

The National Election Studies
Technical Report #45
Panel Attrition Among the 1990-1992 Panel Respondents

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Introduction

The 1992 National Election Study was comprised of two components: 1) a fresh cross-section of 1,126 respondents randomly selected from the citizen, voting-age population and 2) a randomly selected subset of 1,359 respondents first interviewed in the 1990 National Election Study.

Although 2,000 individuals took part in the 1990 National Election Study, budget constraints did not permit us to empanel all 2,000 respondents. Accordingly, 211 respondents were randomly assigned to replicates that were not released as part of the 1992 sample. Another 20 cases were subsequently deleted from the 1990 dataset because they were discovered either to be non-citizens or contained faked data. Thus, a total of 1,769 respondents to the 1990 Election Study were eligible to be reinterviewed in 1992.

Of these 1,769 respondents, 1,359 (76.8 percent) were successfully reinterviewed in the 1992 Pre-Election study (99 of these cases did not give us a Post-election interview in 1992). Of the 410 respondents who were not reinterviewed in 1992, 55.6 percent refused to be reinterviewed, 22.0 percent could not be located in 1992, 6.1 percent died between 1990 and 1992, and 16.3 percent were not reinterviewed for other reasons, including precarious health, their absence from home during the entire field period, or unavailability of a Spanish speaking interviewer.

Extensive tracking of respondents was carried out subsequent to the 1990 interviewing and the start of the 1992 field period. There were four separate mailings to respondents, with address corrections added to the recontact files. Once in the field, interviewers exercised a wide range of tracking and finding strategies to locate respondents. That we lost only 90 respondents is testament to the field staff's skill and dedication.

Because respondents move, and because their moves frequently take them out of our sampling areas, and out-of-range (for any reasonable cost) of SRC field interviewers, NES also prepared a shortened version of the '92 questionnaires, that were administered over the telephone.

In the tables that follow, we describe the correlates of the likelihood of a 1990 NES respondent being successfully reinterviewed two years later. We examine 5 sets of variables: demographic characteristics of the respondents; characteristics of respondents that would affect their recontactability; indicators of the respondent's reluctance to be interviewed; political interest, information, and engagement; and political opinions and preferences. All variables are measured in 1990. The percentages in each table are the percentage of the 1990 respondents who were successfully reinterviewed in the 1992 Pre-Election Study. Tables marked with an asterisk display percentage differences that are significant at prob < .05.

These tables were produced from the NES 1990-1992 Full Panel Survey datafile (ICPSR #6230). A filter was used to exclude 1990 cases that were never sent to the field (N=211; V3023=0).

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Region	
Northeast	74.9
North Central	80.9
South	76.0
West	74.9
Belt Code	
Large city (1)	76.1
Large city (2)	70.7
Suburb (1)	76.0
Suburb (2)	80.2
Adjacent	78.3
Outlying	73.1
Gender	
Female	77.8
Male	76.0
Age	
18-24	73.8
25-34	79.6
35-44	74.4
45-54	81.0
55-65	79.2
66-75	76.6
75 +	68.6
Race	
Other	70.9
Black	76.7
White	77.1
Hispanic Origin	
No	76.3
Yes	81.6
Number of Children in Household	
None	76.3
One	77.2
Two	80.2
Three	76.4
Four or more	70.8
*Religion	
None	75.6
Protestant	78.8
Catholic	72.9
Jewish	68.8
Other	79.9
Church Attendance	
Never	76.3
Seldom	75.3
Frequently	77.9
Regularly	76.1
> Once a week	79.0
Work Force Status	
Not work force	78.3
Unemployed	73.7
Working now	78.3

Occupation	
Unemployed	74.0
Operatives	76.6
Skilled	81.6
Services	75.5
Administrative	72.7
Sales	74.8
Executive	81.0
Professional	79.3

Labor Union Membership	
Does not belong	76.4
Belongs	79.0

Family Income	
Refused	67.1
Less than \$7k	75.1
\$7k-12k	74.7
\$12-20k	75.3
\$20-30k	81.1
\$30-40k	75.8
\$40-60k	81.5
\$60K and over	78.8

*Education	
< High school	75.5
High school	73.7
Some college	77.6
College degree	83.0

Characteristics of Respondents That Affect Recontactability

Number of eligible adults in household	
One	77.0
Two	77.1
Three	71.7
Four or more	85.2

Marital Status	
Not married	75.1
Married	78.1

Length of Time in Community	
< 6 months	70.4
6-12 months	69.8
13-24 months	74.5
3-4 years	71.5
5-10 years	80.2
11 years or more	77.7

Respondent Reluctance to be Interviewed

Refusal Conversion	
Yes	68.3
No	77.1

*Persuasion Letter Used	
Yes	70.5
No	78.1

Ease of Interview	
Hard	68.4
Moderate	75.9
Easy	78.6

*Phone Number Obtained?	
Refused to give	64.7
No phone	70.6
Yes	77.6
*R's Suspicion	
Very	59.5
Somewhat	70.7
Not at all	78.7
*R's Interest in the Interview	
Very low	52.0
.	68.3
.	73.0
.	82.6
Very high	86.1
*Reaction to the Interview	
Negative	60.0
Not negative	77.5
*Interview was too Long	
Yes	71.4
No	77.7
*Interview was too Complicated	
Yes	53.3
No	77.8
*Interview was Boring or Tedious	
Yes	60.3
No	77.6
*R Wanted to Stop the Interview	
Yes	57.1
No	77.9
R Ill, Tired, Deaf, or had Problem with Sight	
Yes	69.0
No	77.4
*R Was Confused	
Yes	63.9
No	78.0
*R Was Agitated or Stressed	
Yes	60.8
No	77.7
R Became Angry at the Interview	
Yes	61.5
No	77.2
*R Enjoyed the Interview	
No	71.8
Yes	79.8

Political Interest, Information, and Engagement

*R Expressed Lack of Knowledge	
Yes	65.2
No	78.4

*R Expressed Lack of Political Knowledge

Yes	70.1
No	78.6

*Interest in the Political Campaign

Not Much	72.4
Somewhat	78.2
Very	80.6

Days Last Week Discussed Politics with Family and Friends

None	73.2
One	80.5
Two	78.0
Three	80.7
Four	80.9
Five or six	78.0
Seven	83.1

Days in Past Week Read a Newspaper

None	76.0
One	76.4
Two	78.6
Three	77.5
Four	75.6
Five	63.3
Six	86.1
Seven	78.0

Interest in the Outcome of the Congressional Elections

Not at all	72.1
Not very much	76.2
Pretty much	78.9
Very much	79.6

*Knowledge of the Congressional Candidates

Knows none	74.5
Knows one	83.8
Knows two	87.5

Respondent Identifies Important Issue in Congressional Campaign

None mentioned	66.7
One mentioned	79.1
> one mentioned	80.0

*Contact with Congressional Candidates

Neither	71.3
One candidate	77.9
Both candidates	79.7

*Registration and Turnout

Not registered	70.8
Registered	76.9
Voted	80.7

*Contacted by a Political Party

No	75.8
Yes	81.3

*Political Information (Number of Political Figures Correctly Named)

None	72.3
One	72.1
Two	74.8
Three	79.7
Four	85.1
Five or more	94.0

*Correctly Identifies Which Party Controls Congress (Before & After Election)

Neither correct	72.1
Correct once	82.1
Correct twice	80.2

*Interviewer's Rating of R's Information About Politics

Very Low	66.1
.	72.9
.	77.3
.	83.0
Very High	84.0

Political Opinions and Preferences

*Approval/Disapproval of President Bush

Strong Disapprove	81.9
Disapprove	72.4
Approve	78.3
Strong Approve	75.5

Vote for U.S. Congress

Democrat	81.2
Republican	83.1

*Party Identification

Strong Democrat	79.1
Weak Democrat	75.1
Ind. Democrat	76.6
Ind. Ind.	69.2
Ind. Republican	81.7
Weak Republican	81.3
Strong Republican	73.5

Liberal / Conservative Self-Identification

Havn't Thought	72.6
Extreme Liberal	79.2
.	79.8
.	79.9
Moderate	77.4
.	82.3
.	75.4
Extreme Conserv	83.8

Have Policies of the Federal Government Made R Better or Worse Off

Worse off	78.1
Same	76.5
Better off	78.1

Opinion on the Death Penalty

Stongly Oppose	78.1
Oppose	77.1
Depends	71.9
Favor	80.1
Strongly Favor	76.4

Opinion on Abortion

Always	77.5
By need	79.4
Rape, Incest	74.8
Never	77.3

Trust Government in Washington

Always	70.6
Some of the time	74.9
Seldom	78.1