

Tracking Louisiana Opinions

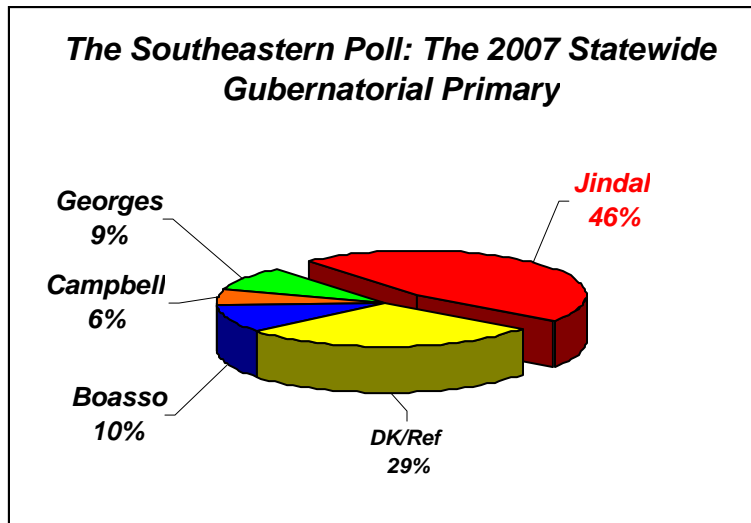


A Publication of the Southeastern Social Science Research Center

The Southeastern Poll:

The 2007 Statewide Gubernatorial Primary Election

“If the primary election for Governor of Louisiana were held today, would you vote for Walter Boasso, Foster Campbell, John Georges or Bobby Jindal?”



*Random Sample Size: 641
Sampling Error: \pm 4%
Conducted Between October 1 - 7, 2007*

The Southeastern Poll: The 2007 Statewide Gubernatorial Primary

The most recent *Southeastern Poll* of registered voters statewide shows that, two weeks before election day, Bobby Jindal has a substantial lead over his opponents in the 2007 statewide gubernatorial primary. In fact, Jindal maintains his lead whether we factor in undecided leaners or distinguish among chronic or “likely” voters.

Voters see education, “corruption and corrupt politicians,” crime, hurricane recovery and “jobs and unemployment” as the top five “most important” problems facing the state of Louisiana today. In addition, despite some indications that the traditional “populist” political culture in Louisiana may be receding, voters still favor more state spending in an array of policy areas.

At the same time, any statewide polling results must be read with caution, since the catastrophic hurricanes Katrina and Rita have caused demographic shifts that make assurances of representative random sampling somewhat problematic.

These *Southeastern Poll* results are based on a statewide random sample of 641 registered voters, interviewed October 1 – 7, 2007. The overall sampling error is $\pm 4\%$.

The Gubernatorial Primary

When we ask registered voters statewide for their choice in the upcoming primary election for governor, 46.2% favor Bobby Jindal, while Walter Boasso is favored by 10.1%, John Georges by 9.2% and Foster Campbell by 5.6%. A large 28.9% of voters are undecided or refuse to state a preference. When undecided “leaners” are apportioned among the candidates, Jindal has 49.6%, Boasso 11.2%, Georges 10.8%, and Campbell 6.2%, while 22.1% remain undecided or refuse to answer (Table 1).

Table 1: The Primary Campaign for Governor. “If the primary election for Governor of Louisiana were held today would you vote for Walter Boasso, Foster Campbell, John Georges or Bobby Jindal?”

		With Undecided Leaners
Boasso	10.1%	11.2%
Campbell	5.6	6.2
Georges	9.2	10.8
Jindal	46.2	49.6
Don't Know/Ref	28.9	22.1
N =	641	641

Our *Southeastern Poll* sample includes ALL registered voters. However, we did incorporate into the study actual past voting behavior (vote frequency in five statewide elections) as a rough method for determining the likelihood that someone might turnout to vote on election-day. As in the past, we use past vote frequency as an objective measure of voting behavior, based on records found in the statewide list of registered voters.

With that in mind, perhaps the best indicator of the candidates’ standing at this point in time is in the trial heat results factoring in undecided leaners and chronic voters, as in Table 2. Jindal leads among these chronic voters with 49.5% of preferences, Boasso has 11.4%, Georges 11.2% and Campbell 7%. About 21% of these chronic voters are undecided or refuse to state a preference. However, Jindal’s lead is even stronger when we take into consideration the various demographic groups that make up the Louisiana electorate

Table 2: The Gubernatorial Primary, With Undecided Leaners, by Vote Frequency*

		Vote Frequency Collapsed		Total	
		Non-Voters	Chronic Voters		
Boasso	Count	25	47	72	
	% within Vote Frequency Collapsed	10.9%	11.4%	11.2%	
Campbell	Count	11	29	40	
	% within Vote Frequency Collapsed	4.8	7.0	6.2	
Georges	Count	23	46	69	
	% within Vote Frequency Collapsed	10.0%	11.2%	10.8%	
Jindal	Count	114	204	318	
	% within Vote Frequency Collapsed	49.8%	49.5%	49.6%	
Don't Know	Count	42	57	99	
	% within Vote Frequency Collapsed	18.3%	13.8%	15.4%	
Refused	Count	14	29	43	
	% within Vote Frequency Collapsed	6.1	7.0	6.7	
Total	Count	229	412	641	
	% within Vote Frequency Collapsed	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
		SE±	6.6%	4.9%	4%

* Chronic voters are those who voted at least 4 times in the last 5 statewide elections prior to the Oct. 20th primary. Non-chronic voters are those who voted 3 or fewer times across the same elections.

In short, four years after losing a tight gubernatorial runoff election to Kathleen Blanco, when long-term patterns in Louisiana political culture overtook his candidacy, Bobby Jindal appears to benefit from slow changes in Louisiana political culture that started over forty years ago, with the issues and events that produced Republican growth throughout the South, changes that were, perhaps, enlivened by the catastrophic storms Katrina and Rita.

Tables 3 through 9 tell part of the story of this statewide campaign. Jindal’s electoral strength runs across virtually every demographic group, in a way that would have been unthinkable a mere few decades ago in the state that produced Huey Long, Earl Long and Edwin Edwards. But this also is a state that has produced its’ fair share of racist demagogues. Bobby Jindal, a young son of first generation Indian immigrants, seems to have finally overcome these prejudices, even among voters who, objectively, can be labeled “populists.”

Even among Black voters (Table 3), Jindal runs a respectable second to Walter Boasso (Jindal 17.7%, Boasso 21.5%). A huge 45.7% of Black voters are undecided or refuse to state a preference. Whether we look at gender (Table 4), party (Table 5), age (Table 6), region (Table 7), education (Table 8) or income (Table 9), Jindal leads his primary opponents substantially.

Table 3: The Gubernatorial Primary by Race

quest1 * Race2 Crosstabulation

			Race2		Total
			Black	White	
quest1	Boasso	Count	40	25	65
		% within Race2	21.5%	5.5%	10.1%
	Campbell	Count	15	21	36
		% within Race2	8.1%	4.6%	5.6%
	Georges	Count	13	46	59
		% within Race2	7.0%	10.1%	9.2%
	Jindal	Count	33	263	296
		% within Race2	17.7%	57.8%	46.2%
	Don't Know	Count	66	76	142
		% within Race2	35.5%	16.7%	22.2%
	Refused	Count	19	24	43
		% within Race2	10.2%	5.3%	6.7%
Total		Count	186	455	641
		% within Race2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4: The Gubernatorial Primary by Gender

quest1 * Gender2 Crosstabulation

			Gender2		Total
			Female	Male	
quest1	Boasso	Count	33	32	65
		% within Gender2	9.9%	10.4%	10.1%
	Campbell	Count	22	14	36
		% within Gender2	6.6%	4.5%	5.6%
	Georges	Count	36	23	59
		% within Gender2	10.8%	7.4%	9.2%
	Jindal	Count	136	160	296
		% within Gender2	41.0%	51.8%	46.2%
	Don't Know	Count	83	59	142
		% within Gender2	25.0%	19.1%	22.2%
	Refused	Count	22	21	43
		% within Gender2	6.6%	6.8%	6.7%
Total		Count	332	309	641
		% within Gender2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5: The Gubernatorial Primary by Party Identification**quest1 * partyid2 Crosstabulation**

			partyid2				Total
			Democrat	Independent	Republican	Don't Know/Ref.	
quest1	Boasso	Count	46	6	7	6	65
		% within partyid2	16.6%	7.4%	3.2%	9.8%	10.1%
	Campbell	Count	29	3	3	1	36
		% within partyid2	10.5%	3.7%	1.4%	1.6%	5.6%
	Georges	Count	29	10	17	3	59
		% within partyid2	10.5%	12.3%	7.7%	4.9%	9.2%
	Jindal	Count	72	34	174	16	296
		% within partyid2	26.0%	42.0%	78.4%	26.2%	46.2%
	Don't Know	Count	82	21	18	21	142
		% within partyid2	29.6%	25.9%	8.1%	34.4%	22.2%
	Refused	Count	19	7	3	14	43
		% within partyid2	6.9%	8.6%	1.4%	23.0%	6.7%
Total		Count	277	81	222	61	641
		% within partyid2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

** Party Identification was originally measured on a 7-point scale. Independent leaners were recoded as partisans. Independents who did not “lean” toward either major party are viewed as “pure” independents.

Table 6: The Gubernatorial Primary by Age**quest1 * age2 Crosstabulation**

			age2				Total
			< or = 35 yrs.	36 - 50 yrs.	51 - 64 yrs.	> or = 65 yrs.	
quest1	Boasso	Count	10	20	15	20	65
		% within age2	13.2%	12.7%	8.2%	8.9%	10.2%
	Campbell	Count	4	6	14	12	36
		% within age2	5.3%	3.8%	7.7%	5.3%	5.6%
	Georges	Count	3	11	23	22	59
		% within age2	3.9%	7.0%	12.6%	9.8%	9.2%
	Jindal	Count	39	81	80	95	295
		% within age2	51.3%	51.6%	44.0%	42.2%	46.1%
	Don't Know	Count	15	31	38	58	142
		% within age2	19.7%	19.7%	20.9%	25.8%	22.2%
	Refused	Count	5	8	12	18	43
		% within age2	6.6%	5.1%	6.6%	8.0%	6.7%
Total		Count	76	157	182	225	640
		% within age2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7: The Gubernatorial Primary by Region

quest1 * parish2 Crosstabulation

			parish2			Total
			Cajun Triangle	Southeast	North/Central	
quest1	Boasso	Count	13	32	20	65
		% within parish2	8.9%	10.5%	10.5%	10.1%
	Campbell	Count	4	9	23	36
		% within parish2	2.7%	3.0%	12.0%	5.6%
	Georges	Count	13	27	19	59
		% within parish2	8.9%	8.9%	9.9%	9.2%
	Jindal	Count	73	147	76	296
		% within parish2	50.0%	48.4%	39.8%	46.2%
	Don't Know	Count	32	69	41	142
		% within parish2	21.9%	22.7%	21.5%	22.2%
	Refused	Count	11	20	12	43
		% within parish2	7.5%	6.6%	6.3%	6.7%
Total		Count	146	304	191	641
		% within parish2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8: The Gubernatorial Primary by Education

quest1 * educ2 Crosstabulation

			educ2			Total
			< or = HS Diploma	Some College/ Degree	Don't Know/ Refused	
quest1	Boasso	Count	17	44	4	65
		% within educ2	8.9%	10.6%	11.1%	10.1%
	Campbell	Count	18	17	1	36
		% within educ2	9.4%	4.1%	2.8%	5.6%
	Georges	Count	18	40	1	59
		% within educ2	9.4%	9.7%	2.8%	9.2%
	Jindal	Count	61	222	13	296
		% within educ2	31.9%	53.6%	36.1%	46.2%
	Don't Know	Count	67	66	9	142
		% within educ2	35.1%	15.9%	25.0%	22.2%
	Refused	Count	10	25	8	43
		% within educ2	5.2%	6.0%	22.2%	6.7%
Total		Count	191	414	36	641
		% within educ2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9: The Gubernatorial Primary by Income

quest1 * income2 Crosstabulation

			income2			Total
			< \$60TH	> or = \$60TH	Don't Know/Ref.	
quest1	Boasso	Count	35	23	7	65
		% within income2	10.5%	11.3%	6.7%	10.1%
	Campbell	Count	23	11	2	36
		% within income2	6.9%	5.4%	1.9%	5.6%
	Georges	Count	30	21	8	59
		% within income2	9.0%	10.3%	7.7%	9.2%
	Jindal	Count	141	114	41	296
		% within income2	42.3%	55.9%	39.4%	46.2%
	Don't Know	Count	83	30	29	142
		% within income2	24.9%	14.7%	27.9%	22.2%
	Refused	Count	21	5	17	43
		% within income2	6.3%	2.5%	16.3%	6.7%
Total		Count	333	204	104	641
		% within income2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Tables 10 and 11 raise a more fundamentally intriguing question about the long-term viability of Louisiana’s populist political culture. Our polling in the 2003 runoff campaign between Kathleen Blanco and Bobby Jindal made use of two questions to objectively determine the strength of four ideologies in Louisiana political culture: populism, liberalism, conservatism and libertarianism. The questions we used were adapted from ones used by the Gallup organization (www.gallup.com) in the mid-1990s. In 2003 and in 2007, we asked voters:

1. “As you know, some of us may differ on what we expect the role of state government to be in certain areas of our lives. Some of us may favor a more active role for state government than will others. What about yourself? Do you support or oppose an activist role for state government in determining the distribution of economic benefits in society? [PAUSE] Do you feel strongly about this or not?”
2. “Do you support or oppose an activist role for state government in promoting a particular set of social values? [PAUSE] Do you feel strongly about this or not?”

About 70% of Louisiana voters are classifiable using these criteria, so a lot has to be done to refine our measurements. Still, using our questions as a starting point, results comparing voters in 2003 and 2007 are in Table 10. Then and now, most voters fit the populist model, though their numbers have dropped from 45.6% to 37.9%. In 2003, Kathleen Blanco received her largest margin of victory among “populists,” beating Bobby Jindal in our poll 47.7% to 40.2%. In 2003, these populists are the same group who gave four-time Governor Edwin Edwards his highest approval rating (49%), even though he was in prison. In 2007, Bobby Jindal leads even among the “populists” (Table 11). Although it is doubtful that we have adequately measured these ideological concepts, our results are intriguing.

Table 10: Ideologies in Louisiana Political Culture: 2003 and 2007

	2003	2007
Populists	45.6%	37.9%
Liberals	23.7	30.5
Conservatives	13.9	9.0
Libertarians	16.8	22.6

Table 11: The Gubernatorial Primary the Populist Political Culture**quest1 * ideolid2 Crosstabulation**

			ideolid2				Total
			Populist	Liberal	Conservative	Libertarian	
quest1	Boasso	Count	22	17	7	4	50
		% within ideolid2	13.0%	12.5%	17.5%	4.0%	11.2%
	Campbell	Count	11	13	3	3	30
		% within ideolid2	6.5%	9.6%	7.5%	3.0%	6.7%
	Georges	Count	12	15	3	8	38
		% within ideolid2	7.1%	11.0%	7.5%	7.9%	8.5%
	Jindal	Count	75	58	18	65	216
		% within ideolid2	44.4%	42.6%	45.0%	64.4%	48.4%
	Don't Know	Count	41	27	8	12	88
		% within ideolid2	24.3%	19.9%	20.0%	11.9%	19.7%
	Refused	Count	8	6	1	9	24
		% within ideolid2	4.7%	4.4%	2.5%	8.9%	5.4%
Total		Count	169	136	40	101	446
		% within ideolid2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Rating Governor Kathleen Blanco, Issues and Problems

As she completes four years as Governor of Louisiana, we asked voters to rate the performance of Kathleen Blanco. In fact, Governor Blanco ends her time in office, perhaps, with a better approval rating than some expect. Few voters are undecided or refuse to evaluate her tenure (10.9%). Over 43% (43.6%) disapprove of her performance, 30.3% strongly so. On the other hand, 45.6% of the state's voters approve of Kathleen Blanco's performance over the four years of her governorship, 24.2% strongly so (Table 12).

Table 12: Governor Kathleen Blanco’s Job Approval Rating, 2007

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Approve, Strongly	155	24.2	24.2	24.2
Approve	137	21.4	21.4	45.6
Dissapprove	85	13.3	13.3	58.8
Dissapprove, Strongly	194	30.3	30.3	89.1
Don't Know	43	6.7	6.7	95.8
Refused	27	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	641	100.0	100.0	

We asked voters “What do you think is the most important problem facing the State of Louisiana today?” “Education” (21.4%) stood out as the leading concern of voters, statewide, followed by “corruption/corrupt politicians” (9.2%), “crime” (8.7%), “hurricane recovery” (7.3%) and “jobs/unemployment” (6.6%) rounding out the top five concerns (Table 13).

Table 13: The Most Important Problem.

Education	21.4%
Corruption/Corrupt Politicians	9.2
Crime	8.7
Hurricane Recovery	7.3
Jobs/Unemployment	6.6
Health Care/Ins.	5.9
Economy	5.0
Government/Leadership/Governor	4.7
Politics/Politicians	4.1
Coastal Erosion/Wetlands	2.0
Roads/Infrastructure	2.0
*Other	12.9
Don't Know/Ref.	10.2

*More than 10 items at under 2% each.

As we stated in 2003, many of these concerns are also reflected in attitudes toward state government spending. Tables 14 and 15 compare results from 2007 and 2003, respectively, on questions about spending in four policy areas. In 2007, voters tend to think that state government spends too little on aid to the poor (48.0%), health care (56.9%), education (67.1%), and economic development (47.4%).

We repeat our cautionary note from 2003 that advocating more spending on something is easy when there is no mention of preferred taxes or spending cuts to pay for it. Yet, again, attitudes about taxes and spending cuts were not part of this study. And, while it is true that in 2007 higher percentages of voters said that state government spends “too much” in these policy areas, these

questions continue to be informative regarding any inclination among Louisiana voters toward less dependence on state government than in years gone by, perhaps serving as a counterweight to the idea that traditional Louisiana populism is dead or dying.

Table 14: Attitudes About Government Spending. 2007

	The Poor	Health Care	Education	Economic Development
Too much	18.9%	11.5%	7.6%	10.3%
About right	20.9	20.0	18.1	28.1
Too little	48.0	56.9	67.1	47.4
Don=t Know/Ref	12.2	11.5	7.2	13.2
N =	641	641	641	614

Table 15: Attitudes About Government Spending. 2003

	The Poor	Health Care	Education	Economic Development
Too much	14.6%	6.6%	5.4%	8.2%
About right	20.2	18.4	14.5	28.4
Too little	49.7	64.6	72.0	46.6
Don=t Know/Ref	15.6	10.5	8.1	16.9
N =	705	705	705	705

Attitudes about abortion haven’t changed much over the past four years. Voters in Louisiana tend to support permitting abortions “under certain circumstances” (Table 16). Voters also tend to believe that, between “a literal interpretation of the Bible” and “the scientific theory of evolution,” the best explanation for the development of life on earth is in the Bible, although in 2007 posing the question with several positions in the middle ground reduced the percentage of people on the extremes. In 2007, the Bible had 42.1%, while the theory of evolution had 9% (Table 17).

Table 16: Attitudes about Abortion, 2003 and 2007

	2003	2007
Should never be permitted	26.5%	24.1%
Permit under certain circumstances	41.7	44.3
Always allow	24.3	26.8
Don=t Know/Ref.	7.5	7.4
N =	705	641

Table 17: “Creationism” v. The Scientific Theory of Evolution. “Which of the following statements best represents your view on the development of life on earth? The best explanation for the development of life on earth is in a literal interpretation of the Bible, or The best explanation for the development of life on earth is in the scientific theory of evolution.”

2003 - Asked as an either/or question		2007 Asked as a 7-point scale	
Bible	66.9%	Bible 1	42.1%
		2	5.3
		3	5.3
		4	12.0
		5	9.4
		6	4.2
Evolution	16.1	Evolution 7	9.0
Don't Know/Ref.	6.7	Don't Know/Ref.	12.5
N =	705	N =	641

About the Southeastern Poll

The Director of the *Southeastern Poll* is Dr. Kurt Corbello, Political Science and *Coordinator of Survey Research* for the *Southeastern Social Science Research Center*. Through the *Southeastern Poll*, Southeastern Louisiana University provides objective and independent analyses of public opinion on important issues and elections. Each poll is conducted by students who are trained for the purpose and who are under professional supervision. Special thanks go out to the political science students of Dr. Corbello and Dr. Manabu Saeki, all of whom did such a wonderful job on this study.

Facilities for the *Southeastern Poll* are provided by the *Southeastern Social Science Research Center (SSRC)*. This includes funding, along with a 20-station, state-of-the-art Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. Thanks to the students on staff in the **Center**, for their helpfulness, smiles and laughter. Double thanks to Dr. Bonnie Lewis for never saying “no” to the call for “Help!” For further information about *Southeastern Poll* contact:

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Appendix: Selected Sample Demographics

Congressional District

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	121	18.9	18.9	18.9
2	36	5.6	5.6	24.5
3	81	12.6	12.6	37.1
4	103	16.1	16.1	53.2
5	101	15.8	15.8	69.0
6	106	16.5	16.5	85.5
7	93	14.5	14.5	100.0
Total	641	100.0	100.0	

Race2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Black	186	29.0	29.0	29.0
White	455	71.0	71.0	100.0
Total	641	100.0	100.0	

Gender2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Female	332	51.8	51.8	51.8
Male	309	48.2	48.2	100.0
Total	641	100.0	100.0	

RaceGen

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid White Female	236	36.8	36.8	36.8
White Male	219	34.2	34.2	71.0
Black Female	96	15.0	15.0	86.0
Black Male	90	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	641	100.0	100.0	

partyid

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strong Democrat	142	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Weak Democrat	82	12.8	12.8	34.9
	Independent leaning Democrat	53	8.3	8.3	43.2
	Pure Independent	81	12.6	12.6	55.9
	Independent leaning Republican	47	7.3	7.3	63.2
	Weak Republican	66	10.3	10.3	73.5
	Strong Republican	109	17.0	17.0	90.5
	Don't Know	17	2.7	2.7	93.1
	Refused	44	6.9	6.9	100.0
	Total	641	100.0	100.0	

educ

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No High School Diploma	53	8.3	8.3	8.3
	High School Diploma	138	21.5	21.5	29.8
	Some College	187	29.2	29.2	59.0
	College Degree	227	35.4	35.4	94.4
	Refused	36	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	641	100.0	100.0	

income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than \$20,000	98	15.3	15.3	15.3
	Between \$20TH and \$40TH	138	21.5	21.5	36.8
	Between \$40TH and \$60TH	97	15.1	15.1	52.0
	Between \$60TH and \$80TH	88	13.7	13.7	65.7
	More than \$80,000	116	18.1	18.1	83.8
	Don't Know	16	2.5	2.5	86.3
	Refused	88	13.7	13.7	100.0
	Total	641	100.0	100.0	

Vote Frequency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0/5	53	8.3	8.3	8.3
	1/5	42	6.6	6.6	14.8
	2/5	46	7.2	7.2	22.0
	3/5	88	13.7	13.7	35.7
	4/5	153	23.9	23.9	59.6
	5/5	259	40.4	40.4	100.0
	Total	641	100.0	100.0	

Region

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Cajun Triangle	146	22.8	22.8	22.8
	Southeast	304	47.4	47.4	70.2
	North/Central	191	29.8	29.8	100.0
	Total	641	100.0	100.0	