

The National Election Studies

Technical Report #46 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents to the 1980, 1984, and 1988 NES Pre-Election Studies by Week of Interview

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Introduction

Interviewing for the NES Pre-Election Studies begins the Wednesday after Labor Day and continues for approximately nine weeks, until the eve of the general election. In years prior to 1984, the sample was released all at once to interviewers, who worked the sample as rapidly as possible. Inevitably, the hard-to-reach and resistant potential respondents were interviewed later in the pre-election period, after interviews with the more amenable and more findable respondents were already taken.

In an effort to provide data that would better support the monitoring of the closing nine weeks of the presidential campaign, the NES Board of Overseers recommended a design in which the sample was divided up into four random quarter samples, with a fresh quarter sample being released 9 weeks, 7 weeks, 5 weeks, and 3 weeks before the election. The last few days were used as "clean-up" week in which to complete any outstanding interviews. NES used this quarter sample design in its 1984 and 1988 Pre-Election Studies. Although interviewers could not conduct an interview with a respondent before the quarter sample to which that respondent belonged was released, sample that was not successfully turned into completed interviews during the two-week period could be pursued in succeeding weeks. (Thus, for example, quarter 1 release sample could also be worked in quarters 2-4, and the clean-up week.) Even though the different quarter samples were effectively in the field for differing periods of time, 81 percent of the 1984 interviews and 80 percent of the 1988 interviews were completed within the quarter sample period in which the sample was released.

Tables 1 and 2 display data from the 1980, 1984, and 1988 Pre-Election Studies by date of interview. (Data from 1980 are included for purposes of comparison with the quarter-sample design used in 1984 and 1988.) Table 1 displays the total number of interviews taken in the four, two-week intervals and in the clean-up week prior to election day. Table 2 examines the demographic characteristics of the respondents interviewed during each of the nine weeks prior to the election. Entries in Table 2 marked with an asterisk display percentage differences that are significant at prob < .05.

Table 1. Percent of Interviews Taken by Weeks Prior to Election Day

	8-9 weeks	6-7 weeks	4-5 weeks	2-3 weeks	1 week	N
1980	16.5	19.6	24.3	28.0	11.5	1569**
1984	20.3	24.4	22.6	25.9	6.9	2257
1988	21.4	23.6	25.5	23.4	6.0	2040

**This N does not include 45 cases for which date of interview was not determined.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents to the 1980, 1984, and 1988 National Election Studies by Week of Interview

WEEKS BEFORE ELECTION

REGION		9 weeks	8 weeks	7 weeks	6 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks	3 weeks	2 weeks	1 week
*1980	East	18.7	23.9	23.1	15.6	22.6	17.8	20.9	24.8	25.6
	Midwest	28.0	30.3	20.8	32.6	27.9	25.3	25.7	27.1	31.1
	South	37.3	31.2	36.4	36.3	32.7	37.9	38.7	32.9	26.1
	West	16.0	14.7	19.7	15.6	16.8	19.0	14.8	15.2	17.2
	N	150	109	173	135	208	174	230	210	180
*1984	East	15.4	23.3	19.1	19.0	15.5	18.7	15.0	19.2	28.8
	Midwest	27.4	27.3	27.6	29.5	27.1	31.1	30.3	24.6	17.9
	South	37.9	28.5	33.8	29.5	38.5	26.0	35.6	33.9	27.6
	West	19.3	20.9	19.4	21.9	18.9	24.2	19.2	22.3	25.6
	N	285	172	340	210	291	219	360	224.0	156.0
*1988	East	13.6	21.7	14.8	16.5	20.2	16.5	16.7	20.0	29.3
	Midwest	34.6	21.7	28.6	28.2	24.5	27.8	32.1	22.2	24.4
	South	35.0	34.4	38.9	33.5	35.5	34.5	36.2	33.5	30.1
	West	16.7	22.2	17.7	21.8	19.9	21.1	15.0	24.3	16.3
	N	257	180	311	170	327	194	293	185.0	123.0
URBANISM										
1980	City	22.7	26.6	32.4	18.5	33.2	31.0	26.5	25.2	26.1
	Suburb	36.7	44.0	36.4	40.7	40.4	33.9	41.3	41.4	41.7
	Rural	40.7	29.4	31.2	40.7	26.4	35.1	32.2	33.3	32.2
	N	150	109	173	135	208	174	230	210	180
1984	City	20.7	23.8	19.7	27.1	22.7	25.6	23.3	23.2	27.6
	Suburb	44.5	36.0	44.4	41.4	42.3	40.2	39.7	44.2	41.7
	Rural	35.1	40.1	35.9	31.4	35.1	34.2	36.9	32.6	30.8
	N	285	172	340	210	291	219	360	224	156
*1988	City	24.5	21.7	25.7	18.2	25.7	21.6	27.6	21.6	27.6
	Suburb	38.5	39.4	40.2	48.8	41.9	38.1	43.7	43.8	52.8
	Rural	37.0	38.9	34.1	32.9	32.4	40.2	28.7	34.6	19.5
	N	257	180	311	170	327	194	293	185	123
GENDER										
1980	%Male	40.7	38.5	53.2	43.0	43.3	37.4	40.4	45.2	44.4
	N	150	109	173	135	208	174	230	210	180
1984	%Male	43.5	45.9	44.7	44.8	40.5	46.1	43.1	44.2	42.9
	N	285	172	340	210	291	219	360	224	156
1988	%Male	40.1	41.1	43.7	40.0	43.7	46.9	38.6	49.2	43.1
	N	257	180	311	170	327	194	293	185	123
RACE										
1980	%White	85.3	88.1	88.4	87.4	86.1	87.4	89.1	88.6	88.9
	N	150	109	173	135	208	174	230	210	180
1984	%White	86.3	89.5	85.9	82.4	86.9	85.4	85.6	85.7	90.4
	N	285	172	340	210	291	219	360	224	156
1988	%White	84.0	81.7	84.6	84.7	83.5	82.0	80.9	84.3	83.7
	N	257	180	311	170	327	194	293	185	123

AGE		9 weeks	8 weeks	7 weeks	6 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks	3 weeks	2 weeks	1 week
*1980	17-24	11.3	15.6	14.5	10.4	17.3	13.8	16.1	13.8	17.8
	24-34	18.0	29.4	22.0	20.7	20.7	28.2	23.5	20.0	25.6
	35-44	18.7	13.8	16.2	15.6	19.2	18.4	16.5	17.1	16.7
	45-54	11.3	13.8	8.7	21.5	14.9	11.5	10.4	14.8	15.6
	55-64	20.7	12.8	14.5	19.3	11.5	10.3	13.5	16.2	12.2
	65-74	14.7	9.2	12.1	8.9	9.6	13.2	14.3	11.4	6.1
	75-99	5.3	5.5	12.1	3.0	6.7	4.6	5.7	6.7	5.6
	N	150	109	173	135	208	174	230	210	180
*1984	17-24	16.1	11.6	12.6	12.9	9.3	13.2	13.1	13.4	14.1
	24-34	21.1	24.4	21.8	27.6	25.8	26.0	23.3	29.9	26.3
	35-44	17.2	22.7	17.9	20.5	14.8	18.3	18.3	21.9	19.9
	45-54	9.1	10.5	12.9	13.8	13.7	10.0	13.3	12.9	11.5
	55-64	11.9	12.8	11.8	12.4	14.1	14.2	12.8	9.8	12.2
	65-74	12.3	8.7	9.1	6.2	15.1	10.0	11.4	9.4	10.3
	75-99	12.3	8.1	10.0	5.7	6.5	6.8	6.9	2.2	3.2
	N	285	172	340	210	291	219	360	224	156
1988	17-24	11.7	10.0	7.1	10.0	8.0	10.3	10.2	11.9	13.8
	24-34	20.6	27.8	24.4	25.9	22.0	26.8	24.6	25.4	19.5
	35-44	19.8	26.7	23.5	23.5	25.4	24.7	20.8	23.8	26.0
	45-54	12.8	9.4	12.2	13.5	11.0	10.8	11.9	14.6	14.6
	55-64	6.0	8.9	11.9	12.4	13.5	8.2	12.3	14.6	16.3
	65-74	13.2	10.0	12.2	7.1	11.9	9.8	13.0	5.9	4.1
	75-99	8.2	6.7	8.7	7.6	8.3	9.3	6.8	3.8	4.9
	N	257	180	311	170	327	194	293	185	123
WORK FORCE STATUS										
*1980	In Work	52.7	61.5	59.0	67.4	54.8	58.6	55.7	59.5	72.2
	N	150	109	173	135	208	174	230	210	180
*1984	In Work	51.6	62.2	57.1	71.0	54.3	65.3	57.2	68.3	66.0
	N	285	172	340	210	291	219	360	224	156
1988	In Work	56.0	65.6	62.1	66.5	61.8	66.5	61.4	66.5	74.8
	N	257	180	311	170	327	194	293	185	123
OCCUPATION										
*1980	Profess.	12.7	22.9	22.0	25.2	23.6	24.1	21.7	27.1	31.1
	Wht Col.	20.0	14.7	12.7	23.7	15.4	19.5	19.1	13.8	20.6
	Blu Col.	43.9	41.4	50.3	35.6	35.0	35.1	32.7	38.2	34.4
	HW/NW	23.3	21.1	18.0	15.6	25.0	21.3	26.5	20.9	13.9
	N	150	109	173	135	208	174	230	210	180
1984	Profess.	20.4	26.2	22.4	23.3	20.3	26.0	22.2	26.3	25.0
	Wht Col.	21.1	22.7	16.2	24.3	23.0	24.7	22.8	23.2	25.6
	Blu Col.	40.7	36.6	44.4	41.1	41.2	35.2	36.1	35.3	34.7
	HW/NW	17.9	14.5	16.6	10.9	15.5	14.2	18.9	15.2	14.7
	N	285	172	340	210	291	219	360	224	156
1988	Profess.	22.2	25.0	26.7	30.0	24.5	24.2	23.9	27.0	29.3
	Wht Col.	20.6	21.1	18.6	19.4	17.1	27.8	25.3	21.6	23.6
	Blu Col.	40.1	40.0	41.2	37.7	42.6	35.1	35.8	34.7	34.9
	HW/NW	17.1	13.9	13.5	12.9	15.9	12.9	15.0	16.7	12.2
	N	257	180	311	170	327	194	293	185	123

INCOME		9 weeks	8 weeks	7 weeks	6 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks	3 weeks	2 weeks	1 week
1980	Refused	4.7	13.8	13.9	7.4	12.0	13.2	10.4	13.3	15.6
	Low	35.4	34.8	30.1	31.9	30.2	29.9	31.7	22.4	20.6
	Medium	35.3	24.8	32.9	31.1	32.2	27.6	32.6	31.9	37.2
	Hi Income	24.6	26.6	23.1	29.6	25.5	29.3	25.2	32.4	26.6
	N	150	109	173	135	208	174	230	210.0	180.0
*1984	Refused	8.4	16.9	10.9	12.9	10.3	12.3	11.4	10.7	17.9
	Low	37.2	25.0	27.6	24.3	33.0	21.4	31.9	27.2	26.0
	Medium	30.5	28.5	37.1	35.7	25.8	34.2	28.6	33.9	25.6
	Hi Income	23.8	29.6	24.4	27.1	31.0	32.0	28.1	28.1	29.5
	N	285	172	340	210	291	219	360	224	156
1988	Refused	5.1	8.3	7.1	10.6	7.3	13.9	10.2	7.0	13.0
	Low	35.8	28.3	30.6	27.1	32.5	28.8	31.0	22.1	19.5
	Medium	32.3	38.9	32.5	31.8	31.2	29.9	29.0	37.8	30.1
	Hi Income	26.9	24.4	29.9	30.6	29.1	27.3	29.7	32.9	37.4
	N	257	180	311	170	327	194	293	185	123
EDUCATION										
*1980	Grade S.	16.0	14.7	15.0	11.9	10.6	8.6	14.8	10.0	7.8
	High S.	55.3	47.7	53.2	48.1	55.3	55.2	45.2	50.0	52.2
	College	28.0	37.6	31.8	40.0	32.7	36.2	40.0	40.0	40.0
	N	150	109	173	135	208	174	230	210	180
*1984	Grade S.	10.5	11.6	14.4	8.6	15.5	11.4	10.0	4.5	5.8
	High S.	53.0	47.7	48.5	48.6	46.4	40.6	48.6	47.3	43.6
	College	35.8	40.1	37.1	41.0	37.8	47.5	40.3	47.8	50.6
	N	285	172	340	210	291	219	360	224	156
1988	Grade S.	13.2	9.4	10.9	8.8	11.0	11.3	7.5	7.0	4.9
	High S.	49.0	47.8	47.6	47.6	46.8	42.3	47.8	48.1	45.5
	College	37.7	42.2	41.5	43.5	41.9	46.4	44.0	44.9	48.8
	N	257	180	311	170	327	194	293	185	123