

Cornell National Social Survey 2015

Report 2: General Results

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Introduction

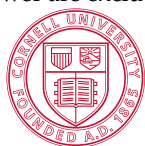
This report summarizes the findings of the 2015 Cornell National Social Survey (CNSS), conducted by the Survey Research Institute (SRI) at Cornell University. The 2015 CNSS queried continental United States residents regarding a wide range of topics through questions developed by Cornell University faculty and researchers. Questions were presented as modules that included topics on:

- Public Education and Household Income
- Environment
- Diet and Exercise
- Social Interaction and Age Perception
- Discrimination and Elder Mistreatment
- Family and Wellbeing
- Social Media

Methodology¹

- A total of 1,000 telephone interviews were conducted between August 24, 2015 and October 29, 2015. 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 79% 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.



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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>.

Public Education and Household Income Education

Opinions on statewide exams as a rating method for schools seem to be split; however, there is a general consensus that teaching students only to do well on statewide tests or not reporting low test scores for the benefit of the school rating is unacceptable.

- It is unclear how people feel about statewide exams; less than half of those who were surveyed (45.1%) either somewhat or strongly disagree that statewide exams are a good way to rate schools, while 43.3% either somewhat or strongly agree.
- The majority of respondents believe that it is unacceptable to teach students only for statewide tests (65.4%) or not report low test scores at all (81.4%).

Income

The majority of respondents would benefit from an additional \$1000 in job-based or investment-based pre-tax income, but almost 10% believe their household income would decrease from such a gain.

- Two out of three respondents said that their 2014 income was either completely job-based or not at all (46.0% completely job-based vs. 20.2% not job-based at all).
- Nine out of ten respondents (90.1%) said that their household income would increase if someone in the household earned an additional \$1000 before taxes in job-based income. However, 9.9% said the household income would decrease. For those who said that their household income would increase, the average expected increase was \$567 and for those who said that their household income would decrease, the average expected decrease was \$349.
- Slightly more than nine out of ten respondents (91.6%) said that their household income would increase if someone in the household earned an additional \$1000 before taxes in investment-based income. However, 8.4%

said the household income would decrease. For those who said that their household income would increase, the average expected increase was \$564 and for those who said that their household income would decrease, the average expected decrease was \$386.

Environment

The majority of respondents say that they have experienced extreme weather, believe in climate change, would be willing to reduce their carbon footprint, and would take political action after an extreme weather event. However, fracking seems to be a controversial issue with opinions split almost evenly between those who oppose it, those who support it, and those who are indifferent.

- Half of the respondents were told that scientists have predicted that global warming may cause irreversible climate changes by 2030, while the other half were told it would happen by 2100. Given this information, most respondents (58.5%) believe that that it is very or of the utmost importance that policymakers prioritize reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Surprisingly, there was almost no difference in responses based on which prompt respondents were given (57.9% vs. 59.1% respectively).
- Two out of every three respondents claims to have experienced extreme weather (66.4%).
- An overwhelming majority (82.0%) say they believe in climate change, and 63.0% of those who believe in climate change say they have personally experienced it.
- Even though most people would be somewhat or very likely to take political action after an extreme weather event (68.6%), less than half (45.2%) would be somewhat or very likely to take political action to prepare for climate change. Furthermore, only 57.4% of those who would take political action after an extreme weather event believe the political action will be somewhat or very effective.
- Although respondents were each randomly given only one of five different prompts², there was almost no difference in the percentage of respondents who would be willing to reduce their carbon footprint (overall 70.4%).
- Opinions on fracking were split almost equally into thirds with 36.1% opposing it, 30.0% supporting it, and 31.6% being indifferent.
- Similarly, views on the risks of fracking, both personal and for the U.S., were split fairly evenly; 34.9% and 37.5% believe that the risks outweigh the benefits, 29.4% and 30.2% believe that the benefits outweigh the risks, and 31.2% and 27.7% were indifferent.

² The five prompts were: 1. Climate change is dangerous for birds 2. Climate change is dangerous for people 3. Reducing carbon footprint is beneficial for birds 4. Reducing carbon footprint is beneficial for people 5. No information

Diet and Exercise

Even though half of those who were surveyed spend almost no time at all walking or bicycling for transportation, more than half exercise at least two days per week. The majority of respondents also consumed at least one fast food meal in the week prior to being surveyed.

- One out of two respondents spends less than six minutes per day walking or bicycling for transportation, while more than one-third (37.2%) spend 30 minutes or more.
- Over half of respondents (52.4%) spend between two and five days on vigorous-intensity sports, fitness, or recreational activities; however, more than a quarter (26.7%) of respondents never engage in such activities.
- For those who do spend at least one day on fitness, the average time spent is almost an hour and a half (86.4 minutes).
- While almost half of respondents (47.0%) consumed fast food on either one, two, or three days in the week prior to being surveyed, 45.1% of respondents did not consume any fast food meals that week.

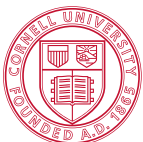
Social Interaction

There is a general consensus among respondents about the value of compassion and chastity, but opinions on teamwork vs. self-expression are mixed.

- Nearly nine out of ten respondents (88.4%) showed some form of agreement with the following statement, “compassion for those who are suffering is the most crucial virtue”.
- Only slightly more than half of respondents (55.3%) believe that being a team player is more important than self-expression.
- Two out of three respondents (66.9%) either slightly, moderately, or strongly agree that chastity is an important and valuable virtue.
- More than half of those who were surveyed (55.4%) reported that none of their friends or acquaintances call them by their last name.

Age Perception

Overall, respondents said they felt younger than their actual age and wished to be even younger than the age they felt. There is practically no difference in opinion on when men or women are too old to marry and when men or women enter old age.



- On average, respondents said they felt 7.3 years younger than their actual age and wished they were 15.3 years younger.
- More than three-quarters of respondents (77.7%) believe women are never too old to marry, and a similar number of respondents (77.0%) believe men are never too old to marry. The second most popular answer for both questions was age 50 (3.0% and 4.1% respectively).
- Similarly, there was very little difference of opinion on when men and women enter old age (average age: 67.6 for women and 67.3 for men).
- Nearly two out of three respondents (63.7%) reported no preference for the sex of a child if they could only have one. Nearly one out of five respondents (19.3%) would prefer a boy and one out of ten (11.4%) would prefer a girl.
- Slightly more than a third of respondents (35.9%) reported no preference for the sex of the children if they could only have two children. About half (50.8%) would prefer one boy and one girl, and less than one out of ten respondents would prefer two boys (5.9%) or two girls (3.3%).
- Almost half (45.5%) of the respondents who would not have a preference for the sex of one child would want one boy and one girl if they could only have two children.
- Almost one-third (31.2%) of people surveyed did not have any children, 11.6% had one child, 27.7% had two, 15.6% had three, 8.2% had four, and 5.7% had five or more.
- Four out of ten respondents (40.9%) would turn to their partner/spouse when upset, while nearly two out of ten (18.8%) would turn to God or religious/spiritual higher power/entity, and one in ten (11.0%) would turn to a friend.
- More than two out of five respondents (42.7%) would miss their partner/spouse if they were absent, 18.1% would miss their son or daughter, and 16.2% would miss their parent or parental figure.
- Two-fifths of respondents (40.6%) make sure to see their partner/spouse frequently, one-fifth (20.0%) make sure to see their son or daughter, and a little more than one-tenth (12.6%) make sure to see their parent or parental figure.
- Four out of ten respondents (39.8%) say that their partner/spouse is most likely to always be there for them, 17.8% say their parent or parental figure, 13.8% say God or religious/spiritual higher power/entity and 10.7% say son or daughter.
- Almost three out of every four respondents (73.7%) either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “I feel lonely most of the time” and only 6.9% agree or strongly agree with the statement.

Discrimination and Elder Mistreatment

The majority of respondents say that they have not experienced discrimination because of their height or weight, nor have they experienced elder mistreatment.

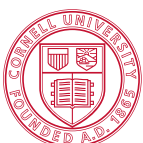
- The majority of respondents say that they have not experienced discrimination because of their height (84.6%) or because of their weight (79.7%).
- However, while eight out of ten people (79.8%) believe discrimination against short people is staying the same, five out of ten believe discrimination against obese people is increasing (50.2%).
- Less than one-third of respondents (31.0%) say they have experienced elder mistreatment.
- Of those who have experienced it, less than one-fifth (17.7%) had it happen to a parent, one-quarter (24.9%) had it happen to a grandparent, and more than a quarter (28.4%) had it happen to a friend or neighbor; interestingly, mistreatment occurrences were split almost 75%/25% in female-male couples between the females (wife, grandmother, aunt) and the males (husband, grandfather, uncle).
- On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being not distressing at all and 10 being extremely distressing, almost half (46.1%) of those who experienced elder mistreatment would rate the situation a 10 and more than three-quarters (77.1%) would rate it at least a 7. Moreover, 61.8% were involved in helping the mistreated person deal with the elder mistreatment.

Family and Wellbeing

Most of the respondents would not have a preference for the sex of a child if they could only have one, but more than half would want one boy and one girl if they could only have two children. When it comes to seeking comfort when upset or missing someone, respondents tend to turn to their partner/spouse, parents, children, and God.

Social Media

All of the respondents could describe their most memorable experience related to social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) and almost three-quarters of respondents currently have or had a Facebook account.



- The majority of respondents (70.9%) currently have or had a Facebook account.
- Almost all of the respondents (95.8%) who have or had a Facebook account created the account voluntarily and 75.0% have never deactivated their primary account.
- Surprisingly, of those who have never deactivated their account, more than two out of five respondents (42.2%) considered deactivating it.
- The choice to not have a Facebook account for those who have never had one or deactivated theirs was voluntary for the vast majority (88.9%) of respondents.
- All of the respondents said that they could describe their most memorable experience related to social media.

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Citing Results from the CNSS:

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