

To: NES Board
From: Santa

Feb. 6, 1985

Concerning: Some analysis of hard-to-reach Rolling Thunder respondents

The genesis of this report is a "Thank God It's Finally Over" celebration that the NES staff gave for the Field Office and Telephone Facility interviewers, on the last day of Rolling Thunder interviewing. It was mentioned to me that interviewers love to hear "analysis" of studies on which they have worked, and that a few words about what we know from the early part of Rolling Cross Section would be appreciated.

It seemed to me that one approach with sure-fire appeal would be a demonstration of exactly what we had gained by our perseverance and tenacity in interviewing hard-to-reach or difficult to persuade respondents. My notion was that hard-to-reach respondents would look demonstrably different than the more amenable and accessible respondents in our survey, not only in terms of demographics but in political attitudes. It is a long way from a few simple tables, of course, to a finished analysis of a complex problem, but the results of this preliminary cut of the data are interesting (and topical) enough that Warren thought they should be shared with you.

I settled on a figure of four calls as representing an "easy" interview. 53% of our respondents in the Primary Season part of Rolling Cross Section came with 4 calls or less. Four calls also represents a common cut-off number in the commercial polls. Respondents who were converted refusers or who required more than 4 calls were in the "hard-to-obtain" interviews. (In practise, there is a virtually complete overlap between number of calls and refusal conversion: almost all converted refusers required more than four calls.)

There were the expected demographic differences. Remember that my original purpose was not to predict what makes a difficult to get respondent, but to describe the differences between easy and hard respondents, and to show those who did the interviewing (and ourselves) exactly what we had achieved by getting the hard interviews. Table 1 compares easy to reach and hard to reach respondents. In a crude sense the difference between the easy-to-reach respondents and the total sample represents the "gain" from the extra effort to reach additional respondents.

TABLE 1a. Gender and Interview difficulty

	MEN	WOMEN	N
	—	—	—
EASY	42.7	57.3	907
HARD	47.2	52.8	818
TOTAL	44.8	55.2	1725

TABLE 1b. Age and Interview difficulty

	17-24	25-54	55-99	N
	—	—	—	—
EASY	12.8	56.8	30.4	906
HARD	16.9	62.2	20.9	815
TOTAL	14.8	59.4	25.9	1721

TABLE 1c. Working Status and Interview Difficulty

	WORKING	RETIRED	HOUSEWIFE	N**
	—	—	—	—
EASY	55.1	18.4	10.3	907
HARD	70.9	9.1	6.0	812
TOTAL	62.6	14.0	8.3	1719

***These percentages don't add up to 100 because several thinly populated categories of working status are omitted.

TABLE 1d. Marital status and interview difficulty

	MARRIED	NEVER MARRIED	DIVORCED	WIDOWED	N**
	—	—	—	—	—
EASY	60.4	14.7	10.3	11.0	906
HARD	54.5	22.5	12.6	7.3	809
TOTAL	57.6	18.4	11.4	9.3	1715

TABLE 1e. Education and Interview difficulty

	LESS THAN HIGH SCHL	HIGH SCHL	SOME COLL.	COLL DEGR	N
EASY	13.3	32.9	30.1	23.7	894
HARD	13.3	29.8	30.0	27.0	799
TOTAL	13.3	31.4	30.0	25.3	1693

TABLE 1f. Income and Interview Difficulty

	0-10K	10K-19,999	20K-29,999	30K+	N
EASY	16.7	25.3	23.1	34.9	884
HARD	12.8	21.0	25.2	41.0	777
TOTAL	14.9	23.3	24.1	37.7	1661

The harder to reach are slightly more affluent, younger, better educated, and slightly more likely to be male, working and single. This is not a very surprising picture. Political interest and follow campaign distributions are also predictable with hard-to-reach respondents being less interested in the campaign and following public affairs less. See Table 2.

Table 2a. Follow Public Affairs and Interview Difficulty

	<u>MOST TIME</u>	<u>SOME TIME</u>	<u>NOW& THEN</u>	<u>HARDLY AT ALL</u>	<u>N</u>
EASY	46.0	33.1	14.6	6.3	903
HARD	40.2	31.3	18.8	9.7	815
TOTAL	43.2	32.2	16.6	7.9	1718

TABLE 2b. Campaign Interest and Interview Difficulty

	<u>VERY MUCH</u>	<u>SOME</u>	<u>NOT MUCH</u>	<u>N</u>
EASY	50.9	35.9	13.2	906
HARD	43.8	40.7	15.5	815
TOTAL	47.5	38.2	14.3	1721

TABLE 2c. Watch National News on TV and Interview Difficulty

	<u>0 days</u>	<u>1-3 days</u>	<u>4-6 days</u>	<u>7 days</u>	<u>N</u>
EASY	13.2	22.2	24.9	39.7	907
HARD	16.1	31.7	23.0	29.3	815
TOTAL	14.6	26.6	23.9	34.8	1722

TABLE 2d. Newspaper reading and Interview difficulty

	<u>0 days</u>	<u>1-3 days</u>	<u>4-6 days</u>	<u>7 days</u>	<u>N</u>
EASY	15.4	22.5	14.5	47.6	907
HARD	14.0	23.8	16.0	46.3	816
TOTAL	14.7	23.1	15.1	47.0	17230

My curiosity was piqued by noting that our hard-to-reach respondents tended to watch less television than easy to reach respondents, but looked the same relative to newspaper reading. This is another indication that hard-to-reach respondents are simply more mobile -- you have to be home to watch TV, but not so to read newspapers.

The climax of this talk was to be the demonstration that demographic differences in the kinds of respondents who came in easily and the kinds who came in only with extra calls and persuasion were going to translate into dramatic differences in political "dependent" variables: Reagan approval rating, thermometer ratings and party ID. Leaping rapidly ahead, one could go on to show why our results were so different and more credible than those of various other national surveys, done with far less pursuit of selected respondents. But the data did not lend itself to such a conclusion.

TABLE 3a. Reagan Approval and Interview Difficulty

	Approve	Disapprove	N
EASY	62.2	37.7	871
HARD	64.6	35.3	783
TOTAL	63.4	36.7	1654

TABLE 4b. Party ID and Interview Difficulty

	DEMOCRAT (S,W,I)	INDEPENDENT	REPUBLICAN (S,W,I)	N
EASY	51.9	8.8	39.3	899
HARD	50.2	10.5	39.3	809
TOTAL	51.1	9.6	39.3	1708

The mean thermometer rating for Reagan for easy interviews was 60.4, for hard interviews it was 59.7. (This was non-significant at the .65 level)

Since the dramatic denouement to this talk to interviewers was thus forestalled, I next turned to "ransacking" the data for something I could say that differentiated the difficult and easy respondents. There was an interesting set of differences, associated with the Hart candidacy. I will present these below, but then return to looking at party ID and Reagan approval for easy/hard respondents, in a somewhat more systematic way.

1. On the thermometer ratings, the only analysis of variance that approached significance was the Hart ratings (where the independent variable is the "easy/hard" assignment) with the hard-to-reach R's evaluating Hart less favorably.
2. On the "chances" battery, the only analysis that reached significance was the Hart chances, with hard-to-reach R's giving Hart less chance to achieve the nomination, and less chance to win the Presidency if nominated.
3. When asked about first choice for Democratic nomination, "easy" respondents and "hard" respondents were equally likely to say Mondale, while "hard" respondents were 6% less likely than "easy" R's to prefer Hart.
4. On the trait batteries, it can be said in general that "hard" respondents were less likely to evaluate any candidate as having "a great deal" of any trait. But this was particularly true in Hart's case. (Here of course, the time frame is not exactly comparable). The entries are percentage differences for easy-hard respondents answering "a great deal."

TABLE 5. Traits and interview difficulty

	REAGAN	MONDALE	HART
Hardworking	-1.5	+0.8	-7.0
Decent	-4.6	-3.6	-4.5
Compassion.	-4.6	-1.1	-3.0
Respect	-2.3	-4.8	-7.4
Intelligent	-4.7	-3.0	-7.3
Moral	-5.3	-3.5	-6.5
Kind	-2.7	-1.2	-7.0
Insprng	-2.3	+0.8	-7.2
Knwldg	-0.5	-0.3	-7.5
Good Examp	-1.5	+0.9	-4.5
Cares	-2.5	-2.5	-2.9
Strng Ldr	+1.8	-0.5	NA

All together, these little bits of scattered evidence support the idea that our harder-to-reach respondents were less carried away by the idea of a Hart candidacy than the easier-to-reach respondents. I think the relationship between ease of interview, amount of TV watching and Hart

support would be worth looking at.

Another question is evident. How can the hard-to-reach respondents differ on demographics in predictable ways, differ very slightly on Reagan approval and party ID -- standard "dependent" variables -- and then be different on the Hart candidacy? How would typical schemes for non-response weighting deal with this complexity?

If this line of inquiry were to be pressed one step farther, it would be in the direction of employing several kinds of post-stratification schemes on our easy-to-reach respondents to see if our overall distributions can be emulated by schemes commonly in use.

In response to conversation with Warren, my next tack was to begin looking, in a very elementary way, at the possibility of such interaction between demographic variables, ease of interview, and party ID and Reagan approval. I generated numbers of simple cross-tabs showing approval rates and party id among "hard" and "easy" respondents in different demographic groupings. Here my conclusion is basically that relationships between demographic groupings and these variables may indeed differ contingent upon ease of interview.

Table *6a. Age, Percent Democrat and Interview Difficulty

	17-24	25-55	55-59
	-----	-----	-----
LE 4 calls	49.6	54.3	48.0
GT 4 calls	39.6	53.8	54.0
Converted	--	45.3	48.9

Table 6b. Gender, Percent Democrat and Interview Difficulty

	Male	Female
	-----	-----
LE 4 calls	50.2	52.9
GT 4 calls	44.6	57.4
Converted	40.8	47.6

Table 6c. Working Status, Percent Democrat and Interview Difficulty

	Working	Retired	Housewife
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LE 4 calls	50.6	45.5	51.7
GT 4 calls	49.7	58.3	59.4
Converted	40.2	--	--

Table 6d. Marital Status, Percent Democrat and Interview Difficulty

	Married	Never Married	Divorced	Widowed
	-----	-----	-----	-----
LE 4 calls	48.9	56.8	54.9	57.6
GT 4 calls	49.9	46.8	58.0	56.5
Converted	--	--	--	--

Table 7a. Reagan Approval, Age and Interview Difficulty

	17-24	25-54	55-59
	-----	-----	-----
LE 4 calls	62.6	62.2	62.0
GT 4 calls	71.0	63.7	63.3
Conv.	61.8	63.9	61.5

Table 7b. Reagan Approval, Gender and Interview Difficulty

	Male	Female
	-----	-----
LE 4 calls	65.3	59.9
GT 4 calls	73.3	56.9
Conv.	64.3	62.4

Table 7c. Reagan Approval, Working Status and Interview Difficulty

	Working	Retired	Housewife
	-----	-----	-----
LE 4 calls	64.4	62.2	69.0
GT 4 calls	67.8	65.9	57.1
Conv.	71.7	64.0	--

Table 7d. Reagan Approval, Marital Status and Interview Difficulty

	Married	Never Married	Divorced	Widowed
	-----	-----	-----	-----
LE 4 calls	67.3	50.8	62.7	48.4
GT 4 calls	69.0	60.9	60.0	51.7
Conv.	--	--	--	--

Any formula for non-response weighting would certainly have to deal with the inter-correlations among predictor variables, which we have not done here.

But these tables do suggest a relationship between ease of interview and party ID or Reagan approval. What is going on is masked by the

interaction between demographic variables, and party ID, for example. Table 6b is probably the best illustration of this: overall, there is no difference between hard and easy interviews and none for the "easy" respondents. But the difference between men and women is very sharp at the greater than 4 calls category.