



# *Voter Satisfaction with Ranked Choice Voting*

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# *Ranked Choice Voting*



Potential to address polarization



Political and legal opposition heightened over last decade



Research focuses on voter confidence and/or error



# Methodology

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## Qualtrics Mock Ballot

- Five 2024 Election Candidates
- Questions on ease & confidence, satisfaction & trust, political identity & demographics



## Participants

- N = 923
- Online solicitation with gift card lottery
- Eligible US voters



## Treatment Groups

- One SCV group
- Three RCV groups with standard instructions
- Two RCV groups with different instructions

# Hypotheses



## **Ease/Voter Confidence**

Voters using RCV will not find their ballots more confusing or complicated than voters using SCV

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## **Voter Satisfaction with the Democratic Process**

Voters using RCV will be more satisfied, trusting, and accepting of the outcome

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## **Political orientation/identity**

Far right/left voters and voters who strongly identify as political will be less confident, satisfied, trusting, and accepting of the outcome of an RCV election

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# Results: Ease & Confidence

## Voters found all ballots easy

- Almost 80% of all respondents found their assigned voting method “somewhat” or “extremely easy”
- Likewise, vast majority did not find their assigned ballot confusing and were confident their vote would be counted correctly

## RCV ballots are less “easy” but no more “confusing”

- All RCV ballots except hand-rank were perceived to be less “easy” than the single choice ballot
- The only RCV ballot more “confusing” was the low instruction RCV ballot.  
Instructions matter!

## Voter confidence is high as long as instructions are clear

- The only RCV ballot with significantly lower voter confidence was the low instruction RCV ballot.

## As age increases, voters are more likely to find optical scan easiest

- Other than the video grid, all other ballot types (including SCV) were considered more difficult



Increased time spent  
on grid ballots =  
increased perceptions  
of ease

# *Results: Voter Satisfaction*

## **Voters were generally satisfied with all methods**

- Null result on satisfaction with voting method
- When grouped, voters were slightly less satisfied with RCV as a voting method, compared to single choice

## **RCV voters more satisfied with outcome, regardless of own preferences**

- When grouped, RCV voters were more satisfied with their outcome, regardless of their own preferences
- When grouped, RCV voters found the outcome more fair, regardless of their own preferences

## **RCV better captures voter preferences**

- When grouped, RCV voters felt their assigned ballots better captured their “preferences”
- Note: RCV ballots did not better capture “perspective”



**Optical scan ballots =  
more democratic,  
more fair, more  
accepted regardless  
of political affiliation**

# *Results: Political Identity*

## **Conservative voters find RCV outcomes less fair regardless of own preferences**

- As voters become more conservative, they are less likely to find the outcome fair, regardless of their own preferences after voting with RCV
- Only null response was optical scan ballot

## **Certain voters respond worse to video instructions**

- Respondents identifying as more centrist/moderate find the video grid produces a significantly less fair outcome, regardless of their preferences
- As voter become more conservative, they are less likely to be satisfied with the video grid outcome, regardless of their preferences

## **Voters with “cold” party sentiment find RCV more democratic**

- Voters who responded coldly to either or both political party were more likely to find the outcome democratic regardless of their preferences after voting with RCV
- Voters who responded coldly to either or both political party were more likely to find the ballot captured their preferences after voting with RCV



**Voters in RCV states =  
more democratic,  
trusting, accepting**