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Title: Who's Missing? An Analysis of Non-response and Under coverage in the 1986 National Election Studies Post-Election Survey

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Abstract

Willingness to be a participant in an NES survey may well interact with the independent variables one analyses, not only demographic variables but specifically political variables, such as political interest or information. The NES response rates usually are in the neighborhood of 72%, but the 1986 experience was worse, achieving only 68%. Who are the non-respondents, and why did the response rate drop between 1984 and 1986? By comparing demographic characteristics of the NES sample with Bureau of the Census Current Population Studies November supplements, and by analyzing certain "coversheet" information collected for nonrespondents, it is determined that NES samples under-represent the elderly, blacks, and males, and that much if not most of the Under coverage is due to Nonresponse bias. The situation in 1986 does not appear to be markedly different than 1984. In addition, analysis of non-response in 1986 suggests that much of the drop is attributable to administrative issues (new interviewers and new sampling areas) although in part, the source of the relatively poor performance remains a mystery.