Election 2008 Exit Poll

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• More than 1100 interviews in 10 Iowa City, 3 Coralville, and North Liberty and Penn Township precincts. Better than a 50% success rate in getting interviews.

• Took about 8 minutes to do the poll.

• Interviewers were students in my Political Campaigning classes.

• Polled from 7:00 AM until 8:15 PM.

• Poll does NOT include early voters (About 55% of all voters!)
  – However, it does represent Election Day voters very well.
Exit Poll compared to Actual Vote

• Poll matches very well with the actual election day vote in Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty
• This is one of the best performances we’ve had, though only 2006 was way off
• Presidential sample off more than Senate and House
Partisan Breakdown of Sample

- A pretty good match with partisanship, although a little low on Democrats and a little high on Republicans

- Independents match pretty well to official Johnson County numbers
Only 14% of all voters were first time voters, compared to 22% in 2004, nearly 1 in 4 first time voters used election day registration.

First time voters were less driven by the economy and more likely to pick education as the most important issue, reflecting that 78% were college students.

First timers were no more likely to be Democrats; no more likely to vote for Obama.
Presidential Vote by Candidate Qualities

- Obama won on every candidate quality except experience; however, McCain outperformed on trust.

- Across the board:
  - 23% chose Leadership
  - 16% chose Cares about People
  - 15% chose Trust
  - 14% chose Stands up for Beliefs
  - 13% chose Fair & Just
  - 8% chose Experience as their most important candidate quality.
Most important National Concerns
(Pick one or two)

- Given a list of twelve Issues & Candidate Traits, 41% said the national economy was the most important.

- That the candidate has a vision was second at 31%, character was third at 23% and Iraq was a distant fourth at 14%

- The election in Johnson County was driven by the economy and two key candidate traits.
Most important National Concerns by Presidential Vote

(Pick one or two)

- Among Johnson County voters, Obama did best with those who cared most about candidate vision, the Iraq war, and Education

- McCain did particularly well among those who were concerned about national security; he outperformed among those who cared most about a candidate’s character
Perceived Media Bias due to Obama’s Race

- Whether voters thought the media was biased in reporting based on Obama’s race depends on party: Republicans were much more likely to believe this.
- Our small sample of non-white respondents (about 9% of sample) were more likely to believe this than whites.
- Which direction a voter believes the bias goes most likely depends on his or her own partisan point of view.
Credit Crunch by Presidential Vote

Nearly half of voters say they are personally feeling the “credit crunch” in Johnson County.

Obama did particularly well among this group, compared to voters who say they are not feeling the crunch themselves.

More indication that the state of the economy really did drive this election locally just as elsewhere.
Presidential Vote by Age

- As anticipated, Obama is very well with the youngest voters - but he did just as well with the older voters here in Johnson county.

- McCain performed best among those who came of age in the Reagan-Bush years.
The gender gap on election day grew in Johnson County, where women were 9 points more likely than men to support Obama.

In 2004, the election day gap was only 2 points, as 65% of men and 67% of women voted for Kerry.
Dave Loebsack (US House) lagged a bit behind Obama and Harkin with Democrats.

Tom Harkin won not only nearly all Democrats, but 75% of Independents and 19% of Republicans.

Harkin’s performance reflects on the weakness of his challenger and how well established he is compared to Loebsack.
Local Issues

In addition to the candidates on the ballot we asked some local questions:

☑ Single most important problem our local area needs to solve

☑ The bar access/drinking issue in Iowa City
Most Important Local Problem

• Johnson County voters see the economy as the most important local problem (24%) a significant increase since 2006
• Education is 2nd at 13%; it was 1st in 2006; Flood recovery is third, just behind education
• College students consider flood recovery 2nd after the economy, while it is only 5th on the list for non-students
Local Issues

Three questions about bars and drinking

Bar Access – limit to 21?

Responsibility for addressing binge drinking

Binge drinking priority
Bar Access Policies in Iowa City

- We see decline in support for limiting bar access in 2008 and an increase in support for an 18 drinking age.
- However, this may be driven primarily by differences in voter turnout in an off-year election (like 2006).
- Comparing to 2004 the results for 2008 look very similar, despite the 2007 referendum results.

![Bar Access Policies in Iowa City Chart](chart.png)
Bars and Drinking Age by Sex

- Women support the 21 drinking age and limited bar access to a much greater extent as we found in 2004 and 2006 as well.
- Men are more equally split, but 2/3 want under 21 access to bars, compared to about 52% of women.
- These results are very similar to what we found in 2004.
• As we might expect, those under 30 strongly oppose limiting bar access while those over 30 support it.

• There is a significant minority position for an 18 year old drinking age.

• 28% of those who are currently college students (regardless of their age) do support limiting access.
Bars Access by Gender & College Student

- College women are more likely to support 21 only than college men, 31% to 23%.
- College men are much more likely to support an 18 drinking age than college women, 47% to 35%.
- Non-student voters are more supportive of 21 only; especially women, with 56% support.
Responsibility for Addressing Binge Drinking

- Voters think that students are the ones “most responsible for addressing” binge drinking.
- For the most part the bar owners are not seen as most responsible, but neither is city council nor the UI.
- Those outside of Iowa City see things pretty much the same as those in Iowa City.
Responsibility for Addressing Binge Drinking

- Interestingly, students themselves are more likely to say they are responsible for addressing binging.
- Non-students are somewhat more likely to believe that City Council has the most responsibility for addressing the problem.
- Women are more likely to say UI has responsibility: 22% to 15%.
Priority of Addressing Binge Drinking

- Voters think that addressing binge drinking is at least a medium priority, but few consider it the highest priority
- Again, no difference between voters who live in Iowa City and those who live elsewhere
Priority of Addressing Binge Drinking

- Surprisingly there is little disagreement between those in college and voters who are not on the priority of dealing with binge drinking
- Non-students are somewhat more likely to believe it is a higher priority, but this difference is pretty small
- Women are more likely to believe it is a medium or high priority: 61% of women and 47% of men rank it medium or higher
For More Information

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