
The Election Integrity Election Verification Exit Poll

Report on the Kentucky Pilot Project

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Overview of the Kentucky Pilot Project

On May 20, 2008, *Election Integrity*, *Election Defense Alliance* and *The Warren Poll* conducted a pilot-project Election Verification Exit Poll (EVEP) of the Democratic Party Presidential and US Senate primaries in Kentucky. The primary purpose was to test and codify our methodological survey techniques in preparation for a November EVEP of key battleground states in the Presidential election and, possibly other important elections. We were not striving to find vote count problems by election boards at this time, and even less to challenge them, but what we do in the future with indications of fraud is the major issue for which we must prepare.

We polled seven sites in Louisville. The sites were chosen to maximize numbers of Democratic voters, variance in demographic make-up, convenience to our local base and pollability. The sites were covered full time, except for short bathroom breaks, from the opening of the polls at 6 am until close at 6 pm. At these sites, we conducted 1,880 interviews.

We met all our objectives and then some. The polling went well. This was a highly competent survey that was generally well executed – certainly one of the most competent exit polls ever conducted for the purposes of verifying election results.¹ Of course, whether that is good enough to actually help insure election verity depends not only on the polling itself, but its presentation and many other factors over which we have, at best, limited control. But operationally, our survey methods were sound, and we improved upon our performance in the 2006 election in terms of getting official results quickly. Our survey data was more than 75% processed by the time the polls closed, and both survey data and official results were fully collected and processed within 90 minutes of the poll closing. As we were preparing for, conducting and analyzing the poll; we were also codifying, refining and reflecting on the process.

¹ This includes the Edison/Mitofsky (E/M) National Election Pool (NEP) exit polls conducted by all the major networks and the Associated Press, as well as any exit polls conducted overseas expressly for the purposes of election verification. I would like to subject this claim of methodological superiority to survey design experts – it will, however, require time and funding to submit our EVEP for publication in a scientific journal. Given the methodology, I also believe that our results display great fidelity to the actual intent of the electorate, but “proving” this remains a challenge.

This report is still a draft. Please forward comments and suggestions to the author at sf@alum.mit.edu.
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We did not expect to find fraud in this exit poll, mostly because the Jefferson County Board of Elections insisted that we inform them of the sites we were going to poll and we complied. Although this would have been an unacceptable demand if we were intending to verify the integrity of this particular election, we acceded because the purpose of this poll was, as indicated above, to test our operations. A second reason we didn't expect to find fraud was that neither contest was expected to be close or, in fact, was close: the state's presidential primary had been conceded to Clinton, and Lunsford had long seemed a lock for the US Senate nomination. Nevertheless, *survey results for the Presidential nomination election were improbably off in 4 of 6 polling sites* where representative samples were obtained, wildly so in two of them. *The Senate race was improbably off in 2 of the 6 polling sites; in all cases it was the state Democratic Party's preferred candidate whose official numbers were improbably better than our survey results.* Nothing about our surveys suggested that they should have been off in this direction. Therefore, the results suggest fraud. Indeed, we believe the results are strong circumstantial evidence of fraud. We have not acted upon this evidence, but what to do about any such result found in November (or any other election) is a critical matter to be discussed before any future poll is undertaken.

Despite the strengths of our survey design and execution, we observed several areas for improvement and areas of concern, which we discuss throughout this report. Our most important objective in conducting this project was to codify Ken Warren's long experience as an exit pollster as well as EI's experience in this poll and its 2006 poll into a systematic process that can be reproduced throughout the nation for a general election EVEP in November. In this effort, we were fortunate to observe the functioning of three Edison/Mitofsky (E/M) polling sites as well as to draw from our own experience. The next part of this report is organized around this codification of previously tacit knowledge. To the best of our knowledge, no one has ever written anything like this. It was tacit knowledge of the few people who had experience conducting multiple exit polls, and without which there is no way a meaningful large scale, national EVEP could be conducted.

Report Structure

The following two sections are a technical codification of how to conduct an EVEP. They comprise a step-by-step guide and checklist for future efforts. Although developing this was the central purpose of our effort, most readers² will only want to skim or skip these sections. Following that, I report on the Kentucky exit poll operation. Next, I report our survey results and a data analysis. We conclude with a discussion of next steps.

Operations - Centralized tasks

The tasks involved in conducting an exit poll can be organized into two spheres of responsibilities: I'll discuss *site-based operational tasks* in the following section. *Centralized tasks* include fundraising, general management, and publicity tasks which are beyond the scope of this report. But I will discuss briefly the centralized scientific and technical tasks that need be performed.

Research Design

The first task is to clarify the purpose of the survey, and specifically what one hopes to learn by conducting it. All subsequent design considerations – # of places to poll, # of interviewers, subject selection, and questionnaire design – depend on intent. Even though we have determined that we want to conduct an Election Verification Exit Poll, there remain questions that must be answered: are we trying

² Those responsible for conducting polls should read treat these sections as their bible.

to simply determine what the “real” vote is, *detect* fraud, or “prove” fraud, if it exists. If proof, then proof in what court? The court of public opinion, the scientific community, or the legal system?

Analytic Strategy

Analytic Strategy goes hand-in-hand with Research Design, and is critical for a rapid analysis and timely reporting. If we want to produce a report quickly, we cannot simply start sifting through a pile of numbers to see what comes up. We need to determine in advance what are we looking for? What are the first data to look at? What are the first calculations to make? And what are the second, third, fourth and fifth for a variety of contingencies.

Moreover, the general election holds the likelihood of widespread interest. If we can make good quality data available on election night, our site will receive literally millions of hits, and we will have thousands of people working the data. What do we want to give them? How can we make it useful? How can we enlist them in our efforts? (Part of this might involve a totally transparent effort with maximum pre-awareness so that *they* also develop analytic plans.)

Questionnaire design

Unlike Edison/Mitofsky (E/M), which uses a long questionnaire to give media suitable things to talk about, our questionnaire is short, in order to maximize participation rates and so as to not cloud our focus. Design for a survey as short as ours may seem very simple, but there are *many* things that can go wrong. Our survey had several problems, most of which can be remedied for the future elections. Appendix X shows the survey we used, and includes some comments interviewers and I observed throughout the day.

Questionnaires should be designed early in the process. This permits more time for review, and subsequently, gives the coordinator time for reproduction and enables advance programming. In this test project, writing the questionnaire was hasty, with very limited review. The more people that view the questionnaire, the better. As an example of things that can go wrong, names of the candidates were downloaded from the Kentucky Board of Elections site and two of the 11 candidates’ names were wrong, including Barrack (sic) Obama.

Programming

Programming involves taking data to be entered from questionnaires and turning them into SPSS files and Excel spreadsheets. The spreadsheet and crosstab templates and the programming must be done in advance so that it is then a simple matter on Election Night to create the files and spreadsheets so that they are ready for general analysis.

Site-based operational tasks - Preparation

Here are the site-based operational tasks in the approximate order in which they need to be done. The first tasks are to hire a Local Coordinator, establish a local base and get the necessary Election Board information.

Local Coordinator

The most important operational task we face for any area we exit poll is hiring a good Local Coordinator. Without a competent Local Coordinator, we will not collect meaningful data. This person’s responsibilities include:

- a. Secure and establish a local base of operation
- b. Establish and manage relations with Election Board (EB) officials.
- c. Obtain information from the EB (see section below)
- d. Help choose precincts (see section below)
- e. Visit the chosen polling sites to ensure that (a) we know where it is and (b) that there are no serious problems, e.g., voters live in the building and thus never pass by the interviewer.
- f. Recruit, help train and schedule interviewers
- g. Recruit data entry people
- h. Put together Election Day kits
- i. Deal with any Election Day problems, e.g., interviewers are harassed or no shows, and call us with anything they cannot resolve.
- j. Manage data entry of exit poll survey results, and send them to us ASAP
- k. Ensure that official results³ issued by the Board of Election are obtained, entered into a spreadsheet, and sent to us ASAP
- l. Mail us the actual surveys or maintain them for at least two (2) years
- m. Be available for the month following the election in order to help track down any discrepancy or apparent error.

Local Base

A local base is necessary to fill the following critical needs:

- Meeting room for training
- Tables at which data entry people can work
- A high-speed internet connection
- Good telephone lines
- Easy access for meetings, to pick up Election Day kits, drop off data and get to polling sites

A college could provide an excellent base. A local base might also be the home of the Local Coordinator.

3 I use the term **Official Results** for what are officially referred to as "unofficial results" and commonly referred to by the media and political scientists as **actual** vote or **actual** result or **vote count**. The last two are among the many misleading, or at least, leading, terms in election lexicon. I won't use the term **actual** because how people actually voted is precisely what's at issue. Likewise, **vote count** presumes that the votes are counted, which is likewise in question.

Unfortunately, **Official Results** has two meanings, neither of which has a good substitute. In one sense, the emphasis is on **results** – the final numbers that determine who will hold office and which go into the record books. In the other sense, the emphasis is on **official**, which is to say that they are derived from and have the sanction of, persons in office; and are authorized and supported by government institutions.

In the first sense, the official sense if you will, results are not actually "official" until they're certified some time well after the election. But in all cases these are results issued by government agencies, whose motives and actions are not always impartial. My solution is to use "official" as an adjective describing any numbers issued or acknowledged by the government as authoritative; when additional precision is needed, I'll distinguish between **unofficial results** or **preliminary official results** and **final official results**.

It's also important to specify from where the numbers are derived. In most cases, our numbers will come from directly from posts at the precinct by Board of Elections workers or from the county Board of Elections. Media reports may come from separate tabulations from various sources. In 2000, Bush was named president by all the TV networks, Gore called Bush to concede and was minutes away from making a full concession speech, based on a false FOX-TV tabulation.

Election Board Information

All the following information will be needed:

- a. Past election results by precinct. This is necessary for both choosing precincts and conducting subsequent analysis.
- b. Most current voter registration list
- c. Regulations governing exit pollsters at polling places. For example, what is the law on how far back from polling place exit pollsters have to stand?
- d. Most current polling place listing with name of building (e.g., Dwight School), address, and precincts at that polling place.
- e. Map of the polling places or precinct map. Best is if there is a precinct map that also shows the location of the polling places. That is, all in one.
- f. Hours polling places are open on Election Day.
- g. Names and telephone numbers of election board officials (i.e., Head of the Election Board, Democratic Director of Elections, Republican Director of Elections). Names and contact information for other primary contact people at the Election Board.
- h. How to get official results as soon as possible (hopefully, shortly after the polls close on Election Day) for the precincts that we are polling. Or people to contact if official results are not forthcoming.
- i. Meet, and try to establish good working relations with Election Board officials.

It's also valuable to get a sense of who we're dealing with. In Jefferson County, Kentucky, one person only dealt with the public: Nore Ghibaudy, the Director of Public Relations, Media & Communications for the Jefferson County Board of Election. Mr. Ghibaudy was polite, helpful and responsive as was his staff, and once he authorized them, the elections people, but it was clear that this was a tightly controlled operation and we had to speak to him if we wanted anything. He needed to know what sites we were going to poll because, he said, sheriffs would remove us if we were not authorized. Not that he had any objection at all to us being there, it's just that this is the way that it is.

We are in a delicate position with respect to election boards. We want to try to be on good terms with election officials. Election Boards have the power to make our work much easier or much more difficult, and we don't need more enemies. Because this was an operational test rather than an actual election verification effort, and because we were without legal resources, we acceded; but we must be prepared to challenge such a demand in a true verification effort. We also took advantage of the notification requirement to obtain the E/M sites, which I visited and found highly instructive. Given the threat of sheriffs, Ken also asked for an authorization letter, which proved helpful. At one site, the local official was ready to have the interviewer removed by the sheriff, until our interviewer showed her this letter. The official immediately called Mr. Ghibaudy to confirm that he really had given us permission.

In a true election verification effort, however, we cannot comply with such a demand. Notification of what precincts we are polling, of course, potentially undermines our efforts. We would need to challenge such a request. We would hope that the Board of Elections would understand the importance of our sites *not* being known in advance, but if not, we would have to pursue other options. This particular demand, like most other obstructions we will face, is unsupportable by law. Federal courts have asserted the right to unfettered exit polling in several cases, and this is reflected in Kentucky statute as well. The NY Times, Associated Press and E/M have all faced and won lawsuits regarding the right to exit poll, and no one has ever lost (statutes are included in the appendix), but of course asserting one's rights does involve some costs.

In Ken's 30 years as a pollster, this was the first time a jurisdiction demanded to know what precincts would be polled. But this is not the only form of resistance we will face from election officials (in '06, for example, one county would not release official numbers), all of which underscore a need for legal resources and legal strategy.

Choosing precincts / polling sites

We need to consider our intent carefully and precisely, but some general considerations apply:

Statistical and forensic considerations

- Equal distribution of Rs and Ds provide greater information, including more statistical power. On the other hand, evidence indicates that fraud in 2004 was most extreme and blatant in the most heavily Republican precincts (Freeman & Bleifuss, 2006; Freeman & Mitteldorf, 2005).
- Larger polling sites are generally better: more data and statistical power. On the other hand, if we poll a high percentage of a site's voters, statistical power can be strong even in small precincts.
- Single precinct polling sites provide better data, but they are rare and becoming more rare still. Moreover fraud has been correlated with multiple precinct polling sites (Liddle 2006) and directly linked to them through ballot-switching procedures (Jacobs 2006).
- Variation in precinct partisanship, partisan control, voting technology, and socioeconomics
- What's at stake? Are important maverick candidates running whose election would or could threaten powerful interests?

I originally had as a bullet point, "*Any reason to suspect fraud?*" But as I began listing the reasons – Statistical or anecdotal evidence raising questions, generally corrupt political leadership, use of e-voting; or opacity in process, e.g., restrictions in observer access, obstructions in access to paper ballots if they exist, or reluctance to post official results quickly – I realized that there is little reason for confidence in official results from the vast majority of jurisdictions across the country. Indeed, we may want to seek the few in which we *do* have confidence as control sites for our methodologies.

"Pollability" considerations

- Proximity to Local Coordinator – permits help in resolving problems, allows for early data collection
- For important remote sites, ability to hire and train an interviewer.
- Protection from rain or snow? An indoor space is best, but hard to ensure.
- Can we cover all the exits? (one if we use only one interviewer)
- Accessibility: Are we permitted to poll there? Of course, if we're not or restrictions are placed, that's one more reason to suspect fraud (see above), but one nevertheless needs at least capable people and a plan for how to circumvent opposition.)

Recruit, help train and schedule interviewers

Sources for recruitment include:

- University professors – especially those teaching government, criminal justice, statistics, or survey design classes
- EI/EDA newsletter
- Friends and relatives of early recruits and EI/EDA newsletter recipients
- Craigslist
- Viewers of Election related films.

Training has consisted of compulsory attendance at a one hour session conducted by Ken or me. We also provide them with a handout of instructions. Alternatively, we could either schedule a remote training or provide a video followed by a brief telephone interview, which is how E/M trains their interviewers.

Exchange information: We need to collect from them their names, cell phone numbers, email address, and any location/scheduling preferences. We need to provide them with various documents: authorization letter from EI, authorization letter from local elections officials, pertinent exit poll regulations, interviewing instructions^a and cards with phone numbers to call.^a We should also take some time to inform them about the work of EI and EDA.

Local media have been interested in both of our polls. One of our Kentucky interviewers was on the 5:00 and 6:00 local news. The Local Coordinator may want to identify interviewers whom they feel would reflect particularly well on the effort and direct local media sources to their sites, but we should briefly prepare all interviewers for what to say to newspaper reporters and broadcasters in the event that they are interviewed.

Data Entry Preparation

We provide instructions, e.g., 1="Yes"; 2= "No"; entry is done using *Notepad*, which is available on PCs along with Microsoft computer operating systems (under Accessories), is good. Coordinators need to familiarize themselves with this program. Data Entry goes quickly, only about 20 seconds per questionnaire.

Data people use either supplied computers or laptops. If laptops, we will buy a numeric keypad (about \$15 at Staples) for them.

Schedule data entry to begin early in the day. If the Local Coordinator or an assistant visits sites during the day, then he or she can pick up questionnaires, so that they are being entered continuously throughout the afternoon, and fewer are left to complete after poll closing. Early completion is essential for analysis as soon after the polls closed as possible.

Election Day kits

We prepare an *Election Day kit* for each polling place:

- two exit poll boxes⁴ (pictured is an exit poll box used in 2006 election. The box used in KY said simply "Exit Poll.")
- three clipboards
- box of pencils (alt: attach a pen with string to the clipboard)
- lots of questionnaires^a
- missed subject sheets^a
- documents: authorization letter from *Election Integrity*, pertinent exit poll regulations, interviewing instructions^{ab}
- cards with phone numbers to call^{ab}



⁴ Ted Soares writes: Better looking boxes such as white boxes in bulk could be bought for as little as ~\$0.66 @ here: <http://store.cspackaging.net/shop/C50.aspx> Or bought at Office Max ~ \$2.00 @: http://www.officemax.com/omax/catalog/sku.jsp?skuld=20649620&searchString=&productId=ARS22408&category_id=664

^a see Appendix for example

^b these are also given out in advance

In addition, the following items MAY be provided depending on budget and strategy:

- snacks (MAYBE),
- authorization letter from local elections officials (if we think it might be helpful)
- Information about us and any sponsors (MAYBE, see discussion)

Election Day Operations

We divide the interviewing shift into two parts. Kentucky polls are open 6 am to 6 pm, so the morning shift went from 6-noon; and the afternoon shift from noon-6 pm. Despite the early opening time, we had no shortage of volunteers for the morning shift.

Morning shift interviewers

Interviewers should arrive at the site at least 10 minutes before the polls open to find a suitable spot and set up.

If they have extra time during slow periods on their shift, they should fill in the polling place site and Congressional District code on the questionnaire.

At the end of the shift, if possible, morning interviewers should deliver their surveys to the local base so that data entry can begin.

Afternoon/evening shift interviewers

Interviewers should arrive at the site at least 10 minutes before they are scheduled to begin, in order to get the lay of the land from the morning interviewer(s).

If they have extra time during slow periods on their shift, they should fill in the polling place site and Congressional District code on the questionnaire.

At the end of the shift, they should stay on-site to collect the official results, and, if possible, the tabulations from individual machines.

Provision must be made for direct delivery of remaining questionnaires and official numbers to base as soon as they are available.

Data Entry

Get started with data entry early in the day. In Kentucky, two people began at noon, another came at 3 pm, and then two more came at 6 pm to input the afternoon questionnaires quickly. If the Local Coordinator or an assistant visits sites, then he or she can pick up questionnaires so that they are being entered continuously throughout the afternoon, and will be all done shortly after poll closing. Typically, one person will write in Respondent #s (and Polling Site #s and CD#s if they're missing) for all the forms as they come in. **The most critical task is entering the correct Polling Site #.** All other errors could be caught upon going back for review, but if the wrong Polling Site # is entered, it will be undetectable. The other data entry people will immediately begin data entry.

Data is entered in the following form:

05783381023111

05793181013112

Each row represents one questionnaire and each column or set of columns a particular response to a particular question. In this case, the first four columns are Respondent #, the next column is polling site, followed by each of the questions in the questionnaire (we did not enter congressional district). "0" indicates a missing value; for example, both questionnaires do not have an answer to question #4 (If you answered "No", please give your reason). The first quality control is achieved by the fact that most errors result in row length being off. If that happens, the data entry person goes back and re-enters that questionnaire. The Local Coordinator (or Data Entry Supervisor if we have one) should not enter data, but rather ensure that data is entered correctly, making sure that Polling Site #s are properly identified and entered, and spot check some entries of each worker to ensure their entries are correct.

There are typically a few questionnaires with questionable entries, for example a respondent checks off two candidates for President. The data entry person and the Local Coordinator should make a decision as to respondent's intent or "0" (missing response) if they cannot do it, but also note these questionable entries and provide us with a log of them.

As soon as Data Entry is complete at the end of the day, the *Notepad* files should be sent to our programmer to produce SPSS and Excel files for analysis.

Collection of Official Election Results

In Kentucky, all results were posted, as prescribed by law, at the polling place as soon as possible after closing. At our seven sites (which were among the largest in the state), results were posted between 30 and 75 minutes after closing. The delay was due, in part, to allow voters who were in line at 6 pm to cast their ballots.

There was confusion at one of the two sites I visited after closing. After the machines were closed, they realized that one ballot had not been fed through and the workers didn't know what to do. At that point they realized I was watching and asked me to leave. The other site had two postings on a ticker tape similar to a cash register receipt. The principal voting machine ticker tape was fairly clear and straightforward. But the other one, for handicapped or sight-limited voters had only eight votes and was, ironically, very difficult to read and understand.

Each primary piece of data, i.e., each tape, ought to be collected. In Kentucky, in one precinct they posted the tapes for each machine at one precinct. Even if only precinct numbers are posted, it would be better to get actual machine counts. (I had hoped to do that at the location I was at, but they did not let me.)

ASAP upon getting these numbers, they should be delivered along with the survey data, or called in to the local base.

At the local base they should be accumulated into a spreadsheet – we will provide local sites with a template ^a – that should be sent in to HQ once completed.

Cleaning the Data

A programmer will convert the *Notepad* files to SPSS files. The first run is frequencies of each variable, and the first review is a quality control check. If there are any responses, for example, designated "3" or higher for a question with only 2 choices, it's clear that an error has been made and

^a see Appendix for example

that questionnaire data must be reviewed and corrected in the SPSS file.

More thorough cleaning of the data, which may or may not be done on Election Night, is done through a variety of examinations including the following:

- List of Respondent records numerically ordered -- make sure there are no duplicate respondent #s or skipped respondents
- Respondents by polling sites -- any respondent # out of sequence indicates a possible data entry error
- Examination of striking *Within Precinct Disparities* (WPDs -- see below)

A programmer or analyst must systematically do this, probably over the telephone with the Local Coordinator for each area we poll.

Compilation and First Analyses

After cleaning the data, the following reports should be produced:

- a. Frequencies and percentages of each response to each question.
- b. *Within Precinct Disparity* (WPD) by polling place (PP)
- c. P(WPD) -- the likelihood or unlikelihood of such an outcome
- d. Cross-tabs on PP by all other variables.

We will have other cross-tabs we will want to run immediately depending on what we are looking for. In cases with striking data, such as more survey votes than official votes, or very large WPDs, we will want to go back and ensure that data was entered correctly.

Exit Polling the May 20, 2008 Democratic Primary in Louisville, Kentucky

Critical Decisions

With the exception of polls that we happen to conduct ourselves in Philadelphia or St. Louis, the first and most important decision we make is the hiring of a Local Coordinator. In Kentucky, we hired Angela Spies, a Louisville native and wife of Ken's colleague at St. Louis University, Scott Cummings. Spies has an MBA and had managed survey data entry teams in Louisville. The couple still has a home there.

We had one other important early decision to make. As discussed above, the local Board of Elections wanted to know what precincts we were polling. Such a requirement obviously compromises an effort to unroot fraud. Nevertheless, because this was an operational test, in which the most important thing to do was poll, and because we didn't have much time or resources with which to challenge this regulation, we complied with the request. But we must plan in advance for how to avoid compromising any efforts in November.

Generally, all the Preparation & Training went well. Ken ran a training session on Tuesday, May 13. I arrived in Louisville on Sunday May 18, and conducted a training session with three interviewers who missed Ken's original training session. Only one originally scheduled interviewer backed out – the day before the election. She was easily replaced one of our extras.

Preparation, Training & Scheduling

We divide the interviewing shift into two parts. Kentucky polls are open 6 am to 6 pm, so the

morning shift went from 6-noon; and the afternoon shift from noon-6 pm. Despite the early opening time, we had no shortage of volunteers for the morning shift.

Election Day EI / Warren Poll Experience

Angela Spies, our Local Coordinator and I began early. We were in the car at 6 am when an interviewer was having trouble with the local official. By the time we arrived 10 minutes later, the official was assuaged by the authorization note and a phone call to Mr. Ghibaudy.

I visited sites throughout the day, visiting 13 of the 14 polling shifts. All of our interviewers seemed to perform competently. All were in control of what they were doing; none were flustered like one of the E/M interviewers whom I observed (see below). Nevertheless, there were a few problems. Despite what I thought was good training, interviewers were following their own selection systems, some going for every voter, and at least one was going for every third voter, rather than using the three- or five-second rule we taught. He explained that he understood we were supposed to get a random sample, emphasizing *random*. In several cases, husbands and wives or friends leaving together were both allowed to fill out a form, and generally people allowed anyone who wanted to fill out a form to do so, regardless of whether they were in sequence. One problem with the three- or five-second rule is that, at least in Kentucky, men still open doors for the women, and so a woman is typically the next one out when an Male-Female pair leaves together. When this happened in my presence, I alternated men and women regardless of who came out first and told the interviewer I was with to do that, but others may have followed the rule literally, with resultant distortion of gender balance.

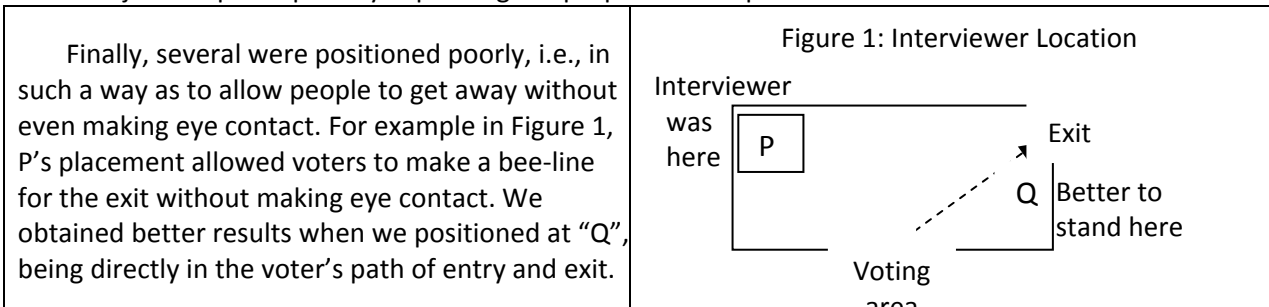


Pic 1: Interviewer Brian Doyle with Local Coordinator, Angela Spies

Most interviewers were not as aggressive and/or persuasive with non-respondents as possible. In some cases, greetings may have been too cautious. For example, a somewhat meek interviewer obtained many rapid refusals asking “Would you be so kind as to take a few minutes to ...” It was too wordy and overstated the amount of time required (it takes less than a minute), thereby doubling signaling wasted time and more of a sacrifice than we needed from them.

Most interviewers did not try to persuade recalcitrant subjects. I was able to persuade most non-rush hour subjects to participate by explaining the purpose of the poll – election verification.

Finally, several were positioned poorly, i.e., in such a way as to allow people to get away without even making eye contact. For example in Figure 1, P’s placement allowed voters to make a bee-line for the exit without making eye contact. We obtained better results when we positioned at “Q”, being directly in the voter’s path of entry and exit.



I obtained good results by greeting people as they entered so as to establish some connection in preparation and then saying simply as they left, “Please take a few seconds to complete this survey.”

Edison/Mitofsky (E/M) sites

During the day, we visited three E/M sites. Reassuringly, all three were manned by apparently conscientious interviewers. I spoke for awhile with all three. I studied (and subsequently reproduced for our own use) their form for keeping track of non-respondents. All three E/M interviewers were women, two in their 20s, and a third in her 60s. The two young women seemed to be in control and following protocol. The third woman was not well organized and was not following a systematic protocol for choosing subjects. In fact, although I had not walked out of the door for voters, she asked *me* to fill out a form when I approached her desk.

I spoke a bit with all of them about their training – a short video sent by E/M followed by a very brief phone call. Throughout the 15 minutes or so that I was at their sites, the two younger women were conducting the interviews properly and also recording the non-respondents with apparent accuracy. I think that their data was probably quite good, assuming they stayed for the day and their breaks were not too long. The third woman, however, did not record any non-respondents throughout fifteen minutes I was speaking with her. She also forgot that she was supposed to call in her results until I asked her about it. I don't see how she was going to tabulate her results and call them in without stopping the interviewing for some significant time, and even then I would not want to have to depend on its accuracy.

After the polls closed

Data entry went really fast. We were all done a less than an hour-and-a-half after the polls closed, and could have been even quicker if we had the surveys of the last two interviewers who were waiting for official results. We had the official numbers tallied soon after they returned.

The official results were posted the following afternoon on the Jefferson County Clerks Office website: http://www.jeffersoncountyclerk.org/side-bar/pr/2008_PRIMARY_GEMS_SOVC_REPORT.pdf. Except for the fact that Senate candidate Andy Horne's were not reported on the site (he had withdrawn from the race after the ballots were already fixed), only a few precinct results differed from the numbers posted at the polling sites: a few sites added a single vote and one precinct at site #3 (Highland Baptist) added five votes to Fisher's total. (His official numbers were still far below his exit poll numbers).

Data Analysis and Specific Findings

Interview rates

We conducted 1,880 interviews. Some didn't have a presidential preference because some Republicans filled out questionnaires; interviewers were not always clear to ask whether the subjects had voted in the *Democratic* primary. Vote totals were about 6% lower in the Senate race (5,843) than in the Presidential (6,222); this percentage matched up precisely with our survey results (1,721 vs. 1,829).

As shown in Table 1, aside from the problematic Spears Retirement (#2) polling site, we polled slightly more than a third of all voters. The percentage of total voters polled is quite high given that we were typically selecting only every second or third voter throughout most of the day. "% polled" rates ranged from 25% at Douglas (#5) to 44% at Hillebrand (#1). Something clearly is wrong with the numbers from Spears Retirement (#2). We had two good interviewers there, and the afternoon interviewers claimed he had close to a 90% response rate, using a system by which he polled every third voter. The building has two side doors (one of which is an emergency exit, the other of which, we were told, is

hardly used. When I tried to talk to an election worker, by phone, to try to find out what might have happened, I was referred again to Mr. Ghibaudy, the only person in the Jefferson County government anyone is allowed to speak⁵, who said he didn't know about other exits, but that many voters may live in the building, thereby eluding our interviewers.

It would appear that the most likely explanation is that only about a third of all voters left through the exit we manned, and if those from one precinct or another disproportionately used that exit or if we missed the residents of a large Retirement home with different demographics than the rest of the precincts, we would not have a representative sample of voters from this site. Because of this, I exclude it from calculations about election veracity (Tables 5 and 8), although I do report official numbers and our results (Tables 3, 4, 6 and 7).

Table 1: Interviews and Votes Cast by Polling Site

Site #	Polling Place	Dem EP Interviews	Pres Official votes	Primary % Polled	Dem EP Interviews	Senate Official votes	Primary % Polled
1	Hillebrand House	207	471	44%	191	441	43%
2	Spears Retirement	170	1,272	13%	158	1,185	13%
3	Highland Baptist	290	893	32%	278	839	33%
4	Burnett	309	821	38%	286	774	37%
5	Douglas	273	1,087	25%	254	1,025	25%
6	Zorn	438	1,203	36%	419	1,135	37%
7	State St	142	480	30%	135	451	30%
Totals		1,829	6,227	29%	1,721	5,850	29%
Totals - #2		1,659	4,955	33.5%	1,563	4,665	33.5%

At Hillebrand (#1) and Zorn (#6), the afternoon interviewers were not counting to 3 or 5 or counting at all after speaking to subjects, but rather interviewing the next voter immediately. At Hillebrand, the interviewer's boyfriend showed up mid-afternoon and was helping her. That, combined with the smaller number of voters, enabled her to get a large percentage of total voters. I also spent half-an-hour polling at Zorn, doubling up the interviews for a time; and, this being close to our base, we set an otherwise unemployed data entry person over to Zorn to help out for the afternoon rush hour from 5-6 pm, thus augmenting the number of interviews there. This may have thrown off the representativeness of the sample slightly, but it allowed us to experiment with multiple interviewers. I felt the effect was very favorable; the interviewers felt it was fun working together, and enabled these very high yields. My thought at the time was that perhaps we should just put three people at a large site to try to get *everyone*. And maybe a third or fourth team member just to record the non-respondents very accurately.

We only began track to track non-respondents in the afternoon, In three precincts beginning at noon, and at a fourth beginning at 3 pm. The only interviewer of the four that properly followed the established protocol of counting to 5 and taking the next subject (site #4) did not miss a single voter and had only 32 rejects out of 158 voters approached, a participation rate of 80%. The interviewer at Site #7 missed 22% of her subjects because she was positioned off to the side – she had to because parking was only a few feet from the door – and she did not get to approach people who came out of the door and immediately went the other way. The energetic Zorn interviewer (site #6) noted virtually all of the non-participants at

⁵ All calls to the Board of Elections are referred to him. He says all calls to other departments as well – zoning, etc... When I expressed surprise and asked "Why's that?" he explained that that's just the way it is. See earlier discussion.

one of the largest polling sites in the state, almost 600 voters (she had help for about 90 minutes of the 6 hour shift), of which 48% participated. At the smaller Hillebrand site (#1), our interviewer, with the help of her boyfriend, tried to approach most of the voters between 3 pm and 6 pm, and managed to get 74% participation rates.

Table 2: Participation Rates

Site #	Polling Place	Time tracked	EP Int-erviews	Rejects	Missed	Target subjects	% Partic	% Reject	% Missed	Notes
1	Hillebrand	3-6 pm	74	20	6	100	74%	20%	6%	Incl. almost all voters
4	Burnett	12-6 pm	126	32	0	158	80%	20%	0%	Incl. almost all voters Rejects, missed partially estimated
6	Zorn	12-6 pm	283	200	110	593	48%	28%	24%	
7	State St	12-6 pm	88	43	37	168	52%	26%	22%	

Democratic Presidential Preference Results

Tables 3 and 4 indicate the exit poll and official results for the Kentucky Democratic Party Presidential primary.

Table 3: Democratic Presidential Primary: Exit Poll Data by Polling Site (# and %)

#	Polling Place	Hillary Clinton	John Edwards	Barack Obama	uncommitted	Total
1	Hillebrand House	83 40%	0 0%	121 58%	3 1%	207
2	Spears Retirement	12 7%	3 2%	154 91%	1 1%	170
3	Highland Baptist	89 31%	3 1%	196 68%	2 1%	290
4	Burnett	155 50%	4 1%	142 46%	8 3%	309
5	Douglas	85 31%	4 1%	180 66%	4 1%	273
6	Zorn	158 36%	6 1%	268 61%	6 1%	438
7	State St	43 30%	6 4%	91 64%	2 1%	141
Total by Polling place		625	26	1152	26	
Average by polling place		32.2%	1.6%	64.8%	1.4%	

Table 4: Democratic Presidential Primary Official Results by Polling Site (# and %)

#	Polling Place	Hillary Clinton	John Edwards	Barack Obama	uncommitted	Total
1	Hillebrand House	191 41%	1 0%	276 56%	3 1%	471
2	Spears Retirement	80 6%	3 0%	1185 93%	4 0%	1272
3	Highland Baptist	296 33%	5 1%	582 65%	10 1%	893
4	Burnett	480 58%	14 2%	316 38%	11 1%	821
5	Douglas	395 36%	10 1%	662 61%	20 2%	1087
6	Zorn	477 40%	19 2%	689 57%	18 1%	1203
7	State St	197 41%	7 1%	271 56%	5 1%	480
Total by Polling place		2116	59	3981	71	
Average by polling place		36.5%	1.0%	61.4%	1.1%	

Table 5 reveals the differentials between the official results and our exit poll survey results. I am using the term *Within Precinct Disparity* (WPD) with slightly more precision that it has been defined in the past (e.g., Edison/Mitofksy 2005, Freeman & Bleifuss 2006). In Table 5, I calculate a WPD for *each candidate*, that is the difference between their official result and our survey result for them in that precinct the probability that we could have gotten the results that we did if the official count is correct

and there was no systematic polling *bias*. A ✓ mark indicates next to the candidate’s WPD indicates that the disparity is small enough that it could have been a chance disparity. In a clean election, WPD should not exceed two or three percentage points in the great majority of precincts; that is to say the candidate’s official results and exit poll survey results should be within a few percentage points of each other. Only one in twenty such p-values should be .05 or below, identified in red on the table.⁶

The final column to the right indicates Within Precinct Disparity (WPD) as it has been commonly used in commenting on past exit poll discrepancies, i.e., the disparity between margin between the top two candidates in the official result precinct versus the margin between the top two candidates indicated by exit poll data.

Disparities such as Clinton’s performance at the Burnett (#4) or State St. (#7) polling sites are wildly unlikely and could only have been the result of miscount or severe polling bias. That two-thirds of our polling sites have such p-values indicates either system-wide polling bias or that the entire election was corrupted. As indicated above, I saw no evidence at all of polling bias that could have accounted for this disparity.

Table 5: Differentials between Exit Poll and Official Results in the Presidential Race

	Clinton		Edwards		Obama		Uncommitted		WPD (Clinton
	WPD	P	WPD	P	WPD	p	WPD	P	- Obama)
1 Hillebrand House	0.5	✓	0.2	✓	0.1	✓	-0.8	✓	0.3
3 Highland Baptist	2.5	✓	-0.5	✓	-2.4	✓	0.4	✓	4.9
4 Burnett	8.3	.00012	0.4	✓	-7.5	.00043	-1.3	.019	15.8
5 Douglas	5.2	.023	-0.5	✓	-5.0	.028	0.4	✓	10.2
6 Zorn	3.6	.031	0.2	✓	-3.9	.022	0.1	✓	7.5
7 State St	10.8	.0012	-2.8	.003	-7.6	.018	-0.4	✓	18.4
average	5.1		-0.5		-4.4		-0.2		9.5

We have, of course, observed these kinds of numbers before in exit poll data (Freeman & Bleifuss, 2006; Simon & O’Dell, 2007), and the numbers are eerily similar to differentials we observed in New Hampshire (Freeman 2008) and elsewhere this primary season (Simon & O’Dell, 2008). As with New Hampshire, the data indicate that it’s not just vote changes from Obama to Clinton, but from everyone, including uncommitted, to Clinton. Yet the question will again arise, “How do we know that there aren’t other sources of polling error?” I will discuss this more thoroughly later in this report, but for now, not worrying about “proving” fraud, I note that there is no good reason to imagine why they should be skewed. If anything, we would have expected them skewed the other way. Interviewers, all of whom were white (an exigency to try to avoid in future endeavors), indicated that blacks were less likely to fill out the questionnaires than whites; several black voters saw that race was one of the questions and refused to do it then and there. I felt that some interviewers were too passive, but that’s not bias: passivity leaves higher numbers of non-respondents, but there’s no reason to believe that it results in an unrepresentative sample. A Pew survey (2004) concluded that methodologically sound polls are still

⁶ Those who have seen the large Margins of Error that Edison/Mitofsky assigns to their polls may wonder about the precision that we ascribe to ours. These EVEPs can be extraordinarily precise, much more so than even the best standard social science surveys. This is because we are not working with a very large population, but rather a limited number of overall precinct voters. I would like to get even larger percentages of a precinct’s voters in future elections, so that odds become overwhelming that a clean poll of any given (clean) precinct will be within one or two percentage points of the actual vote count.

representative even with low response rates, and that attempts to increase response rates do not necessarily make them more representative. Indeed, the only such probe of exit polls (Merkle, et al 1998) found that extra measures taken to entice non-respondents to participate resulted in slightly *less* representative samples.

Democratic Senate preferences

The Democratic U.S. Senate primary was barely even challenged until the last few weeks before the election. Wealthy businessman Bruce Lunsford built up name recognition through two past unsuccessful election runs and lined up party support early for this nomination. He is hated by Kentucky progressives as a DINO (Democrat in Name Only), not only because of conservative positions on most issues, but also because he has lavished endorsements and financial support on Republicans, even in recent elections (Westmoreland-White 2008, Nickolas 2008). Andy Horne was the progressives' choice, but he dropped out shortly before Election Day (his totals do not appear on the Kentucky's official results list). Greg Fisher, another wealthy businessman, drew support throughout the state as the anti-Lunsford candidate, because with his wealth, which he ultimately did not dip into deeply, he was seen as having the best chance of defeating him.

Table 6: US Senate Race for Exit Poll Survey Results by Polling Site (# and %)

#	Polling Place	Andy Horne	Bruce Lunsford	James Rice	Kenneth Stepp	David L. Williams	David Wylie	Michael Cassaro	Greg Fisher	Total
1	Hillebrand House	16	58	3	3	3	1	7	100	191
2	Spears Retirement	4	78	9	3	8	1	2	53	158
3	Highland Baptist	9	61	0	0	3	0	4	201	278
4	Burnett	22	124	4	3	3	1	21	108	286
5	Douglas	12	70	1	1	4	1	11	154	254
6	Zorn	23	189	3	4	7	2	18	173	419
7	State St	10	65	3	3	2	0	5	47	135
Totals by Polling place		96	645	22	17	30	6	68	836	1721
1	Hillebrand House	8%	30%	2%	2%	2%	1%	4%	52%	
2	Spears Retirement	3%	49%	6%	2%	5%	1%	1%	34%	
3	Highland Baptist	3%	22%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	72%	
4	Burnett	8%	43%	1%	1%	1%	0%	7%	38%	
5	Douglas	5%	28%	0%	0%	2%	0%	4%	61%	
6	Zorn	5%	45%	1%	1%	2%	0%	4%	41%	
7	State St	7%	48%	2%	2%	1%	0%	4%	35%	
Averages		5.6%	38.0%	1.7%	1.2%	1.9%	0.3%	3.7%	47.5%	

Table 7: US Senate Race Official Count by Polling Site

#	Polling Place	Andy Horne	Bruce Lunsford	James Rice	Kenneth Stepp	David L. Williams	David Wylie	Michael Cassaro	Greg Fisher	Total
1	Hillebrand House	27	165	15	6	13	0	22	193	441
2	Spears Retirement	32	561	57	27	66	12	17	413	1185
3	Highland Baptist	28	223	2	6	9	3	21	547	839
4	Burnett	53	329	16	9	18	1	43	305	774
5	Douglas	59	324	6	4	9	4	36	583	1025
6	Zorn	60	491	14	13	29	8	43	477	1135
7	State St	27	205	8	4	7	2	19	179	451
Totals by Polling place		286	2297	118	69	151	30	201	2691	5843

1	Hillebrand House	6%	37%	3%	1%	3%	0%	5%	44%
2	Spears Retirement	3%	47%	5%	2%	6%	1%	1%	35%
3	Highland Baptist	3%	27%	0%	1%	1%	0%	3%	65%
4	Burnett	7%	43%	2%	1%	2%	0%	6%	39%
5	Douglas	6%	32%	1%	0%	1%	0%	4%	57%
6	Zorn	5%	43%	1%	1%	3%	1%	4%	42%
7	State St	6%	45%	2%	1%	2%	0%	4%	40%
Averages		5.2%	39.2%	2.0%	1.1%	2.4%	0.4%	3.7%	45.9%

As indicated in Table 8, numbers in the Senate race were off at two polling sites. Oddly, it was the only two polling sites in which the Clinton-Obama race numbers appeared correct. Although Lunsford’s official numbers did not exceed his poll numbers to quite the extreme that Clinton’s did, Lunsford’s victory margin over Fisher in two polling sites could not have been by chance alone. Fisher’s numbers are wildly low in both, and it’s difficult to fathom any polling explanation for this disparity. Adding to suspicion of fraud is the fact that in both races, the beneficiary of the disparity in all six cases is the party candidate. A third

Table 8: Differentials between Exit Polls and Official Results in the US Senate Race

Differentials (OC - EP)	Horne	Lunsford	Rice	Stepp	Williams	Wylie	Cassero	Fisher
1 Hillebrand House	-2.3 .064	7.0 .0049	1.8 ✓	-0.2 ✓	1.4 ✓	-0.5 ✓	1.3 ✓	-8.3 0.0010
3 Highland Baptist	0.1 ✓	4.6 .019	0.2 ✓	0.7 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.4 ✓	1.1 ✓	-7.4 0.0014
4 Burnett	-0.8 ✓	-0.9 ✓	0.7 ✓	0.1 ✓	1.3 ✓	-0.2 ✓	-1.8 ✓	1.6 ✓
5 Douglas	1.0 ✓	4.1 .06	0.2 ✓	0.0 ✓	-0.7 ✓	0.0 ✓	-0.8 ✓	-3.8 ✓
6 Zorn	-0.2 ✓	-1.8 ✓	0.5 ✓	0.2 ✓	0.9 ✓	0.2 ✓	-0.5 ✓	0.7 ✓
7 State St	-1.4 ✓	-2.7 ✓	-0.4 ✓	-1.3 ✓	0.1 ✓	0.4 ✓	0.5 ✓	4.9 ✓
average	-0.5	1.2	0.4	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.0	-1.6

About Kentucky and the May Primary

We were not expecting to find fraud in these precincts mostly because of the demand that we inform the Board of Elections of the polling sites we were polling. But upon reflection, why *would* they worry about exit pollsters? Other exit media pollsters have long been polling elections without ever saying anything about fraud. It’s also possible that these precincts were cleaned up; fraud may well have been worse yet at the polling sites we did not poll.

Another reason we did not expect to find fraud was because it appeared from all accounts that they did not need to bother. Both Clinton and Lunsford were (supposedly) locks to win. The final official results statewide were:

President:			"UNCOMMITTED"	18,091	2.6%
Hillary Clinton	459,511	65.5%	John Edwards	14,212	2.0%
Barack Obama	209,954	29.9%			
Senate:			James E. Rice	20,403	3.3%
Bruce Lunsford	316,992	51.1%	Michael Cassero	17,340	2.8%
Greg Fischer	209,827	33.8%	Kenneth Stepp	13,451	2.2%
David L. Williams	34,363	5.5%	David Wylie	7,528	1.2%

But there are several possible motivations for fraud: First, this may simply be business as usual: Add a few percentage points to the favored candidate. It's likely that the programming of the theft must be done in advance, in which case, they have to decide well before they know what transpires in the last weeks of the campaign and the actual voter sentiment come Election Day, so they take whatever insurance they feel they *might need* in the worst case. In 2004, fraud was not confined to a few key locations. It may have been worse in Ohio than elsewhere, but nationwide there was an *average* seven percentage point disparity between exit poll results and official results in 1800 precincts.

Second, they may well have wanted to run up the count. If WPD at our six polling sites were representative of the state, then Clinton and Lunsford still would have won handily, 60.4% to 34.2% and 49.9% to 32.2% respectively, and the theft may well have been worse than that. In the Presidential election, Obama already had an insurmountable edge in elected delegates. Clinton's only chance was to convince superdelegates that he would be unelectable in a general election. A 60 something percent to 20 something percent victory is more impressive than 50 something percent to 30 something percent. In the Senate race, a majority for Lunsford is more impressive than a plurality and may discourage defection from unhappy Democrats on the left.

Republicans openly encouraged extended Democratic infighting. In the open primary of Ohio, Karl Rove, Rush Limbaugh and others encouraged Republicans to vote for Hillary Clinton so as to extend the nominating fight. An Obama win in Kentucky, or even a strong showing, could have ended the nominating fight then and there. Given Republican operative ties to Diebold (Harris 2003, Freeman & Bleifuss 2006), it is not unfathomable that they would use their influence to both extend the fight and embarrass the presumptive nominee.

Could there have been polling error?

After finding significant WPDs, it's important to go ensure against data entry error. We haven't done a systematic quality control check of questionnaires compared to their data entry – largely because the questionnaires were left in Louisville, when our Local Coordinator left for her other home. But obvious data entry errors have been corrected, with the result that Obama's and Fisher's totals increased by a few questionnaires over our first count. Additional errors, if they exist, are more likely to result in Obama's and Fisher's exit poll totals appearing lower than they really were. This is because, in the precincts we surveyed, Obama's and Fisher's numbers far exceeded their opponents. Arbitrary data entry errors are thus proportionally more likely to result in an error by which an Obama or Fisher response is miscoded for an opponent than vice-versa.

The only other potential source of error is non-response bias or selection bias. This would occur if, for some reason, Clinton and, to a lesser degree, Lunsford voters were less likely to participate in the polls than other voters; or Obama and, to a lesser degree Edwards, Fisher and Horne voters were more likely to participate in the polls than other voters. If that happened, it could have been either because of the characteristics of these voters or because of the interaction between our interviewers and the voters. In our opinion there is no theoretical or hypothetical support for such an explanation. Despite the negative hype on exit polls, there is *no* evidence to indicate that a well-conducted exit poll will produce skewed results (Freeman 2007).

Moreover, why do all of the six disparities favor the Party's endorsed candidate? From a polling

7 Andrew Horne received many votes on Election Day which were included in Election Day posts, but because he had withdrawn from, they were not included on the unofficial results posted online the following day or the official results produced in June.

perspective, if anything, we would have expected results in the Presidential primary skewed the other way. As indicated earlier, interviewers, all of whom were white, said that blacks were less likely to fill out the questionnaires than whites; several black voters saw that race was one of the questions and refused to do it then and there.

Finally, why do we observe extremely unlikely results in some precincts, but not others?

What Happened?

The same question, however, could be asked of any explanation that invokes election fraud. If fraud occurred, there's no clear explanation or even pattern. Why some polling sites and not others? Why the range of results? What happened, or what might have happened? Why different polling sites for the Senate race versus the Presidential race? Is *every* precinct tampered with, but only one race per precinct? Our inability to answer these questions or even put forward a good hypothesis or set of hypotheses undermines our ability to seek action or even present our story (publishers want to know *what* happened, not just statistical evidence that something did. For future efforts, we need more than statistical evidence of something askew – we already had that. We need much stronger proof. That entails a different kind of multi-dimensional effort, and possibly, a different kind of team.

Part of that additional effort would be forensics. We need to know how can we learn more and develop the capabilities to do so. Just as we must develop an analytic strategy of what data to capture and analyze in anticipation of election night, so we ought to develop an investigative strategy. What are the first, second and third investigative steps to take if we find statistical evidence of fraudulent counts?

Conclusions and Next Steps: What to Do for November

In this Kentucky pilot project, we've taken the big step of producing a methodologically sound election verification exit poll (EVEP), capable of producing results that anyone who cares about election veracity will have to take seriously – and that will produce good data that many people and institutions will likely be interested in. Election verification improvements that we have demonstrated include:

- Full day site coverage
- Workable randomization schemes
- Systematic quality control
- Transparent processes
- Publicly available data
- Apples-to-apples comparisons – Election Day polling site results compared with Election Day exit poll polling site survey results
- A polling team that stands behind its methods and data

Moreover, we have codified these processes so that we may replicate this poll across the country, and even so that other groups may also conduct EVEPs.

Exit Polls as Proof

A big problem remains convincing a skeptical public of the verification value of exit polls. Arguments based on the record are not likely to go any further in 2008 than they did in 2004. If anything, the public, including professional pollster opinion, is probably more negative than ever, and it may even be that the well has been poisoned to the degree that some groups may now resist participation in exit polls. On the other hand, the public now knows more than they ever did, and people are more skeptical of election results. So if we can add something new to the discussion, there is the possibility that we can move opinion our way.

But this is probably not enough. To move forward further, we need two big additional steps: (1) testing the methodology against a known result, and (2) development of election fraud explanations

Testing the accuracy of our polling methodology

The best test of our methodology would be to match it to a known result, i.e. precincts which use paper ballots and have open observation. When we are certain of the count, as we are in these few pristine precincts, we have a true benchmark against which we can test the accuracy of survey methods. If, in fact, we observe disparities in these precincts comparable to those we observe elsewhere, then that is a good indicator that, yes, non-response bias may well be a cause of other exit poll discrepancies, and we have actual numbers of the extent of the effect. If, however, we find in these pristine precincts that survey results match official results, we have an excellent demonstration of exit poll accuracy.

In general, it's impossible to know how well a survey mirrors the overall population; exit polls are, under conditions of a reliable official count, the rare exception. Exit polls are the potentially the best possible survey in all of social science, because we can (potentially) measure exactly how accurately the methodology works. This could be done in hand counted precincts in New Hampshire or by working with an elections Supervisor absolutely committed to verifying the vote count.

Developing Election Forensics

Exit polling is important and necessary for election verification, but is incomplete and needs to be coordinated with an investigative effort. If we can publish this kind of analysis on Election Night or soon thereafter, then people in the communities in question can look at the specific precincts we identify and follow up immediately. They can explore what could have caused the discrepancy.

Investigative journalism, alas, is near dead in the mainstream media. But there are independent election investigators, most notably Bev Harris, but also individuals such as Jim March, Bob Fittrakis, Richard Hayes Phillips and Lynn Landes. Others such as Brad Friedman have large followings and could recruit investigative efforts. If we could identify specific sites of likely fraud, for example, say we observe within a few hours of poll closing, an 18 percentage point disparity between the official numbers and exit poll data, we could perhaps enlist the efforts of a large number of activists to immediately go to the scene, demand the evidence, and begin proceedings. With the proper publicity efforts, we could possibly even convince journalists, scientists, lawyers and criminologists to do likewise.

Approaching every voter at a polling site using a team of interviewers

We also need to consider, and test, some practical questions about how best to conduct these polls. Having now done two exit polls and seeing many more utilizing a single interviewer polling randomly selected voters, I would like to try to *approach every voter* at some polling sites using a team of interviewers. There are several big advantages to such an effort:

First, as we increase towards and even over 50% yield of a polling site's voters, our statistical power increases dramatically, much more than a regular poll of a large population. In a standard survey, each additional respondent provides decreasing marginal information, but in an exit poll, each additional respondent is increasingly valuable in pinpointing the actual vote and thereby providing valuable verification. As our yield increases it becomes increasingly certain that the survey results will match the true count, and that an observed disparity indicates a corrupted count. Note in Table 5, the higher certainty at Site #4 (Burnett) than at State St. (#7), even though the State St. WPDs were nominally higher. Likewise note the statistical certainty at Zorn (#6) despite relatively modest WPDs, but the

frustrating lack of statistical certainty in the Senate contest at Douglas (#5) despite higher the nominally higher WPDs.⁸ Given the bad rap on exit polls, only very high degrees of statistical certainty have any chance of eliciting any action.

Second, and even more important, approaching every voter eliminates the possibility of *Interviewer Bias*. When Freeman & Mitteldorf (2005) and US Count Votes (2005) showed that Non-Response Bias was inconsistent with the exit poll data in the 2004 US Presidential election, the NEP moved on to say the problem was not reluctant bush voters but rather, “interviewer bias,” that is liberal pollsters were self selecting people like them. The data contradicts this too (Freeman 2005; Freeman & Bleifuss 2006), but by the time we could show it, the nation had “moved on.” If we’re trying to interview every voter, then there’s no room for Interviewer Bias, and one less point of “debate.”

Third, it eliminates some systematic non-randomization: e.g., what happens when couples come out together. Or, when non-sequential voters *want* to fill out the questionnaire. Or, using our system, the increased likelihood of getting polled during slow periods as compared to during rush hour.

Fourth, teams can bring a comprehensiveness and reliability to the poll that reliance on individuals cannot. Teams can help balance out passivity or bias on the part of any individual pollster. By mixing races and genders, teams can help mitigate any potential non-response bias due to pollster-subject interaction.

Fifth, teams also can generate reliable non-respondent data. If we want to convince a skeptical public that our data are accurate, keeping track of non-respondents is essential. This can be done much more effectively by a dedicated recorder of this data.

Sixth, going for 100% creates some performance (and quality control) measures that we otherwise do not have:

- a. Yield rate now becomes a reliable measure of response rate and thereby performance.
- b. Does a team’s total # of interviews & non-responses match up with the total # of votes? This gives a measure of accuracy (And if there is a disparity, with the number of people who signed the poll book, a count which also allows us a check on the total number of precinct votes).

If these two numbers are good, that gives an added measure of confidence in the data from that site. It’s also hard to overstate the psychological value of performance measures; indeed, it’s so strong that the wrong ones can completely undermine an effort, or an organization. But the right ones push people firmly in the right direction.

Finally, working in teams is fun! This is especially important if we want volunteers.

8 This dramatically increased statistical certainty happens because we’re not polling from a very large universe of national or state voters, but rather a limited universe of polling site voters. One can think of the votes as being colored marbles in a hat. Imagine Lunsford’s 165 reported votes at Douglas (site #5) as yellow marbles in a large hat and Fischer’s 193 votes as green marbles in the same hat. Each exit poll response indicating a vote for Lunsford is equivalent to pulling out a yellow marble out of the hat and each questionnaire indicating a vote for Fischer is equivalent to pulling out a green marble out of the hat. As an excess of green marbles are pulled out, it becomes increasingly likely that yellow ones get picked at a higher rate. Having interviewed 44% of Hillebrand’s voters, we would have pulled out only 58 yellow marbles and 100 green ones. So now there are considerably more Lunsford yellow marbles – 107 – than Fischer green marbles – 93. If, in fact, the count were correct, the odds of picking a yellow marble out are no longer 37%, but rather over 50%, and so it becomes increasingly less likely that they would be plucked at the 30% rate, which they had been so far. The fact that they have continued this far to be plucked at a 30% rate provides increasingly high certainty of a flawed count. ... At a certain point, more marbles might be picked out of a hat than supposedly were there, i.e. a candidate will receive more exit poll votes than official votes, which is particularly compelling evidence of a corrupted count, even to someone who doesn’t know basic arithmetic.

Of course, teams mean much more expense for coverage of fewer precincts.

Volunteers or paid interviewers

We have used exclusively paid interviewers because we wanted people to commit to their tasks and treat it professionally. The common wisdom and experience of pollsters, as well as campaigns, is that if you *need* something done, you need to pay for it. Paying interviewers ensures that they show up and, once there, perform to a higher standard. Two other reasons to use exclusively paid interviewers:

- To expand the pool of potential interviewers—both in numbers and with desired demographic characteristics—if we paid. Poorer people really do need their daily income.
- A concern that our exit poll be more vulnerable to the charge of zealotry and interviewer bias if the interviewers were unpaid volunteers

On the other hand, moving forward, we may want to use a hybrid system. In key polling sites in key states that we absolutely want to cover and mitigate all possible concerns of bias, we would operate polls using exclusively-paid interviewers directly managed by Ken Warren and the Warren Poll. But we also may want to supplement this primary effort with volunteers at other sites. We could use volunteer teams anywhere we can find them to cover states and jurisdictions we otherwise wouldn't be able to. Volunteers may also make feasible team polling that would try to approach 100% of voters in a precinct.

Volunteers are not a financial panacea. We will save on paying pollsters, but we would need to spend more on recruiting, organizing and training volunteers. But using volunteer is not only a means to do more with less. The other consideration is the citizen spirit of the activity. Democracy depends on citizen involvement, and giving a day's effort (a half day of polling plus an hour or two of training) every two or four years is really a minimal effort. After the 2004 election, people were asking in droves, "What can I do?" Well, here's a chance to do something.

I think they will if we present the case properly. People care about democracy. They have given in great numbers and significant sums to Obama, and they gave big to Dean. Candidates throughout the country draw large donations from large numbers of people. *Even if they only really care about getting their man fairly elected*, they ought to try to ensure election integrity. Without assurance that the votes are counted as cast, then all other political activity is in vain (unless you're doing the fixing, and even then it's just for show). If we can't recruit volunteers and donations for exit polling, then who is even going to care when we say that the election is stolen?

Next step

The big next step is to bring others into the discussion, not only funders and organizers, publicists and strategists, and volunteers, but also political scientists, candidates, parties (likely 3rd parties), criminologists, lawyers and journalists: all the people who we will need on board, if and when we think we see evidence of another stolen election.

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