

## Appendix A

### THE RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE BRITISH CANDIDATE STUDY, 1992

(1) **PARTY MEMBERS**: The survey of Party Members includes 1,634 Labour and Conservative activists who attended twenty-six selection meetings in constituencies throughout Britain. The constituencies to which we had access were chosen to be broadly representative in terms of party, major census region, and marginality. The seats were: Beckenham, Sutton and Cheam, Feltham and Heston, Croydon North East, Putney, Brentford and Isleworth, Eastleigh, Milton Keynes North East, Gloucester, Bristol West, Colne Valley, Ashfield, Dudley West, Stoke on Trent South, Warley East, Monmouth, Manchester Withington, Glanford and Scunthorpe, Leeds South and Morley, Oldham Central and Royton, Littleborough and Saddleworth, Edinburgh Central, Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, Caithness and Sutherland, and Dumfries. Fieldwork was conducted from January 1990 to October 1991. The main questionnaire was distributed in person to members at meetings, and collected there, producing a response rate of 74 per cent. A more detailed follow-up postal questionnaire was given out for self-completion (with a response rate of 43 per cent of all members at the meeting).

(2) **MPs and CANDIDATES**: This survey includes 1,320 MPs and prospective Parliamentary candidates who were selected by constituencies for the April 1992 general election at the time of the fieldwork. We included MPs and PPCs for the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Scottish National, Plaid Cymru and Green parties. We excluded incumbent MPs who were retiring and independents. Fieldwork was conducted in two main waves, from April 1990 to October 1991. Respondents were sent a postal questionnaire with covering letter, a postcard reminder, and a full reminder a month later. Out of 1913 names, we received completed replies from 1,320, which represents a response rate of 69 per cent.

(3) **APPLICANTS**: This survey includes 361 applicants who failed to be selected to become candidates. Respondents were selected using a random sample of one in three applicants on the Labour party 'A' and 'B' lists, and one in two names on the Conservative party Approved List, who had not been adopted by parliamentary constituencies. Respondents were sent the same questionnaire as above, following the same procedure. Out of 656 names we received replies from 361, which represents a response rate of 55 per cent.

(4) **PERSONAL INTERVIEWS**: To pursue questions about their experiences and motivation in greater depth the study includes thirty-nine hour-long personal interviews with MPs, PPCs and applicants. The list of respondents who agreed to a further interview

was stratified by party, type (MP, PPC or applicant) and gender. Using a stratified random sample we selected 39 names for further interview after the election, from April to October 1992. During the course of the project we also conducted personal interviews with constituency activists, party agents and national party managers in all parties.

(5) **OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS:** The project included a review of official documents outlining party rules and procedures.

(6) **MEETINGS:** Research included observations of a range of Labour and Conservative selection meetings at different stages in the process, including Conservative Weekend Selection Boards.

(7) **VOTERS:** Survey items were designed to be identical across different levels of party strata, as well as to be comparable with the British Election Study 1992, conducted by Anthony Heath et al.

(8) **CONSTITUENCIES:** Aggregate data from constituencies was merged with the candidate file, including such factors as the demographic characteristics of the seat and its marginality.

The research focused on the Labour and Conservative parties, given two-party dominance in parliament, although the study of candidates includes all British parties for contrast and comparison. The surveys measured the social background, political experience and attitudes of the main actors involved in the process. Personal interviews allowed the opportunity to explore some of the findings of the survey data in greater depth. Throughout party officials gave us the fullest cooperation, assistance and support. The constituency meetings to which we had access were selected as broadly representative in terms of party, region and marginality. The response rate met, or often exceeded, expected standards for a postal survey.

Table 1: MPs and PPCs Response Rate

	Total	Surveyed	Replied	Response Rate
Conservative	645	606	364	60%
Labour	634	603	415	69%
Liberal Democrat	632	399	320	80%
Scottish National	72	66	59	89%
Plaid Cymru	35	22	18	82%
Green	250	217	144	66%
TOTAL	2268	1913	1320	69%

Table 2: Applicants Response Rate

	Total 1992	Sampled	Replied	Response Rate
Conservative	800	400	232	58%
Labour	768	256	129	50%
TOTAL	1730	656	361	55%