

Cornell National Social Survey 2012

Report 2: General Results

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Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of the 2012 Cornell National Social Survey (CNSS), conducted by the Survey Research Institute (SRI) at Cornell University. The 2012 CNSS queried continental United States residents regarding a wide range of topics through questions developed by Cornell University faculty and researchers. Questions were presented as modules that included topics on:

- Legal and political opinions
- Foreign policy
- Family Estrangement
- Social networks and wellbeing
- Technology and purchasing behavior
- Communicating with management
- Investment in water/sewer infrastructure
- Economic issues and mobility

Methodology¹

- A total of 1,000 telephone interviews were conducted between July 29, 2012 and December 12, 2012. All participants were asked core demographic questions as well as all questions from the omnibus modules.
- The CNSS utilizes a random digit dial (RDD) sample of all telephone exchanges within the continental United States. Eligible respondents must be at least 18 years old.
- The cooperation rate was 63.3% using American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) standards.
- The margin of error (MOE) for questions with two response options is 3.1% among the 1,000 respondents.

Some highlights of results from the CNSS are described below. All results are reported as un-weighted percentages of respondents who provided valid answers. Those who refused to answer and those who responded that they did not know how to answer are excluded.

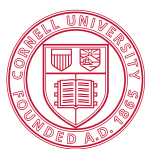
¹ See *Report 1: Introduction & Methodology* for a full description at www.sri.cornell.edu. A copy of the questionnaire and data file is available at: <http://sri.cornell.edu/sri/CNSS.cfm>.

Legal and political opinions

Legal opinions

The vast majority of the respondents would take legal action if they were wronged by a home developer. One third reported they would take legal action to stop the developer from getting away with it. A quarter said they would do so because they did not want the developer to do this to someone else. Almost half the respondents who would not take legal action cited the reason being that it was a personal matter. One third said they would not take legal action because it would be too costly. Two-thirds of the respondents said they were satisfied with their last experience with the legal system.

- More than four out of five respondents (82.3%) said they would take legal action if a developer refused to fix a roof leak six months after it was purchased.
- Of respondents who said they would take legal action, one third (34%) said they wanted to do so because they did not want the developer to get away with it. A quarter of them (26%) said they do not want the developer to do this to someone else, One out of five (21%) said they do not see any other way to address the situation. 17.6% believed that the legal system exists to address this.
- Of respondents who said they would not take legal action, the plurality (45.2%) said it is just a personal matter, not a legal issue. More than one third (35.1%) believed it would be too costly. 6.5% of them would not take legal action because they thought the legal system is unfair.
- The majority of the respondents (55.8%) had a fair



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amount of confidence in the American legal system. Another 15.8% of them had a great deal of confidence. On the other hand, more than a quarter of respondents (28.4%) had not much or no confidence at all.

- Of respondents who had experience with the law, two thirds (65.8%) were somewhat or very satisfied and one third (34.2%) were somewhat or very dissatisfied.

Political opinions

In the 2012 election the majority of respondents reported that the candidates' positions on social issues were extremely important. The most popular primary source of information on the presidential candidates was TV news shows.

- In the 2012 presidential election, half of the respondents (50.8%) thought that the candidates' positions on social issues were extremely important. Additionally, nearly one-third of the respondents (31.9%) believed that to be somewhat important. Only 6.5% thought they were not at all important.
- Two out of five respondents (41%) received information about the presidential candidates primarily from Television news shows. One out of five respondents (21.4%) acquired information primarily from online news sites and blogs. 13.7% of them received their information primarily from Newspapers and magazines. No more than 8% of respondents reported sources including candidate websites, presidential debates, conversations with friends, and radio programs as their primary sources of information.

Foreign Policy

The majority of respondents know someone who has served in Iraq or Afghanistan. About half feel they are safer from terrorism because of the US military operation. However, only about one out of four respondents feel the US should adopt a war tax to help finance the military operation in Afghanistan.

- More than two-thirds of the respondents (71.8%) knew someone who has served in the military in Iraq or Afghanistan.
- Because of the US military operation in Afghanistan, nearly two-thirds of the respondents (63.7%) believe that they are somewhat or much safer from terrorism. On the other hand, more than one third (36.3%) believe that they are somewhat or much less safe.
- More than three quarters of the respondents (77.4%) believe that the US should not adopt a war tax to help finance the military operation in Afghanistan.

Family Estrangement

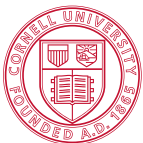
Over one out of five respondents have a family member they are estranged from. Brothers were the most likely family member to be estranged from. Four out of ten respondents were not upset at all by the estrangement. Almost half of the respondents felt they were not likely to reconnect with their estranged family member.

- Over one out of five respondents (21.8%) have a sibling, parent, or child that they have little or no contact with.
- Of those respondents who have an estranged family member, the plurality (49.1%) have two or more estranged family members.
- Among those respondents with an estranged family member, brothers were most likely to be the estranged family member (44.9%). More than a quarter of the respondents (28.8%) estranged from their sisters. 15.1% of them estranged from one of their parents and 11.2% estranged from their child.
- Two out of five respondents (39.5%) did not feel the estrangement upsetting at all. On the other hand, 16.3% of them were quite upset by the lack of contact.
- The plurality (46%) felt that they are not likely to reconnect with their estranged family member.

Social Networks and Wellbeing

The majority of respondents check and share information on social networking sites. The vast majority of respondents rarely or never feel isolated, lack companionship or feel alone.

- The plurality of the respondents (49.4%) check on others through social networking at least sometimes. More than half of them (56.7%) also share information through social networking.
- About one-third of the respondents (36.4%) are not on Facebook. Of those who use Facebook, the median number of their total Facebook friends was 150. However, the median number of their Facebook friends that respondents consider to be actual friends was 40.
- The majority of the respondents (58.4%) never feel isolated. About one out of five respondents (22%) rarely feel isolated. On the other hand, about one out of five respondents (19.6%) sometimes, often, or always feel isolated.
- A little under two-thirds of all the respondents (63.1%) never lack companionship. Just fewer than one out of five respondents (18.5%) rarely lack companionship. Finally, about one out of five respondents (18.4%) sometimes, often, or always lack companionship.



- A little under two-thirds of all the respondents (62.7%) never feel alone. Just less than one out of five respondents (18.4%) rarely feel alone. Finally, fewer than one out of five respondents (18.9%) sometimes, often, or always feel alone.

Technology and Purchasing Behavior

Half the respondents make online clothing purchases, but the vast majority of respondents still prefer to make clothing purchases in person on the store.

- About half of the respondents (50.2%) do make clothing purchases with the internet or mobile device.
- Among those who make clothing purchases online or on mobile devices, the majority (57.9%) do so a few times a year. Over a quarter of the respondents (26.1%) do so about once a month or more. And about one out of six respondents (16%) do so just once a year.
- Among those who make clothing purchases online or on mobile devices, the vast majority (82.4%) prefer to go to the store. About one out of seven respondents (14.5%) prefer to make purchases online. Very few of them prefer mail/phone-order catalogs (2.1%), or make purchases on their mobile devices (1%).

Communicating with Management

The majority of respondents think it is not a good idea to make their manager look bad in front of a group by speaking up. On the other hand, the majority of respondents do not think they should stay quiet to save face for their boss or co-workers.

- More than two-thirds of the respondents (79.2%) think it is not a good idea to make their manager look bad in front of a group by speaking up. More than one out of ten respondents (11.1%) thinks it is a good idea.
- The majority of the respondents (59.4%) think one should speak up about problems even if one does not have a solution. Less than one-third of the respondents (31.3%) think one should not speak up about a problem unless one has a solution.
- The plurality of the respondents (44.9%) think that speaking in front of higher-ups makes their boss look bad. On the other hand, more than two out of five respondents (42.3%) do not think that speaking in front of higher-ups makes their boss look bad.
- Two-thirds of the respondents (66.3%) do not think that they should stay quiet to “save face” for their boss, but nearly one out of five respondents (19.1%) thinks one

should.

- Two-thirds of the respondents (68.8%) do not think that they should stay quiet to “save face” for their coworkers, but 16.9% of them think one should.

Investment in water/sewer infrastructure

Two-fifths of respondents believe the local government should fund water and sewage projects, but half think both public boards and private corporations are equally suited to manage them.

- Two out of five respondents (40%) believe the local government should fund water and sewage projects. More than a quarter of them (28.2%) believe the state government should fund water and sewage projects. 18.3% of them believe these projects should be funded by the federal government and 13.6% of them believe the private corporations should fund these projects.
- 17.6% of the respondents think private corporations are best suited to manage water and sewage projects. About twice that many respondents (38.1%) think that public boards are best suited to manage these projects. The plurality (44.3%) think both are equally suited.
- On a scale from 1 (not concerned at all) and 7 (very concerned), half of the respondents (49.9%) reported a three or less on their level of concern about water and sewage conditions.

Economic issues and mobility

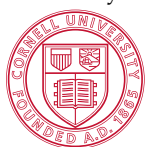
A quarter of the respondents said that economic problems have influenced their plans to move or stay. Half of them said they are less likely to move because of economic conditions.

- About three out of four respondents (74.2%) think it is highly unlikely or unlikely that they will move in the next year. Less than one out of five respondents (17.2%) think it is highly likely that they will move.
- More than one out of five respondents (22.5%) said that economic problems have influenced their plans to move or stay. Of those respondents, over half (52.9%) said they are less likely to move because of their economic conditions. About one third (34.7%) said they were more likely to move because of their economic problems.

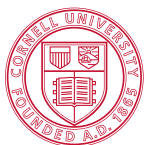
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