male and female view. Broadly speaking women respondents are left-leaning and the men more conservative ... You can see this data here (evangelicals only) <https://www.dropbox.com/s/enx7o3296flgedo/voting%20intentions%20of%20evangelicals%20by%20gender%20september%202014.xls?dl=0>

Now the classic way to correct for this sort of difference is to weight the data so that each woman’s voice counts for more than each man’s ... (no sexist comments please!) I’ve played around with this .. but what ratio should we use... In the general population women slightly outnumber men... among churchgoers they substantially outnumber men... so I’ve done two alternative weights with women counting as 51% and then as 60%

So for example for those intending to vote Labour we would get these percentages..

From the whole sample	23.5%
Women from the whole sample	26.7%
All replies from the web link	26.4%
From all evangelicals (87.7% of all respondents)	22.4%
For the web sample of evangelicals	24.5%
For the regular panel of evangelicals	21.0%
From evangelical women	26.1%

From all evangelicals weighted to the 51% female figure 23.1%

From all evangelicals weighted to the 60% female figure 23.6%

Which of these figures should we use? (And there will be other questions where similar or greater differences will emerge.)