



Signals and Patterns:

Research from SP Labs & Signal Patterns

Election Patterns Findings

October 29, 2008

It's (not necessarily) the economy, stupid: McCain voters prioritize national security.

While conventional wisdom indicates that the foremost issue on voters' minds is the economy, our data¹ reveal a slightly different trend. Supporters of Senator Obama do indeed rate the economy as the most pivotal issue facing the country today. Senator McCain's supporters, on the other hand, are slightly more likely to believe that national security is more pressing. In fact, among voters who rate national security as most important, 78% plan to vote for McCain, while only 11% back Obama. Obama has a similar advantage among people primarily concerned with the economy; he has the support of 72% of them, with 17% backing McCain.

After national security and the economy, the most pressing issue for McCain supporters is abortion. Obama supporters also care about abortion, as they were likely to rank it second or third among the issues, but support among that group trended towards McCain (55% to 32%). Education and health care were hot topics for Obama enthusiasts. McCain also won among voters who rate immigration (49% to 36%) and gun control (83% to 5%) as top issues, but Obama won big in every other group.

Last week, we found that undecided voters were similar in psychological profile to Obama's supporters. In examining the issues, there's more good news for the junior senator from Illinois: Undecideds also rate the economy as the number one issue, particularly female Undecideds (40%). Only 7% of undecided women and 11% of undecided men rate national security as the key issue.

Surprisingly, McCain doesn't have an edge among voters 40 and over (27%, compared to 62% for Obama); that matches his support among voters under 40 (25%, compared to 63% for Obama). In fact, while there are some gender differences in the personality data, the relationships between candidate preference and personality traits are remarkably consistent across age and gender. In other words, it may be harder than people think to craft a message to a particular demographic, when each demographic group has such a mix of personalities. Perhaps that means that personality differences are stronger than age or gender differences.

¹ The Election Patterns (Facebook application) findings were based on the results of 6,211 survey participants as of October 27, 2008



About Signal Patterns

Signal Patterns develops social web applications that characterize and connect users to each other based on their interests, personality and preferences. With these scientific-based applications, consumer can discover more about themselves as well as make valuable connections to like-minded individuals, while publishers, advertisers and social networks can increase their own user engagement. Signal Patterns' patent-pending technology results from a unique combination of in-house behavioral science research and data mining expertise. Founded in 2006, Signal Patterns is based in Pleasantville, NY. For more information: <http://www.signalpatterns.com>

About SP Labs

SP Labs is the research arm of Signal Patterns and consists of a team of top scientists from different disciplines: personality psychology, machine learning, biometrics, social psychology and neuroscience. SP Labs focuses on developing research techniques, surveys and studies that look across seemingly unrelated areas to discover connections and patterns. Through rigorous science and sheer computational power, the SP Labs team's research is able to identify patterns emerging from the data, making connections between disparate subject areas with the goal of helping people learn more about themselves, their relationships and the people around them. For more information visit: http://www.signalpatterns.com/corporate_labs.html