Bringing a Representative Sample of Voters to “America in One Room”: Sampling & Recruitment Procedures

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How NORC Selected the Deliberative Poll’s Respondents

By Norman M. Bradburn

The concept of a deliberative poll presents a major challenge to any survey research organization because it involves not only conducting a survey in the usual sense of the term, but also enlisting respondents to participate in an event that takes place over several days at a location that may require considerable travel away from their homes. To understand the nature of this challenge, consider the similarities and differences between an ordinary public opinion survey and the deliberative poll.

The purpose of public opinion surveys is to measure a sample of the population such that the results can be generalized to the population within known bounds of precision. A major consideration is the adequacy of the sample. Did all the members of the universe to which the results are going to be generalized have a known probability of falling into the sample; that is, is the sample unbiased?

When surveys are conducted, however, not all selected respondents are interviewed, and bias can come in during the execution of the survey. One common indicator of possible bias in the sample is the completion rate. If it is high—say 75-80%—investigators usually don’t worry about the effects of possible bias unless there is reason to believe that some characteristics of interest are very highly correlated with the bias, for example, probability of voting. (It is important to note that a high completion rate itself does not guarantee that the sample is unbiased, nor does a low completion rate, by itself, indicate that the sample is biased.) An investigation of the nature of the non-response is necessary to determine whether any particular sample is biased or not.

In most opinion surveys today, the universe is defined as households that have telephones, rather than total households. Telephone coverage is very high.
Study Requirements for America in One Room (A1R)

- Sample Source: NORC’s Probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel
- Study population: U.S. registered voters
- Administration of Pre-Event and Post-Event Survey content (30+ minutes)
- Delegates attend and participate in A1R Event at the Gaylord Texan Resort on Sept 19-Sept 22, 2019 in Grapevine, Texas
- Minimum Interview Sample Sizes Completing BOTH the Pre-Event and Post-Event Survey
  - Delegates (Treatment) → 500+ registered voters
  - Controls (non-Delegates) → 800+ registered voters

NORC responsible for all aspects of sampling, survey questionnaire development, data collection, logistical support for invited Delegates, survey reporting for public release, and data file prep and delivery for Delegate and Control group samples
Pre-Identified Risk Areas for the A1R Project

- **Representativeness** of the Delegate sample that *actually* attends the event
  - Too many retirees? Too few young adults?
  - Racially and ethnically diverse?
  - Too few rural? Too urban?
  - Not enough Republicans? Too many liberals?

- **Accuracy** of forecasting the actual attendance rate

- **Logistical and personal obstacles** to making transportation arrangements, child care, getting off work, disabilities, etc.

- **Delegate survey administration** at the conclusion of the A1R event

- **Data delivery in less than 48 hours** of the close of the A1R event
The A1R Event Destination Was Attractive

Incentives

$300 honorarium + travel/hotel expense
Solution: Sampling for the Delegate Group

• Exclude already-sampled Controls from AmeriSpeak

• Two-stage selection from AmeriSpeak: Initial Participant Sample (n=3k completes, Final Participant Sample (n=550-600)

• Sample quotas for Final Participant Sample for key subpops:
  • Age group (18-24, 25-49, 50+)
  • Gender (2)
  • Race/ethnicity (African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Other)
  • Census region (4)
  • Rural/urban (2)
  • Education (College, Other)
  • Party ID (Democratic, Republican, Independents or Other)
  • Voting behavior (Trump voters vs. Other)
  • Liberal-Conservative (7-point scale to assign Liberal, Moderate, Conservative)
  • LGBT

• Adaptive Design
  • Final participant sample invited in successive fielding stages to meet subpop sample quotas
Solution: Concierge Approach

- NORC employed a “concierge approach” to facilitate the participation of invited A1R Delegates.
- Each invited Delegate was assigned to a NORC Field Manager (FM).
- The FM concierge focused on securing participation by establishing trust and creating some excitement about this “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”
- FM was tasked with identifying and removing barriers to participation and facilitating special accommodation requests.
- FM personally managed the Delegate through resort reservation, travel booking, and actual travel to the actual event.
- FM personally re-contacted respondents throughout the process to confirm commitment to attend.

Out of 555 Delegates invited and committed to attending, 526 (95%) actually attended A1R.
(519 consented to posing for The New York Times photographer)
Solution: Post-Event Rapid Survey

Challenge:

Simultaneous Sunday morning administration of a 30-minute survey to over 500 respondents spread out over some 30 conference rooms in a large resort AND deliver a clean weighted survey analysis file by Tuesday 9:00am Central

Solution:

• Paper-and-pencil quex designed by NORC;
• AIR moderators personally supervised administration of PAPIs
• Special appointments for delegates with early flights
• Real-time receipt control of completed PAPIs
• Optical scanning of completed PAPIs

Out of 526 participants attending Day 1 of A1R, 523 (99.4%) completed the PAPI on Day 4 of the event
Sample Representativeness: Gender

Unweighted Delegates (n=523) and Controls (n=844); CPS Nov. 2018 Benchmark for 18+ Registered Voters
Unweighted Delegates (n=523) and Controls (n=844); CPS Nov. 2018 Benchmark for 18+ Registered Voters
Sample Representativeness: Race/Ethnicity

Unweighted Delegates (n=523) and Controls (n=844); CPS Nov. 2018 Benchmark for 18+ Registered Voters
Sample Representativeness: Metro/Non-Metro

Unweighted Delegates (n=523) and Controls (n=844); CPS Nov. 2018 Benchmark for 18+ Registered Voters
## Party Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party ID</th>
<th>Treatment &quot;Delegates&quot; (n=523)</th>
<th>Control Group (n=844)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Unweighted
Questions?
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Thank You!