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**THE UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE
NEW AMERICANS EXIT POLL PROJECT**

Preliminary Results from the 2008 New York City Voter Exit Poll

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2008 New Americans Exit Poll

This summary reflects an analysis of the 2008 New Americans Exit Poll based on 94 percent of all surveys collected on Election Day. A full report based on 100 percent of surveys is forthcoming. Because the official turnout statistics are not yet available, we cannot yet properly weight the data or report a margin of error for the survey. The findings, therefore, should be interpreted with care.

Preliminary Findings 2008

1) Immigrants continue to swell the ranks of first time voters in New York City and remain a driving force in the growth of the city's electorate. Not quite half (41 percent) of all those voting for the first time in this presidential election were foreign born. For the past three presidential elections, three in ten of all foreign born voters were first time voters compared to lower rates among the native born (one in ten in 2000; two in ten in 2004, and one in ten in 2008).

2) Our newest citizens make up the largest cohort of foreign born voters. Nearly 18 percent of foreign born voters became citizens during the last two years, and an additional 25 percent of foreignborn voters naturalized between 2000 and 2005; those who naturalized between 2000 and 2005 make up the largest cohort of all foreign born voters.

3) Turnout at the polls in New York City increased by about 3 percent over 2004 levels. This increase was driven by higher turnout rates in Black and Latino-majority election districts, and offset by a slight decrease in white majority election districts. Among Latino-majority election districts, turnout increased by 5.4 percent; African American-majority districts increased turnout by 13 percent. Asian American-majority districts, however, evidenced a decrease in turnout of 6.6 percent over 2004 levels.

4) In the face of national anti-immigrant sentiment, New York City voters retain a positive attitude toward immigration: more favor increasing the number of immigrants legally permitted to come to the U.S. to live (34 percent) than decreasing it (25 percent), with foreign born voters only slightly more positive in their in their views (38.6 percent) than the native born (33.2 percent).

5) In near identical numbers, immigrant and native born voters share the same concerns in this election - they report that their choice for president was motivated primarily by the issues of jobs and the economy, followed by the financial crisis and health care. Immigration itself was the top issue for only a tiny fraction of voters among either group (about one half of one percent a percent of native born voters expressed immigration as their top concern compared to 4 percent of the foreign born).

6) Similarly, both groups say jobs and the economy, education, and health care as the top concerns for state government. Equal proportions of people among the foreign and native born want state government to focus on education as much as job creation and financial management.

7) With respect to city politics and policy, both groups oppose extending the city's term limits law in equal proportions (55.5 percent of native born and 55.2 percent of immigrants). When asked whether the mayor and city council should cut services or raise taxes to address the impending budget, only 15 percent of the foreign born and 21 percent of the native born favor cutting city services. Immigrants are slightly more likely to favor government (at all levels) doing more to solve problems (87 percent) than are the native born (83 percent).

8) Political parties and campaigns do a poor job of contacting immigrant voters. While immigrant and native born voters are contacted at similar rates by unions (estimated at about 12 percent) — only about 9 percent of foreign born voters report being contacted by political parties and only about 11 percent by political campaigns, which is roughly half the rate that native born voters report being contacted by parties and campaigns (at about 18 percent and 20 percent, respectively).

9) Governor Paterson needs to make inroads to gain the approval of foreign born voters. Foreign born voters approve of Governor Paterson's performance at lower rates than do native born voters (a 40 percent approval rating from foreign born voters compared to a 50 percent approval rating among native born voters).

TURNOUT, FOREIGN BORN AND FIRST TIME VOTERS

Turnout*

Racial Majority Election Districts	2004	2008	Net Change	Percent Change
White Majority	1,030,314	1,002,440	-31,084	-3.0
Black Majority	486,548	549,587	62,752	13.0
Hispanic Majority	353,073	372,254	18,938	5.4
Asian Majority	33,823	31,604	-2,219	-6.6
All Election Districts	2,281,450	2,346,909	65,459	2.9

*Actual turnout, as reported by the AP; turnout for mixed population districts not shown.

Proportion of First Time Voters Among all New York City Voters

	Native Born	Foreign Born	Total
2000 Presidential	11	34	20
2002 State and Federal	4	15	8
2004 Presidential	17	30	22
2005 Municipal	3	7	4
2008 State and Federal	3	8	5
2008 Presidential	14	29	18

New York City First Time Voters, 2008

Nativity	
Native Born	51
Foreign Born	41
Race	
White	22
Black	21
Latino	36
Asian	15
Other	7

New York City Foreign Born Voters, 2008

Length of Time in the U.S.	Foreign Born
5 to 10 Years	8
11 to 15 Years	15
16 to 20 Years	22
More Than 20 Years	53
When Naturalized	
2006 – 2008	18
2000 – 2005	25
1995 – 1999	17
1990 – 1994	12
1980 – 1989	14
1970 – 1979	8
Before 1970	6

**Length of Time in the U.S. By When Naturalized
New York City Foreign Born Voters, 2008**

	5-10 Years	11-15 Years	More Than 15 Years
2006-2008	70	29	9
2000-2005	22	50	20
1995-1999	5	14	20
1990-1994	0	6	14
1980-1989	0	0	18
1970-1979	0	0	10
Before 1979	0	0	8

**First Time Voters, Age by Race
New York City Voters, 2008**

	White	Black	Latino	Asian	Other
First Time Voter	22	21	36	15	7
Age					
18 to 29 Years	56	59	60	39	65
30 to 45 Years	27	22	23	32	31
46 to 65 Years	21	23	30	24	2
Over 65 Years	3	1	4	3	0

PARTY AND CANDIDATE PREFERENCES

Vote Choice and Party Registration New York City Voters, 2008

	Native Born	Foreign Born	Total
President			
Barack Obama (D)	84	82	83
John McCain (R)	14	16	14
New York State Senate			
Democratic Candidate	80	79	79
Republican Candidate	13	14	13
Party Registration			
Democratic Party	72	70	72
Republican Party	10	10	10
Other Party	4	3	4
No Party Registration	13	16	13

Vote Choice by Race and Nativity New York City Voters, 2008

	White		Black		Latino		Asian		Other	
	Native	FB	Native	FB	Native	FB	Native	FB	Native	FB
Obama	75	69	95	93	91	89	90	75	91	92
McCain	23	29	2	3	9	9	7	24	3	8

Vote Choice by Age and Nativity New York City Voters, 2008

	18-29 years		30-45 years		46-65 years		Over 65 years	
	Native	FB	Native	FB	Native	FB	Native	FB
Obama	89	92	86	84	78	82	69	70
McCain	9	5	12	13	20	17	28	30

**Proportion of Voters Reporting Voter Contacts
In the Month Before the 2008 Election
New York City Voters, 2008**

Contacted by:	Native Born	Foreign Born	Total
Union	11	12	12
Family, Friend, Neighbor	24	18	22
Political Party	18	9	15
Political Campaign	20	11	17
Immigrant Organization	1	2	1
Automated Call	15	9	13

ISSUES

Issues and Voting New York City Voters, 2008

	Native Born	Foreign Born	Total
Single Most Important Issue in Deciding Vote for President			
Jobs/Economy	31	27	30
Financial Crisis	15	20	17
War in Iraq	15	15	15
Health Care	8	6	8
Education	7	9	7

Role of Government New York City Voters, 2008

	Native Born	Foreign Born	Total
Agree:			
Government should do more to solve problems	83	87	84
Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals	17	13	16

Attitude Toward Levels of Legal Immigration to the U.S. New York City Voters, 2008

	Native Born	Foreign Born	Total
Number of Immigrants Permitted to Come to the U.S. to Live Should Be:			
Increased a lot	17	21	18
Increased a little	16	18	16
Decreased a lot	15	6	13
Decreased a little	13	10	12
Same as now	21	22	21
Don't Know	18	23	19

**City and State Politics
New York City Voters, 2008**

	Native Born	Foreign Born	Total
Do you approve or disapprove of the job Gov. Paterson is doing?			
Approve	51	40	48
Disapprove	12	12	12
Most important issues for state legislature			
Jobs/Economy	68	64	67
Education	67	65	66
Health Care	48	49	48
Should the Mayor and city council cut services or raise taxes to address the city' fiscal crisis			
Cut services	19	21	20
Raise taxes	21	15	19

**Racial Composition of Candidate's Support
New York City Voters, 2008**

	Obama	McCain	Total
Race			
White	38	69	42
Black	22	3	20
Latino	25	13	24
Asian	9	13	10
Other	6	2	5

**Race Questions by Racial Group
New York City Voters, 2008**

	White	Black	Latino	Asian	Other
Candidate of Same Racial Background Understands My Issues Better	14	51	43	38	29
Race Relations in NYC Better Over Past Four Years	53	14	20	9	4

Background

The University Collaborative/New Americans Exit Poll (NAEP) project began in 2000. Since then, we have interviewed over 17,000 New York City voters, including nearly 6,000 foreign born citizen voters leaving their polling places on Election Day in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2008. The result is a unique database of information on the political preferences, attitudes and behavior of New Yorkers participating in recent national, state and municipal elections. To facilitate the full participation of immigrant voters, surveys are made available in English, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, and Korean translations, and are administered by a trained, multi-lingual survey staff recruited from the city's ethnic and immigrant neighborhoods.

The funding for the 2008 exit poll was provided by Barnard College, Columbia University, the City University of New York, the New York Latino Research and Resources Network (NYLARNet) at the University of Albany/State University of New York, New York Community Trust, Solidago Foundation and the Four Freedoms Fund.

The project enjoys a fruitful collaboration with the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) which provides support through staff time dedicated to project recruitment and implementation, and field work supervision on Election Day.

Methodology

The sampling strategy was originally developed by Prof. Mollenkopf. It involves linking census boundaries with the city's electoral geography and importing demographic data into election district boundaries; grouping the city's 6,291 election districts into 1,360 polling sites, and stratifying them by the proportion foreign born. The demographic data used for sampling for the first four NAEP surveys (2000, 2002, 2004, 2005) was drawn from the 1990 U.S. Census and adjusted with data from the 2000 U.S. Census. In 2006 we replaced the sampling frame with a new sample using only 2000 census data. Next, we randomly sampled polling sites within three strata. The lowest stratum is set at 18 percent foreign born or less, the election district average for the percentage foreign born in the population. Foreign born voters, therefore, are slightly over-sampled in the NAEP. We do this in order to build up large enough representative samples of the city's major immigrant groups appropriate for finer statistical analysis.