

2012 U.S.-China Security Perceptions Project

Survey Methods

General Public Survey

Results for the general public survey are based on telephone interviews conducted April 30-May 13, 2012, among a national sample of 1,004 adults 18 years of age or older living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (600 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 404 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 195 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI). Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples was used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older.

The combined landline and cell phone samples are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for the full sample is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points; the margin of error for Form 1 (n=477) and Form 2 (n=527) is plus or minus 5.3 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.