

**DRAFT: NOT FOR CITATION**

**A Social Approach to Voter Mobilization and Election Day**

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Abstract: This paper explores the effects of a social process of attracting voters to polls, incorporating an interrelated series of attributes to voter mobilization and Election Day efforts. Specifically, it focuses on methods of mobilizing voters that are (1) interpersonal, (2) communal, (3) purposive, and (4) convivial. It finds that research on voter mobilization and voter turnout has not examined sufficiently the way in which eligible voters respond to these social aspects of voter mobilization and Election Day activities. It argues that voting is an event, an experience for voters. It recognizes that, as long acknowledged by scholars, voting is also instrumental. It finds that voter turnout will increase when voter mobilization and Election Day efforts embody both instrumental and social experiences for the voter.

Other scholars have posited that characteristics of the process of voter mobilization and Election Day are intrinsic to a decision to vote. However, for the most part, their hypotheses have either not been tested or they have proven difficult to test empirically. This paper relies on two series of field experiments to test the effects of voter mobilization and Election Day efforts that are interpersonal, communal, purposive and convivial, as well as instrumental, experiences for voters. The first series of experiments involves a program about voting for high school seniors. The second series of experiments centers on an Election Day festival conducted at the election site.

## I. History of a Social Approach to Voter Mobilization and Election Day

### *Voting in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*

The approach to voter mobilization and Election Day in the United States has changed dramatically over the years. Voter mobilization efforts and Election Day activities in the United States have moved in large part from face-to-face, communal mobilization and a festive Election Day to impersonal, individual mobilization and a bureaucratic Election Day. While elections in the past were characterized by a large scale rounding up of voters and a celebratory atmosphere at the polls, elections today are often characterized by direct mail, prerecorded phone calls, and television ads and a solemn, official atmosphere at the polls.

In the eighteenth century – long before the age of partisan drives to get out the vote – voting was a social affair. Voters would travel hours to arrive at the county polling place. Once there, they would likely spend the night, attend the election ball, and enjoy the food and drink supplied in honor of the affair (Schudson, 2001).<sup>1</sup> In most areas, voters would announce their vote orally at the polling place, in front of the candidates, and then personally congratulate the selected candidate “in a ritual of social solidarity.” (Schudson, 2001, 424). It was a common practice, called treating, for the gentlemen standing for office to reward voters for their vote with food and drink, regardless of how they voted, in a show of magnanimity.<sup>2</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the rise of political parties altered the atmosphere prior to and on Election Day. However, the social dynamic accompanying the event continued. According to Schudson (2001), the rise of political parties led to polling areas that were “crowded with banners of rival parties.” (Schudson, 2001, 424). He writes, “Election Day by then was not a convivial oasis, set off from other days, but the culmination of a campaign of several months and many barbecues, torchlight processions, and monster meetings.” (Schudson, 2001, 424). Elections and the voter mobilization activities that preceded them provided some of the most widely anticipated events of the year for their participants. Newspapers chronicled the events in great detail and all of society was a buzz about the election-related affairs.

The feverish, party-generated pitch around nineteenth century elections notwithstanding, elections were still viewed as a time for men to socialize, conduct business, and talk and socialize with their friends and neighbors. As Altschuler writes, “[E]lections were not the silent and single-purpose events that they would become in the era of secret ballots and voting machines, and voters did not attend them just to vote and depart for work or home. They came, in Pomeroy’s words, to meet each other and to vote,” and in many cases to remain for hours in

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<sup>1</sup> As Schudson has written, “because voting was required by law, there were substantial fines for not voting, but the law was rarely enforced.” Schudson, 2001, 423.

<sup>2</sup> James Gardner traces the prevalence of the practice in the United States back to eighteenth-century England, where “treating,” that is “treating the voters to food and drink in heroic quantities in order to gain their favor,” was an evidently universal practice. The practice . . . transformed election campaigns into contests between candidates to provide the most whiskey to eligible voters.” (See E.S. Stavely, Greek and Roman Voting and Elections 78-79 (1972) noting payments to voters in ancient Athens to attend the Assembly). James A. Gardner, Consent, Legitimacy and Elections: Implementing Popular Sovereignty Under the Lockean Constitution, 52 U. Pitt. L. Rev. 189, 232 (1990): (Hasen, 2000, 1327).

the first of these pursuits, availing themselves or not of the parties' inducements to cast a particular ballot." (Altschuler, 75).<sup>3</sup>

There were eligibility requirements to vote in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and many people were excluded from the voting process like women and African Americans. Nevertheless, the nineteenth century in particular was characterized by strong efforts on the part of political parties to mobilize all eligible voters. In this way, the tide to vote swept up every eligible voter. Newly-naturalized citizens were immediately mobilized and incorporated into the voting process and young people were targeted for their vote as soon as they turned voting age. Party officials would work with the new voters to make sure that they knew how to vote and what to do when they arrived before the Election Day judge.<sup>4</sup> The result was a face-to-face, communal mobilization effort that resulted in high voter turnout across all classes of society.<sup>5</sup>

### *Voting as an Instrumental Experience*

While voters likely went to vote for the social experience, they were also likely attracted to the polls for instrumental reasons. Eighteenth-century elections were characterized by Election Day balls that were replete with food and drink. These were celebratory affairs and given that eighteenth century voters were landed gentry, it is difficult to imagine that they undertook the effort to come and vote solely for the food. Nevertheless, the Election Day parties did provide the attendees with tangible sustenance like food and drink. George Washington reportedly provided voters with dinner, rum, rum punch, wine, and beer after elections. (Schudson, 1998, 21).

In the nineteenth century, it was also common practice for political parties to offer food and alcoholic drinks to voters, usually whiskey, stored near the voting site. (Bensel, 181). In addition to food and drink, nineteenth century voters were frequently paid a small sum of money for coming out to vote. (Schudson, 2001, 425). However, even the heightened rewards for voting of the nineteenth century appear more complex than simple instrumental transactions. The food, drink and money were closely intertwined with the social festivities and the sense of belonging that came from being a member of a political party. In many descriptions of election experiences of the time, the gifts of food, drink and money seem more like rituals, expected to accompany the convivial and communal experience of going to vote. As Bensel writes, "For many men, for

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<sup>3</sup> Tocqueville also describes the local flavor and social character of Election Day, "As the election draws near, the activity of intrigue and the agitation of the populace increase; the citizens are divided into hostile camps, each of which assumes the name of its favorite candidate; the whole nation glows with feverish excitement; the election is the daily theme of the press, the subject of private conversations, the end of every thought and every action, the sole interest of the present." (Vol.1, Section 8)

<sup>4</sup> The party official provided voters with a printed ballot that had a list of the party's candidates, and the voters would deposit the card in the ballot box. In some states voters still voiced their list of preferred candidates to the election judges (which they could read from the printed ballot). In other states they deposited their completed, color-coded party ballots given to them by the party officials into the ballot boxes. The voters could erase one or several names on the ballot and insert other names (i.e., vote a split ticket). But, many of the voters were illiterate and were persuaded to just drop the ballot unaltered into the ballot box. (Schudson, 2001, 424).

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that in the late eighteenth century, voting was social, but it was not characterized by the high voter turnout of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, this low voter turnout was likely caused in large part by the restrictions on the franchise and the relatively uncompetitive nature of the elections. In most elections the person who would be selected for the post by the male gentry was known before the actual election.

example, the act of voting was a social transaction in which they handed in a party ticket in return for a shot of whisky, a pair of boots, or a small amount of money. While these transactions could be seen as simple bribery, the practices associated with these exchanges were, in fact, much more complex. . . . Put another way, the men who were given things had become Democrats precisely because they had come to expect to be given things by Democratic agents at the polls. Such men were not so much bribed as rewarded for their votes.” (Bensel, ix)

In light of the social nature in which the food, drink and money were provided in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is difficult to disentangle the instrumental and the social experiences of voting for voters at that time. The gifts were viewed less as bribes than as acknowledgements that voting was a service to the candidate or to the political party. Although food, drink, and money are often sufficient to compel people to act, historical descriptions of the Election Day activities make it clear that people were not solely joining the festivities because they reaped these material benefits. After all, the practices of getting people drunk were not universal and nineteenth century party machine strength and willingness to fund Election Day festivities varied state to state and election to election. (Bensel, 181). Voters did not always partake in the food and drink and not all voters were offered monetary or material inducements. Voters came to the polls not only because they were paid for their ballots, but also because voting was an expression of the voters’ integration into a local, typically ethnic, network of personal associations. (Pomper, Gerald M. and Loretta A. Sernekos, 1991). As Schudson (2001) has written, “Voter loyalty was more a matter of social comradeship. . . . Drink, dollars, drama, and most of all fraternity brought people to the polls.” (Schudson, 2001, 425). In this way, while the characterizations of nineteenth century voting practices in particular as clientelistic, instrumental affairs may be valid, they were also interpersonal, communal and convivial.

### *A Move Away from the Social Experience of Yesteryear*

With a view to creating an informed citizen, election practices changed at the end of the nineteenth century. In the 1880s, the Mugwumps attempted to make elections more information based, issue focused and educational for voters. Similarly, the Progressives in the 1890s and early 1900s wanted to insulate the independent, rational citizen from what they perceived to be the distorting influence of political parties.

In response to these reform efforts, political campaigns began to rely more heavily on informing voters about policy issues and supplying the electorate with information and political pamphlets. In the 1890s, the Australian or secret ballot became popular and was gradually adopted in each state. For the first time in American history, literacy was required to follow much of the debate surrounding an election and to cast a ballot.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The Australian ballot swept the country beginning in 1888, endorsed by the same set of genteel reformers who sponsored civil service reform but supported as well by labor and other groups. By 1892, most states employed it. Until this time, a voter on his way to the polls was handed party-printed tickets, thus concretely reaffirming the voter’s affiliation with a party. Under the new system, the voter received his ballot from the state, making the act of voting a civic obligation enforceable only by private conscience, not a party obligation enforceable by social pressure. And so did the fact that, with the Australian ballot, voting became secret for the first time in American history – not an affirmation in front of one’s neighbors, and not a visible election-day exchange with a party worker, but a marking of a state-printed form within the cloistered voting booth. (Schudson, 2001, 426).

In the early 1900s, nonpartisan municipal elections, presidential primaries, and the initiative and referendum imposed more challenging cognitive tasks on prospective voters. No longer could voters rely solely on political party officials and on preprinted and completed ballots to cast a vote because they had to individually enter a voting booth, read and sort through the list of candidates and cast a vote for each respective office.<sup>7</sup> (Schudson, 2001, 425). It was thought that these electoral reforms would reduce the widespread corruption in political affairs. Along with efforts to change the way voters elected their public officials, there were attacks on corruption in campaign financing and campaign practices. (Schudson, 2001, 425).<sup>8</sup>

The reformers disdained the emotional aspects to election mobilization and Election Day. They felt the emotion prevented a crucial connection between citizens and their governmental representatives. At the time it was dubbed, “a Protestant Reformation in American politics.” (Schudson, 2001, 425). As Schudson writes, “Mugwump reformers were not keen on wild and woolly party democracy with its elevation of the election to an extraordinary collective, carnivalesque ritual. Carnival was not their style.”

In many ways, however, the baby was thrown out with the bathwater. While the Progressive goals of individual-centered, information-based, policy-focused elections took hold in the country, with the result of cleaning up a great deal of the former corrupt practices, elections lost their fun and they were no longer accessible to everyone.<sup>9</sup>

Political parades were dying fast as the new century dawned. By 1908, the occasional parade was simply a curiosity, a pale reminder of an earlier time. In that year, the businessmen’s parade in New York City for the Taft-Sherman ticket was half the size of the sound-money parade of 1896. People ‘do not take their parades so seriously now,’ the *New York World* calmly noted. Banner-raising and pole-raising fell off. The parties stopped hiring the glee clubs and brass bands that had once accompanied rallies. Partisans no longer illuminated their homes and businesses on behalf of their champions. Public interest in political spectacle was increasingly hard to find. Where it survived, the displays it supported were regarded as distinctly old fashioned. (Schudson, 2001, 426).

Most importantly, voter turnout fell dramatically in the wake of the reforms. The large, voting public of the late nineteenth century with voter turnout levels routinely at 70 percent or higher became the vanishing public of the 1920s with turnout under 50 percent. (Schudson, 2001, 427).

### *A Return to the Past Not a Panacea*

Admittedly there were problems and negative aspects to the approaches to elections in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. First and foremost, election laws denied many citizens the right to suffrage. For most of the eighteenth century, for example, only white men with property could vote. The property requirements were changed to taxpaying requirements in most states in

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<sup>7</sup> These changes enshrined “the informed citizenry,” provided a new mechanism and a new rationale for disenfranchising African Americans and immigrants, and inaugurated an enduring tradition of handwringing over popular political ignorance.” (Schudson, 2001, 425).

<sup>8</sup> Political patronage was rife at the time. “The parties raised money by requiring the candidates they supported for office to make substantial contributions and by assessing the salaries of government workers whose jobs they had secured, usually taking 3% of their gross pay.” (Schudson, 2001, 425).

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that many scholars believe this was one of the Progressives’ goals.

the late 1700s.<sup>10</sup> African Americans could not legally vote until 1870 (or effectively vote in many places until 1965). Women would not receive the right to vote until 1920.

Further, nineteenth-century U.S. political machines were rounding up votes. They were not overly concerned with the preferences or political opinions of ordinary citizens. A cynical view of this process would find voting in the nineteenth century lacking in democratic elements. After all, you can make the case that the voters were pawns of the party elites, who selected the candidates and the issues and rounded up the bodies to secure their victory. At the polling site, you could characterize the festivities as more closely akin to bacchanals whereby people were only casting their votes after they were inebriated and unable to think or act clearly. To guarantee these votes the parties employed thugs to oversee the voters' activities. In light of the high illiteracy rates, it is not clear whether voters always knew who they were voting for at the polls. As Bensel writes,

In Baltimore, this [Election Day] practice was apparently a little more elaborate than it was in most parts of the United States; the parties would offer their supporters both alcohol and food in rooms in the period just before the polls opened. These rooms held noisy gatherings that simultaneously constituted celebrations of party fortune and petty forms of bribery. Because the celebrants often drank to excess, many of the men were in a drunken stupor when they left the coops to vote the next morning. Both bribed and drunk these voters were hardly free thinking, independently minded citizens when they turned in their tickets to election judges. (Bensel 181)

There was also often a high degree of corruption around elections. Voting rules were often carried out in a biased way and ballot box stuffing, multiple votes by the same person and/or people who were no longer alive were not uncommon practices. As Bensel writes, "The enforcement of eligibility requirements was haphazard when elections were quiet and fairly administered, ferociously biased when they were not. And at the end of the day, even if the arithmetic was formerly correct, the actual count sometimes bore little relation to the numbers of men who turned their tickets in." (Bensel, 84)<sup>11</sup>

It is important to note, however, that levels of corruption and the nature of corruption varied across the states. In rural areas where polling stations were further apart, residents were more ethnically homogenous, and people knew each other, problems of legitimacy around voting

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<sup>10</sup> States began to nullify the property requirements to voting in the late 1700s. Nevertheless, states tended to replace property requirements with taxpaying qualifications for the suffrage – in Pennsylvania (1776), New Hampshire (1784), Delaware (1791), Georgia (1775), and North Carolina (1776). Because of nominal poll taxes, the taxpaying qualification was very close to universal white manhood suffrage although, technically only Vermont adopted manhood suffrage (in 1777) establishing neither taxpaying nor property owning as a requirement for the vote. Apart from Vermont, some form of financial requirement for voting survived, but the movement was clearly toward liberalizing the franchise.

<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that many people attribute the decline in turnout to the decline in corruption in the wake of the reforms at the end of the nineteenth century. See Jac. C. Heckelman, *The Effect of the Secret Ballot on Turnout Rates*, 82 *Pub. Choice* 107, 108-09 (1995) citing sources on early American vote-buying practices. Secret ballot voting did not exist in most states before the 1880s and 1890s. See Alan Gerber, *The Adoption of the Secret Ballot* (June 1993); see also Heckelman, *supra* note 19, at 111 tbl. 1 providing years in which each state adopted the secret ballot. The end of the secret ballot contributed to a decline in voter turnout. Jac Heckelman, in fact, attributed an 8.2 percent decline in voter turnout to the emergence of secret voting. (Heckelman). This decline in voter turnout due to the decline in corruption and the implementation of the secret ballot is not inconsistent with a decline due to the change in the jovial atmosphere around Election Day. It may be that both factors contributed to the decline.

centered on whether voters met age and residency requirements. In urban areas where polling stations were closer together, people were more diverse, and people were less likely to know each other, voting challenges centered on repeated voting and foreigners and African-Americans voting. In the Western Frontier, although polling places were usually small, a characteristic that in rural regions of the East promoted social consensus and deep, mutual familiarity between voters, many of the men at western polls did not know each other very well, if at all. In this respect, many western polling places resembled large American cities where anonymity promoted stereotyping and, all too often, violence and intimidation. (Bensel, 216)

This research effort by no means intends to romanticize or laud the patronage, opportunistic, transactional, and thuggish nature of nineteenth century politics. It only intends to use the experience as a launching pad to explore the salience of the positive aspects to voting at that time and examine whether these positive aspects can be recreated to the standards of today. After all, despite the negative aspects of U.S. elections in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the methods did effectively incorporate newly eligible voters and did result in high, class inclusive voter turnout on Election Day. "Illiterate and ignorant men, steeped in poverty and lacking any other claim on social responsibility, were not only permitted to cast their tickets, they were enticed, cajoled, treated and blessed as they did so. They were not confused or alienated by competing claims and policy demands that had little apparent relevance to their daily existence. Instead they were assigned identities by party agents that had direct connection to the personal relationships and communities in which they lived." (Bensel 85)

### *Far From the Days of Election Day Festivals*

Mobilization around Election Day today is vastly different than years past. Parties and candidates still engage in get out the vote efforts, but they are largely impersonal campaigns which focus the bulk of their efforts on media advertisements and mailings of pamphlets. While parties and candidates still hold spaghetti dinners and mass political rallies, these are far from the norm. Further, many groups are effectively excluded from the mobilization process. For example, newly naturalized citizens are not tagged by party operatives as potential votes and presidential campaigns generally spend only a minuscule fraction of their campaign funds on mobilizing young voters.

Election Day today is an official, formal process that is far from inviting and easily accessible to newcomers. While voting in the past was easy to navigate -- people voted orally and the political parties provided voters with completed ballots on their way in to vote -- the voting process today is filled with hurdles. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, people were generally permitted by their employers to take the entire day off work to go to vote. Today, most employers would laugh if you stated that you needed time off to go to vote. Further, in most states today, people must register in advance of an election, and they often have to take the initiative to learn what is on the ballot and where their polling site is located.

While in years past elections were held in barns, private homes, country stores, churches and even saloons and liquor establishments, today they are largely held in impersonal, government buildings. In light of the law in most states that prohibits electioneering within a certain number of feet of the polling site, often interpreted to mean no talking within earshot of the polls, voting

stations are often fairly solemn places. People wait in line, approach a table lined with election officials, and are asked to state their name, address and to show identification. Then, they are directed to some voting apparatus and instructed to cast their vote. While there is often someone at the voting booth to help them navigate the process, people don't often realize that they can ask for help – or they feel too intimidated to ask for help. While voters can often come in with a sample ballot already filled out, many people believe they are not allowed to bring anything into the polling station with them. As Schudson (2001) has written, “today . . . there remain quite a variety of voting practices in America, but they all have this in common: we vote on forms, be they cards or screens or paper ballots, that are prepared by the state and that provide for us a choice among the various candidates and parties who have qualified to be on the ballot.” (Schudson, 2001, 423).

The only thing that remains of the festive atmosphere of the past is the small ‘I voted’ sticker, often provided by poll workers to people after they cast their vote. This small token is worn proudly by voters (and the lucky children who also receive them). Can we do better than a small sticker to celebrate such an integral part of our civic life? Why were the approaches of the past so effective? Why did the mass party mobilization, brass bands and festivities resonate so strongly with people? Can the past teach us about the micro-foundations of mass voter turnout? Can we bring back the positive elements of the past to increase voter turnout, leaving the negative behind?

## **II. Voting is an Interpersonal, Communal, Purposive, Convivial, and Instrumental Experience**

### ***Learning from the Past***

As we moved from a social, collective approach to voter mobilization and Election Day activities to an impersonal, individual, government-directed, official approach, we lost the idea of voting as an interpersonal, communal and convivial process. In fact, we lost the idea of voting and Election Day as a process, an event in itself. Academic writing on voter turnout throughout the twentieth century reflects this individual approach to voting, as it tends to ignore the process of voting and instead focuses on hypotheses about individual voters and their decision to vote.

For example, scholars have poured a great deal of energy into examining the demographic characteristics of voters and non-voters, such as income and education, at different periods of time in an effort to explain patterns of voter turnout. Unfortunately, examination of these variables cannot explain why turnout has not risen in the face of changes to these demographic characteristics, which predict a turnout increase. Income and education levels have risen over the past several decades, but turnout fell rather than rose, as predicted by the variables. Similarly, turnout was high in the past when income and education levels were lower than they are today.

Many scholars also believe that changes in the distribution of characteristics like marriage, residential mobility, church attendance, and union activity among the national population can help explain the decline in national turnout. Teixeira, a leading analyst of these changes, points to the significant increase in unmarried adults and in residential mobility among Americans as major factors accounting for almost 18 percent of the drop in voting participation (Teixeira,

1987). Unfortunately, the correlation of these variables to voter turnout does not mean that they are causing the turnout decline. After all, perhaps the change in the atmosphere around voting (closely tied with people's attitudes and relations to their community), which affects levels of voter turnout, also affects people's feelings of attachment to others (affecting decisions about marriage) and to their community (affecting decisions about whether to move or stay in one community). Further, even if the observed changes in demographic variables are indicators of a causal mechanism or mediate causal factors, influencing the low voter turnout, it does not mean that other factors could not counteract these depressive tendencies and serve to increase voter turnout. Finally, the correlation of the demographic variables (and changes to them) with voter turnout does not really provide a solution to the low voter turnout problem. It still leaves one with the question of why the demographics are changing and whether these explanations can be used in an effort to respond to the low voter turnout problem.

In a similar line of reasoning, several academics have claimed that voter turnout has fallen due to a change in a sense of civic duty or societal norms about voting. But, these scholars, often relying on survey research, don't provide much in the way of a causal mechanism explaining the civic duty decline, and in general, they tend to assume that an individual has these characteristics prior to voting, failing to explore the role of the voting process itself in producing these sentiments.<sup>12</sup> After all, a sense of civic duty or a self-conceptualization as a member of the group of voters may develop from the process of being mobilized to vote or voting on Election Day. These sentiments may be shaped either positively or negatively through the experience of going to the polls on Election Day and casting a vote.

Scholars have also spent a great deal of energy explaining patterns of voter turnout by focusing on voters' individual, rational calculations of the costs and benefits of casting their vote (i.e., pecuniary effects of a vote). This largely instrumental explanation concludes that people will only decide to vote when the benefits of their vote – in terms of their ability to affect the outcome of the election – exceeds the costs of going to the polls to vote. Unfortunately, these explanations cannot explain why anyone would turnout to vote in a national election, say for president. After all, one person's vote has practically zero effect on the outcome, making voting an irrational decision even given the relatively lower costs associated with a highly-advertised

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<sup>12</sup> In rational choice theory, collectives are the analytical aggregates of individuals, which is to say that group behavior can be predicted by summing up the behavior of individuals. For these diverse choice theorists, individuals' preferences are exogenous. They are in place before the theorist enters the scene and are put into place by powers independent of (and thus logically prior to) the social situation that is being studied. Theorists, consequently, can afford to be entirely agnostic about the origin of preferences. Schuessler, on the other hand, assumes that preferences to a significant extent emerge from social context itself: following anthropologists and social theorists, preferences, values, and beliefs all emerge from social practice. They are endogenous to the social context in that they are generated by interaction within that very context. (Schuessler, 7). The study of collective action invites a micro-to-macro approach. Schuessler's work, the study of preferences underlying such action, invites a macro-to-micro approach. (Schuessler, 8). The vast majority of approaches that have acknowledged the possible existence of noninstrumental motivation have either merely added a noninstrumental static term to an existent instrumentally driven model – where the noninstrumental term simply absorbs all that which the instrumental terms of the model cannot – or they have proposed a break with a formal incentive-driven approach altogether. The dominant assumption has been that if voters are driven by expressive concerns, their actions are less systematic or predictable or, for that matter, less "rational." (Schuessler, 8). Schuessler shows that the study of endogenous preferences does not preclude an aggregation of microlevel incentives into a coherent macrolevel logic, or "economy" of incentives." (Schuessler, 8).

national race. Similarly, this explanation cannot explain why national elections attract many more voters than local elections where who votes is easy to establish and where elections often turn on a few votes. Finally, this rational, cost/benefit approach cannot explain why face-to-face canvassing (which doesn't provide any more information than other methods of getting out the vote) is much more effective than sending pamphlets in the mail. The problem with this broad approach to the voter turnout problem does not lie in the fact that the scholars take an instrumental view of voting, rather the problem lies in the fact that they ignore the voting process, focusing only on the outcome of an individual vote.

To the extent that the academic literature reflects on the voting process itself and people's experience with voting and Election Day, it tends to be focused on the bureaucratic hurdles to going out to vote. There are numerous articles which claim that turnout levels would improve if Election Day was a holiday, registration coincided with voting, elections were fewer in number, and polls were open for longer than one day. These may be valid explanations for depressed turnout, but they ignore that there are benefits to the Election Day process and going to vote, which if improved upon, could also boost turnout levels. Although recent experiments have pinpointed the success of face to face get out the vote efforts and personal phone calls to voters by a community member, the voter turnout literature has devoted relatively little attention to the importance of interpersonal incorporation into the voting process and a social, communal, purposive Election Day experience.

For example, in a natural experiment of voting by mail in Switzerland, Patricia Funk discovered that with the onset of voting-by-mail, voter turnout decreased, especially in smaller cantons and in smaller communities within cantons. She claims that the reason for the decline is related to the fact that in Switzerland there is a fairly strong social norm that a good citizen should go to the polls. As long as poll voting was the only option, there was an incentive (or pressure) to go to the polls and to be seen handing in a ballot. When that pressure was removed, she claims, there was not as strong an incentive to actually vote. ("Why Vote?" New York Times Magazine, 11/6/2005, 30-31.) A depressive effect stemming from the loss of belonging and connecting to others, which the electoral process previously provided, would also be consistent with her findings.

Eighteenth and nineteenth century practices regarding voter mobilization and Election Day activities highlight that voting is a social process. As Teorell and Westholm have written, "The voters' primary motive for turning out on Election Day is not to influence the outcome but to reap the intrinsic rewards of the act of voting itself." Jan Teorell and Westholm (2005).<sup>13</sup> Historical narratives further suggest that extending from a broad categorization of voting as a

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<sup>13</sup> Teorell and Westholm find that discontent with the welfare state, insufficient interest in politics, vertical as well as horizontal mistrust, declining organizational involvement, and lack of political efficacy all fail to account for falling level of participation. They also find no support for generational change as an explanatory factor. The weakening of both citizen duty and partisan attachment in the Swedish electorate has occurred more or less equally among all birth cohorts. They also provide no support for the view that turnout decline in most industrial democracies should have been caused by weakening group mobilization. In their data, the link between group involvement and electoral turnout fails to materialize. Instead, they conclude, turnout declines because fewer voters consider voting a civic duty and because fewer have much partisan sentiments left to express. And in Puerto Rico, where Election Day is a holiday and turnout often exceeds 70 percent, there is a communal, festive approach to Election Day. ("Elections in Puerto Rico." Accessed 4 January 2004 < [http://electionspuertorico.org/home\\_en.html](http://electionspuertorico.org/home_en.html) >)

social process stem five hypotheses about voter mobilization and the Election Day experience. First, voters respond to people; they respond to personal calls to come and vote. Second, voters respond when they develop a sense of belonging to a particular group by voting; they respond when the act of voting makes them feel like Democrats, Republicans, Youth Voters, good citizens, etc. Third, voters respond when they feel that their vote is contributing to a larger purpose like democracy, the war effort, or the country. Fourth, voters respond when voting is convivial and fun. Everyone loves a party, and any activity becomes more interesting when it is accompanied by an enjoyable experience. Finally, fifth, social aspects of life often embody instrumental elements as well, which are difficult to separate from the social. A party is more fun with food and drink, and voting certainly becomes more attractive if the voting process provides me with a tangible good like a meal, a sum of money, or even information about the voting process itself. Overall, voting is an expression of community solidarity, a sharing and a ritual. Citizens make a personal commitment to their local community when they vote. Voters are not so much atomistic calculators of personal advantage as they are citizens. Or, to invoke Lazarsfeld's famous phrase: "A person thinks [and acts] politically, as he is, socially." (Pomper, Bake Sale Theory of Voting, quoting Lazarsfeld).<sup>14</sup>

### ***Hypothesis 1: Voters Respond to an Interpersonal Voter Mobilization Effort***

People respond to a personal voter mobilization effort. People are mobilized to act when they can connect with the activity in a personal way and when someone they know and respect or when someone from their community is asking them to act. Note: this does not necessarily imply that the voter has to connect with the candidate. It only suggests that voters respond when they connect with the person, who is asking them to vote or to participate in the voting process.

Recent empirical evidence supports this hypothesis. Field experiments conducted since 1998 suggest that impersonal modes of communication – direct mail, automatic phone calls, routinized calls made by telemarketing firms, electronic mail – have a negligible effect on turnout (Green and Gerber 2004). Personal appeals, such as those delivered by face to face canvassers, are much more effective.

### ***Hypothesis 2: Voters Respond When Their Vote Fosters Self-Identification with a Community***

People respond and come out to vote when the process of voting fosters a sense of identity or belonging to a particular group. Turnout appears to increase, for example, when voting fosters identification with a group like Democrats, Republicans, Catholics, Workers, Italians, Young Voters, Responsible Citizens, etc. Even just the being part of the group of "Voters" drives people to the polls. It may be rational to abstain from voting if you know that everyone else in your community plans to vote. Nevertheless, people want to be part of the phenomenon. If everyone is doing it – it must be worth doing!

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<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, there is evidence today that going to the polls on Election Day is an attraction in its own right and participation incentives can be identified. For example, posters, t-shirts, and trinkets are often given away at political rallies and it is common to reward voters on Election Day with a small sticker or pin. Recently, some groups like the Ben and Jerry's ice cream chain have even tried to encourage registration by offering a free gift to new registrants. (Press release at [http://www.benjerry.com/our\\_company/press\\_center/press/fcd2004.html](http://www.benjerry.com/our_company/press_center/press/fcd2004.html))

This hypothesis would likely strike psychologists as obvious. Psychologists have long posited that a self or “ego” as a primary force of individual behavior. They have further linked an individual’s sense of self to the social setting. Identity is bound to social categories and individuals identify with people in some categories and differentiate themselves from those in others.<sup>15</sup> While experiments in social psychology do not show the existence of a “self” or this identification *per se*, they do demonstrate that even arbitrary social categorizations affect behavior.<sup>16</sup>

Further, there is a long history in psychology of research on social identity within organizations.<sup>17</sup> This research is grounded in experimental work where people are randomly given labels, such as even or odd, or assigned to groups. They then play a game where they are asked to assign payoffs to different people, or they are asked to evaluate the judgments of different people. The experiments reveal a strong tendency for group assignments and labels to influence behavior, and subjects display in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination.<sup>18,19</sup>

As Schuessler writes, self-identification and the power of belonging to a group is an outgrowth of going to vote for many people. It is the voter’s statement of her preference for the Democratic

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<sup>15</sup> For discussion of the “self” see Thomas (1996), Brefer (1974), or Gleitman (1996). For a review of the social psychology of identity, see Brown (1985) and Wetherell (1996), and especially the work of Tajfel and Turner (1979).

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of social psychology experiments, see Brown (1985, p. 541-66) and Wetherell (1996, pp. 203-216).

<sup>17</sup> See Haslam (2001) for an excellent review of the experiments supporting the social identity approach to organizations.

<sup>18</sup> In the experiments, people were told they were assigned to one of two groups according to their expressed preference for one of two paintings (one by Klee, the other by Kandinsky). In fact, the division was random. When subsequently asked to assign rewards to members of the two groups, subjects assigned rewards that maximized the relative difference in the groups’ rewards, even while doing so reduced their group’s absolute rewards. See Tajfel (1978); see also Akerlof and Kranton (2003, 2), quoted from Schuessler.

<sup>19</sup> Akerlof and Kranton (2003) provide a counterpart to the current economic literature on incentives. They describe why workers might act in a firm’s interest, even when they have many chances to behave opportunistically. In their models, a worker may identify with the firm, the position within it, or the work group. The principal pays lower monetary rewards if the worker identifies with the firm. The presence of identity acts as a substitute for monetary incentives. Because identity reduces the need for monetary rewards, it can be viewed as a new type of firm capital, which could be called motivational capital. The result that non-pecuniary motivations and wages are substitutes mirrors findings in other work. Bewley’s (1999) interviews, for example, indicate that most employers do not cut wages in a recession because of the consequences for workers’ morale and loyalty to the firm. There is a growing recognition of such substitutability in the theory of organizations; at least two papers (Rob and Zemsky (2001) and Huck, Kubler, and Weibull (2003)) show how pecuniary incentives can crowd out workers’ motivations to cooperate with each other in the work place. A growing experimental literature finds that monetary incentives can displace other motivations for behavior (see Rob and Zemsky (2001) for review). For example, in a leading experiment, Fehr and Gächter (2002) examine the interaction between subjects assigned to be “buyers” and “sellers.” The results show sellers provide lower quality when they face a fine for doing so than when they do not. A study by Gneezy and Rustichini (2000) shows similar perverse effects of pecuniary incentives: at an Israeli day care center, parents were more likely to pick up their children late when facing a fine than when not. These and other experiments indicate that pecuniary incentives displace other kinds of incentives, such as fairness, reciprocity, and adherence to social norms. A variety of evidence, discussed in Fehr and Gächter (2002), supports such an effect. (Akerlof and Kranton, 2003, 5). An interesting implication of this work is that those with a higher self-identification with the firm require less compensation. Those with a lower self-identification with the firm require the greatest incentive compensation.

candidate, through voting, that makes the voter a Democrat. To understand voting fully requires us not merely to map out the instrumental consequence of the individual's vote on the electoral result, it additionally requires us to investigate the expressive, or in some sense existential, consequence of the vote for the voter herself. (Schuessler, 3). People do not go to vote just to produce an outcome; they also go to vote to express who they are. (Schuessler, 5).<sup>20</sup>

Political parties certainly tug on these ideas of self-identification when they attempt to mobilize their base in advance of an election. However, for the most part, the process of casting the vote itself and the atmosphere at the polls on Election Day – especially when compared to Election Day in the nineteenth century -- does not really generate a feeling of belonging to a particular group and a strong feeling of community.

***Hypothesis 3: Voters Respond When Their Vote is Purposive; Contribution to a Greater Good***

People respond when they believe that their vote contributes to a greater good like building democracy in their country and when voting allows them to feel like they are making a contribution to their community. This is especially true in a time of crisis – like war. At these times of crisis, people feel a strong desire to get involved and contribute the cause. Even in ordinary times, however, people respond if they feel like they are part of something larger than themselves and that their contribution matters to a larger process. In the psychology literature this attribute is often associated with internalizing a particular ideal (e.g., job performance in the workplace depends upon workers' ... adoption of particular ideals). (Akerlof and Kranton, 2003, 3)

A common question asked at election polling sites is, "How is the turnout?" People feel good when turnout is high. They feel proud of themselves for voting and for participating in what they perceive to be a noble cause. They also feel proud of their neighbors for contributing to the community and to the democratic process.

Note: this response is similar to the response we see in the face of competitive elections. When the stakes are higher or the outcome is in doubt, people are more likely to come out and vote. It would not make sense for a person to believe that his/her singular vote will affect the outcome (with the exception of a local race where literally every vote counts). But, it seems that given the

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<sup>20</sup> Schuessler uses an example of George Bush announcing in a campaign speech that he will win the election. "Bush's expression of assured victory stands at odds with Olsonian theory: if such victory is indeed certain, why should individuals feel compelled to participate in the election still? . . . Yet such campaigning is consistent with the economy of expressive incentives. If the voter's motivation is one of attachment – I attach myself to a public outcome, rather than produce it – the basic collective action question will need to be recast. For example, instead of asking "Why should I face the steep cost of participation when an outcome is already being produced, regardless of my participation?" one can now recognize that "because a significant number of individuals are already producing the desired outcome, I can, at the mere cost of participation, purchase for myself the status of outcome-producer. In the instrumental context of production, the cost of participation is steep relative to the expected value of the outcome, which is virtually indistinguishable from zero. In the expressive context of attachment, in contrast, the cost is low, relative to the value of participation. . . . If the logic is one of identification or attachment – of Being – rather than one of production – of Doing – then the relevant probabilities that mediate the benefits of my participation will be different." (Schuessler, 5-6). The purpose here is not to characterize the behavior of voters and other as nonrational or irrational. Instead it is to approach such behavior as noninstrumental. (Schuessler, 6).

sense of crisis or doubt about the winner of the race, a person feels a more compelling desire to want to help out by coming to vote.

#### ***Hypothesis 4: Voters Respond to a Convivial, Fun Environment***

People respond to the excitement and stimulation of a social event. People enjoy parties and an activity like casting a vote becomes more fun and interesting when it is surrounded by a social, jovial affair.

In the past, politics served as entertainment for people. In discussing debates in the mid-nineteenth century, Schudson writes, “This was the best show in town. Politics . . . still offered sparsely populated communities not only the opportunity to take sides on crucial issues but their sole access to grand entertainment as well. Politics provided high drama and spirited fun to neighborhoods devoid of activities anywhere near as engaging and exciting. Compare that to the solemnity with which we conduct televised presidential debates today. The moderator in the 1988 [presidential] debates cautioned the studio audience against applauding for their favorite.” (Schudson, 1998, 136)

When discussing low voter turnout today, scholars often reflect on broad social trends like greater mobility and the demands of modern life. These observations may be true and they may add strain to a practice like going to vote at a community polling place each year. Nevertheless, if a person has a strong tie (sense of belonging/attachment) to a community and she finds the practice of going to vote each year enjoyable, lively and fun, she will likely endeavor to maintain her level of participation despite the challenges. After all, many people struggle with the demands of modern life, yet they still return to their college or high school reunions, they still attend their family reunions, and they still watch the Super Bowl each year with the same group of friends.

#### ***Hypothesis 5: Social Events Often Involve Instrumental Components, Which are Difficult to Separate from the Social Experience***

Social events often involve instrumental components. The most casual of gatherings with friends often involves a transfer of information and knowledge along with the camaraderie. Parties often involve food and drink.

In the past, voting was a social experience, but it also involved balls, food, drink and often monetary rewards. A material benefit in return for a vote certainly adds an incentive to casting a vote. In the nineteenth century, political parties regularly paid voters \$5 or \$10 to cast the proper ballot. Sometimes payment came in the form of a keg of whiskey, a barrel of flour or, in the case of an 1890 New Hampshire Congressional race, a live pig.” (“*Why Vote?*” *New York Times Magazine*, 11/6/2005, 30-31) But, historical accounts make it clear that the instrumental value of the voting practices could not be separated from the social nature of them.

There are accounts that vote buying of a kind continues today.<sup>21</sup> This research effort is certainly not advocating vote buying. Nevertheless, it is exploring the salience of a social approach to voter turnout – like an Election Day festival – which may include food and drink. To be sure, there is instrumental value in the food and drink. Nevertheless, value also lies in the process and in the atmosphere in which the food and drink is enjoyed.

Pomper and Sernekos have written about bake sales that are held at their polling place each year. They explain how bake sales are held at the polls and voter turnout is generally high. Clearly, the goodies sold at the bake sale are part of the attraction of the event. Nevertheless, the authors conclude that voting participation, beyond all other factors, will be higher among persons who are more fully integrated into their communities, finding satisfaction in the community life. The lesson they draw from the success of the bake sale, therefore, is not the food, but rather the sense of community around the baking, the selling and the effort to make Election Day an extra special event. They maintain that most explanations of voting are incomplete because they rest on individualistic, even atomistic assumptions. A full explanation must place the individual voting behavior within a social context. It must take note of the bake sale – and a complete picture of what is involved in a bake sale -- as well as the voting booth. (Pomper, Gerald M. and Loretta A. Sernekos, July/August 1991).

### *Voting in Response to Peer Pressure or to Avoid Sanction*

It is likely that some people vote because they are told to do so by their parents, bosses or peers or because they would face a sanction if they did not turnout to vote. Perhaps they are voting to protect their job or to avoid retribution in some way. In the eighteenth century, for example, there were fines for not voting. As Bensel writes about the nineteenth century, some men came to the polls with friends and relatives who pressured, cajoled, or otherwise persuaded them to vote a particular ticket. Fathers and brothers threatened trouble in the family if their sons and siblings voted the wrong way. In yet other instances, men belonging to ethnic and religious communities threatened their fellow countrymen and co-religionists with social ostracism if they transgressed party lines. (Bensel, ix).

It must be noted that this instrumental approach to voting is not captured in this research project. Nevertheless, peer pressure has to start with someone and that first person has to be voting for a particular reason. In this way, the knowledge that some people turnout to vote due to peer pressure is not as helpful as the knowledge of why the person doing the pressuring turns out to vote. Further, some of the people who succumb to peer pressure likely do so out of a need to belong to a particular group (e.g., to the family, social circle, etc.), which is captured by hypothesis 2.

In addition, voting at most polling places is a quick process. There are only a few people who remain at the polls the entire day, and voter crossover sheets (tallies of the names of people who have voted) are hard to monitor with complete accuracy and coverage all day long. In this way, in most elections – with the exception of small, local races – people are not likely to know in the

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<sup>21</sup> See Karlan at 1458-59 & n13 citing cases with payments of three dollars or five dollars, a \$45 welfare voucher and a six-pack of beer; and \$20 in one transaction and \$30 in another. Pamela S. Karlan, Not by Money but by Virtue Won? Vote Trafficking and the Voting Rights System, 80Va. L. Rev. 1455, 1462 (1994).

moment who has voted and who has not voted, making peer pressure extremely difficult to enforce (and less likely to be a widespread motivating factor).

### *Voting As a Social Norm/Civic Obligation*

Much has been written in the voting literature about voting as a social norm. In this literature, voting is largely a matter of adhering to a social norm – voting out of a sense of civic obligation to the community (Campbell et al. 1960; Downs 1957; Verba and Nie 1972; Fiorina 1976; Knack 1992; Knack and Kropf 1998; Riker and Ordeshook 1968; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Social norms such as voting are more easily propagated and thus stronger in communities whose members share a high degree of trust (Coleman 1987; 1988, 1990; Putnam 1995, 1993).<sup>22</sup> While the notion of a social norm is likely a motivating factor in voter turnout, it is a secondary explanation rather than the initial cause of attitudes around voting and Election Day. In this way, the notion that voters develop social norms about voting is not overly useful for mobilizing voters who have not been voting and for increasing voter turnout.

Each of the incentives posited above (hypotheses 1 to 5) likely generate norms about voting through ritual and repetition. If a person votes each year because she feels part of the “voter group” when she votes, over time it is likely that she will vote because that is what she (and people like her) do each year on Election Day. Voting becomes a norm, sanctioned by others who do or don’t see “the voter” at the polls on Election Day and/or maintained by the voter’s self concept. But, to generate that norm, it is important to understand what the person experiences and feels when he or she votes.<sup>23,24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The CES includes a test of whether adolescents intend to be informed voters. The student respondents are asked “When you are an adult, what do you expect that you will do?” “Vote in elections” and “Get information about candidates before voting in an election” are two options. Possible responses are: I will certainly not do this, I will probably not do this, I will probably do this, I will certainly do this. A simple additive index of these two items has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.79, indicating a high degree of overlap between them. Together, they indicate the degree to which young people report the likelihood they will become educated and active members of the electorate. They have been combined into a single factor, the Informed Voter Index (eigenvalue of 1.07). Both variables have a loading of .73. While the CES itself is not longitudinal, evidence from another panel study suggests that adolescents who say they are going to vote actually do, and cast their first ballot relatively soon after coming of age to do so. Monitoring the Future, an annual survey of high school seniors, includes a question much like what is found on the CES: MTF researchers follow up with a representative subset of respondents every two years following their graduation from high school and ask whether they have voted. A panel beginning in 1980 found that 84 percent of those students who said that they would vote reported doing so ten years later.

<sup>23</sup> Akerlof and Kranton (1999) use the word prescriptions rather than norms because previous usage in economics has given ‘norm’ specific connotations. Akerlof and Kranton say that people follow prescriptions, for the most part, to maintain their self-concepts. In contrast, in much of the economics literature, a norm is obeyed because failure to do so results in punishment (e.g., Akerlof (1976), Kandori (1992), Cole, Mailath, and Postlewaite (1992)). In Montgomery’s (1997) game-theoretic model of social roles, agents adopt strategies that norms assign their roles because otherwise ‘they would not recognize themselves.’ Elster (1989) writes that social norms are sustained by strong feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, and guilt suffered from violating them. Huang and Wu (1994) also consider social norms sustained by people’s emotions, which in the view of Akerlof and Kranton would result from a person’s sense of self.” (Akerlof and Kranton, 1999, 2).

<sup>24</sup> In Elster (1989) social norms are defined as injunctions to behavior that (i) are non-outcome oriented, (ii) apply to others as well as to oneself, (iii) are sustained by the sanctions of others, and (iv) are sustained by internalized emotions. These are social by virtue of ii and iii and norms by virtue of i. On the one hand, they differ from merely private rules that people can construct to regulate their behavior, such as ‘Never drink before dinner’. On the other hand, they differ from the outcome-oriented injunctions of instrumental rationality in that the targeted action is

### *Voters Develop a Habit of Voting*

Further encouraging efforts to discover mechanisms to increase voter turnout is the finding that once you create a voter, in all likelihood the person remains a voter for life. Research on the persistence of voting is longstanding. For example, Campbell et al. 1960; Milbrath 1965; Verba and Nie 1972 wrote that people voted year after year because of a sense of civic obligation (i.e., general attitude about voting developed over time). Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Lake and Huckfeldt 1998 wrote that voters kept voting because political groups continued to mobilize them.

Plutzer (2002) finds that the earlier in life people cast their first vote, the more likely voting becomes a matter of habit over the course of their lifespan. Based on cross-sectional data across numerous nations, Franklin (2004) comes to a similar conclusion. Gerber, Green, and Sachar find that people vote continuously out of habit. They find that all else equal voting in one election substantially increases the likelihood of voting in the future. In other words, they find that there are longstanding effects to mobilizing people to vote. Casting a ballot in one election increases a person's propensity to vote in the next election (i.e., the propensity to vote changes with a vote). Gerber, Green and Sachar ground their work in the psychology literature that finds that prior behavior can influence future behavior -- often called the "foot-in-the-door effect".<sup>25</sup> In this way, if you can get people to the polls and provide them with a positive voting experience, it is likely that they will return to vote again in the future.

### *A Package of Characteristics to Replicate*

The characteristics mentioned in the above five hypotheses are often difficult to separate. It is difficult to throw a party without offering food and drink. People who develop an identity from belonging to a particular group and engaging in the group's activities often feel that they are contributing to something larger than themselves (e.g., a Democrat may believe she is contributing to a larger welfare state by being a Democrat).

Field experiments do permit the separation of these characteristics. One could throw a party without offering food and drink (although people may expect it will be there and come to the party anyway). One could see if people respond differently to getting a five dollar coupon for a cup of coffee and a doughnut in the mail in return for voting than they do to getting the same cup of coffee and doughnut at a party with friends and neighbors at the polling site. Future developments of this research will endeavor to separate these aspects in order to measure their separate marginal effects. Nevertheless, at this stage, the goal is primarily to recreate these characteristics – as a package – around voter mobilization and Election Day activities and to test the effects of this package on voter turnout.

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to be performed because it is intrinsically appropriate, not because it is a means toward a desired goal. 'Always wear black dress to a funeral' is very different from 'Always wear white dress in strong sunshine.' (Elster, 1996, 1389)

<sup>25</sup> It must be noted, however, that their strong effects stem from measuring the effects of voting one year to the next are silent to the long-term effects of voting in one year.

In this research project two types of experiments were conducted to test the five hypotheses. In each category of experiments an effort was made to ensure that the five characteristics were embodied in the treatment. In this way, although one would not be able to determine at this stage whether voters were responding to the social or the instrumental part of the treatment, it would be clear that a treatment that incorporated these characteristics was effective. First, field experiments were run to study the effects of a personal, communal, purposive, convivial and instrumental voter mobilization effort with a group in the United States that tends to have relatively low levels of voter turnout – young, first-time voters. In several high schools across the country, voting-age seniors were randomly assigned to a treatment and a control group. The small group of students randomly assigned to the treatment group gathered with their peers (communal) in a relaxed atmosphere (convivial), received voting instruction (instrumental), and voting motivation about why it is important for young people to vote (purposive). The program was run by a relatively young, motivated voter, who called on them to vote (interpersonal).

Second, experiments were run to study the effects of a personal, communal, purposive, social and instrumental atmosphere at the polls on Election Day.<sup>26</sup> In several voting districts across the country, voters were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. The people assigned to a treatment group were invited to an Election Day party by their neighbors and local community leaders (interpersonal). They were told that their friends and neighbors would be at the event (communal) and that they should bring their friends and family members to listen to music and celebrate with a clown (convivial). They were also told that there would be free food, drink and prizes (instrumental).

### **III. An Interpersonal, Communal, Purposive, Convivial, and Instrumental Effort to Attract Newly Eligible, High School Seniors to the Polls on Election Day**

The fact that young people, 18- to 24-year olds, vote less than older age groups appears to be well established.<sup>27</sup> In 1980, Wolfinger and Rosenstone in studying the 1972 election found that

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<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that the Party at the Polls events were open to entire communities. This openness ensures that there is no risk of them being construed as vote buying. Vote buying can be described in the following way. Sarah is entitled to vote in an upcoming election. Bob wants Sarah to vote according to his preferences; indeed, he wants this outcome badly enough that he is willing to buy Sarah's vote. If Bob and Sarah are voting in a federal or state election, it is illegal for Bob (the buyer) to pay Sarah (the seller) for her vote or for Sarah to take anything of value from Bob in exchange for her vote. See 18 U.S.C. 597 SS (1999) imposing a fine or imprisonment on anyone who "makes or offers to make an expenditure to any person, either to vote or withhold his vote, or to vote for or against any candidates," as well as on anyone who "solicits, accepts, or receives any such expenditures in consideration of his vote or the withholding of his vote"; see also 18 U.S.C. SS 598 (1999); 42U.S.C. SS 1973i© (1999) imposing a fine or imprisonment on anyone who offers or accepts payment either for registration to vote or for voting. Every state prohibits the practice as well. (Hasen, 2000, 1324). On the subject of paying voters to boost turnout, federal law prohibits the practice, but at least a few states allow it. The practice appears most developed in California, but exists in other states as well. See e.g., *Dansereau v. Ulmer*, 903 P.2d 555, 560 (Alaska 1995) Although Alaska law prohibits a person from paying another person to vote for a particular candidate, proposition, or question, no Alaska Statute prohibits a person from compensating another person for voting per se; *Naron v. Prestage*, 469 So. 2d 83 (Miss. 1985) upholding a candidate's use of a lottery to increase voter turnout under Mississippi law. (Hasen, 2000, 1326).

<sup>27</sup> Wolfinger and Rosenstone. *Who Votes?* The authors find that controlling for other demographic characteristics, people aged eighteen to twenty-four are 28 percent less likely to vote than fifty-five-year-olds; those aged twenty-five to thirty-one are about 21 percentage points less likely to vote. P. 50. Interestingly, they find that the relationship of age to turnout is even stronger in midterm than in presidential elections. P51 They also write that

citizens in their 80s turned out to vote 30 percentage points higher than voters in their 20s, controlling for factors like education and demographics. (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, p42). More recently, the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) conducted a survey that showed that in 1998 fewer than one in five 18 to 24-year-olds turned out to vote.<sup>28</sup> In 2000, turnout for 18- to 25-year-olds was only 42 percent while turnout for voters over age 25 was 70 percent (Levine and Lopez, 2002).<sup>29</sup>

Low youth voter turnout is not new. Historically, young people have voted at lower rates than their older counterparts. Nevertheless, this fact warrants a continuing focus on youth voter turnout. After all, if young people fail to vote, their views and concerns are likely to remain underrepresented, contributing to the level of inequality of political participation in the United States and skewing the areas of policy focus.<sup>30</sup>

Making matters worse and further complicating the problem of low youth voter turnout, over the past three decades, youth voter turnout has declined. In 1972, for example, 52 percent of 18 to 24 year olds voted, but in the 2000 election, only 37 percent went to the polls (CIRCLE, 2002).<sup>31</sup> Even taking into account the fact that a smaller portion of the population is eligible to vote reveals that turnout of 18 to 24 year olds has dropped from 55 percent in 1972 to 42 percent in 2000, representing a decline of 13 percentage points (CIRCLE, 2002).<sup>32</sup> This decline in young voters will likely contribute to a decline in the voting levels of older voters in the future as today's non-voting youth fail to develop a habit of voting and the overall level of voting in the United states declines in turn.<sup>33</sup>

What can be done to raise the level of youth voter turnout? Will eighteen year olds – first time voters – turn out to vote at higher levels if they are exposed to a voter mobilization effort that incorporates interpersonal, communal, purposive, convivial, and instrumental voter mobilization experiences? Given the persistence of low youth voter turnout and the importance of this fact for

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attempts to explain low turnout by young generally rely on phrases like 'settling down.' This expression alludes not only to the restlessness of the young but to their greater mobility and the specific legal obstacles to voting associated with short residence. (Verba and Nie 1972, p. 139). P51. See also McDonald and Popkin (2001), who according to David Nickerson, argue that voting rates as a whole are not declining, but their estimates show a steep decline (but non-monotonic) among voters age 18 to 20. Nickerson, forthcoming. See also Chen 1992, 142-147.

<sup>28</sup> National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), "New Millennium Young Voters Project," National Information Consortium, 2000.

<sup>29</sup> College students are an exception to this low turnout generalization. Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Heighton and Wolfinger 2001. Even undergraduates, however, do not vote as often as older Americans. Only 32% of the population in that age range cast a ballot for the 1996 Presidential election. This figure was almost cut in half during the 1998 midterm election, when only 19% of young adults voted (U.S. Federal Election Commission 2003).

<sup>30</sup> Fitzgerald (2003) notes that younger voters tend to be more interested in higher education and employment while older voters tend to focus more on social security and Medicare.

<sup>31</sup> Although McDonald and Popkin (2001) claim that there has been no clear trend in voter turnout since 1972, they concede that average turnout rates were higher for all age groups in the period from 1948 to 1970.

<sup>32</sup> McDonald and Popkin (2001) have pointed out that not adjusting for citizens, or eligible voters, deflates the percentage of young people who turnout to vote. For purposes of this project, it is important to measure the percentage of eligible young voters who vote. However, it may be relevant in other contexts to examine the percentage of young people participating in the political process overall (and thus not correcting the denominator to include only those eligible to vote).

<sup>33</sup> Talk about 2004 election.

future turnout levels, young, first-time voters seemed like the ideal candidates for an effort to test the five hypotheses mentioned above.

Just prior to elections in November 2002 and 2003 and spring elections in May 2003 and 2004, seniors in high schools in Connecticut, Kentucky, and New Jersey were randomly divided into two groups, one of which was assigned to participate in a voter mobilization effort tailored to the hypotheses mentioned above. See Appendix 1 for a description of the participating schools.

The First-time Voter Program, as the experiments were called, took care to apply the five hypotheses in ways that would resonate with young people. For example, a relatively young person was selected to conduct the Program, making sure that the call to come out and vote was delivered by someone relatively close to their age and social reality (interpersonal). Additionally, the Program took great effort to make the session fun (convivial). The students would be more likely to remember the experience of learning about voting, it was thought, if they enjoyed this first exposure to the voting process. It had to be relaxing, social, approachable, and more like gym class than chemistry.

The Program also attempted to create a community around voting for these young people. As a result of going through this voter mobilization effort, the Program sought to make the young participants feel part of a voting team. One that was young, motivated, eager and excited to go out – together – and participate in their community’s election (communal). The participants were also called on to serve (purposive). They were reminded that eighteen-year-olds received the right to vote in 1972 in the wake of the Vietnam War. They could be called upon to go to war – even today – and it was their responsibility to get involved and to participate in the country’s democracy.

Finally, as with many social activities, the Program also involved a transfer of information (instrumental). It taught the young participants how to vote. In general, young people are not taught how to vote in school, and few parents take their children to vote or teach them how to vote. In a National Association of Secretaries of State survey (2000) of youth voting practices, for example, many young people claimed that they did not know where or how to vote, and more than half of the survey respondents said that their schools did not provide them with the information and basic skills to vote.<sup>34</sup> The students assigned to the First-time Voter Program learned how to register to vote,<sup>35</sup> how to use a voting booth, and they were given the opportunity to cast a practice ballot.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> From the perspective of a first-time voter, voting is an official process whereby authority figures look on while one “performs” his or her civic duty. If a young person feels unsure of what to expect from the polling place or feels unclear about what to do in the voting booth, he or she will be less likely to vote. In other words, this first-time voter will abstain from voting rather than risk feeling self-conscious and confused at the polling site. As James E. Maddux has written, “People learn vicariously by observing other people’s behavior and its consequences. Vicarious learning through observation greatly reduces people’s dependency on trial-and-error learning and allows for the rapid learning of complex skills that would not be possible if people learned only by taking action and directly experiencing the consequences of their own behavior.” (Maddux, 1995)

<sup>35</sup> During the voting instruction program, all students are taught how to register to vote. When the program was conducted before the registration deadline, eligible students were given the opportunity to officially register to vote.

<sup>36</sup> This research effort cannot separate any boost in turnout that comes from lowering the cost to voting by teaching and registering the students to vote from turnout boosts that come from the other factors in the treatment. Nevertheless, there have been many efforts to lower the costs of voting and to study the voter turnout boost that

There is evidence to suggest that once a person starts voting, he or she develops a habit of voting and continues to vote over the course of a lifetime.<sup>37</sup> Further, there is reason to believe that people who vote are more engaged in political and civic life.<sup>38</sup> Finally, even though residential mobility acts as a hindrance to voting and young adults tend to move more frequently than older adults (Lane 1959, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980), seniors in high school, for the most part, are still living at home, and they are not yet facing the difficulties of a mobile lifestyle. In this way, while there are many hurdles to voting and many factors that explain voting behavior, perhaps if more young people were encouraged to start voting at eighteen by receiving a positive, social experience with voting, their involvement would spillover into other areas of civic engagement, and the slope of their voting trajectories would be permanently higher.<sup>39</sup>

The experiment was replicated in areas with competitive and non-competitive local and state-wide elections and in high and low socio-economic communities in order to determine if the competitiveness of the election and the affluence of the community influence the effects of the mobilization effort. See Appendix 2 for a description of the socio-economic status of the communities where the participating schools are located as well as for a description of the electoral context in which the mobilization class took place.

### ***Research Design***

This study of first-time voters voting relies on a randomized design. First, a sample was identified for the experiment. In some of the participating schools, the sample includes all members of a participating school's senior class. In others, it includes certain classes (of seniors) selected by the school to participate in the program (e.g., the senior history classes). Next, the sample was randomly separated into a treatment group and a control group. Members of the randomly selected treatment group were assigned to participate in the First-time Voter Program. Members of the randomly selected control group did not attend the voting program.

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results from these lower costs. Federal "Motor Voter" legislation, for example, made voter registration easier. Unfortunately, it has had minimal effects on voter turnout (Piven and Cloward, 2000, p265). Studies assessing the effects of various policy reforms on voter turnout have concluded that Election Day registration policies seem to raise turnout, but the effects are only on the order of 3 percentage points during presidential election years. (Fitzgerald 2005, p.856; Knack 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Campbell et al. 1960, Milbrath 1965, Verba and Nie 1972, Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992, Lake and Huckfeldt 1998, Gerber, Green, and Sachar.

<sup>38</sup> The American Citizen Participation Study (ACPS) by Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) provides evidence that political discussion fosters civic engagement. Results from their cross-sectional analyses show that political debate in high school is positively associated with civic involvement and political efficacy later in life, even after controlling for socio-economic covariates. Along these lines, it is likely that if an eighteen-year-old starts voting, this civic act would likely affect his or her civic participation more broadly.

<sup>39</sup> Young people tend to be the least engaged in political affairs. A national survey of students in American high schools found that the students had relatively little knowledge of the American political process (Niemi and Chapman 1999). Similarly, annual surveys of over 250,000 college freshmen show that every significant indicator of political engagement has fallen by at least half over the last 3 decades. "Only 26% of freshmen think that keeping up with politics is important, down from 58% in 1966 . . . [and] only 14% say that frequently discuss politics, down from 30% (Galston 2001, 219)."

Given that some of the students who were assigned to the treatment group did not attend the class – either because they were absent from school or because they opted for some reason not to attend once they arrived to school – the study distinguishes between the intent-to-treat effect and the actual treatment effect. The intent-to-treat effect is the observed difference in voter turnout between those assigned to the treatment and control groups. If everyone in the treatment group actually attends the voting instruction program, the intent-to-treat effect is identical to the actual treatment effect. In practice, however, the contact rates are lower than 100 percent because some students in the treatment group inevitably are absent from the instruction session. So, the actual treatment effect represents the average effect of participating in the voting instruction program on those who attend the program.

After the election following the voting mobilization sessions, public voting records were reviewed and the number of votes cast by members of the treatment group were compared with the number of votes cast by the control group. Because the students receiving the treatment in the First-time Voter Program are chosen by chance, the experimental design provides an unbiased assessment of the effects of the intervention.

This method was chosen because it provides a powerful tool for drawing valid inferences about cause and effect. Observational studies, which examine the correlation between voter turnout and a particular treatment, do not have the benefits of the randomized design. The conclusions drawn from observational studies may be spurious if, for example, unmeasured variables influence both voter turnout and the particular treatment under study. Similarly, surveys must rely on respondents' self-reported statements about their behavior, which for a variety of reasons may misrepresent the true causal impact of the treatment.

Because the First-time Voter Program simulates an actual program and takes place in the field as opposed to in a laboratory, the experiment provides externally valid insights. The First-time Voter Program is a classroom style, interactive presentation, which is similar to programs that high schools run throughout the year. Although the experiment only targets high-school seniors in a limited number of schools, the variety of schools participating in the program – urban and suburban, advantaged and less advantaged – increases the ability to form general conclusions about high-school seniors from the results.<sup>40</sup>

### ***The Treatment: The First-time Voter Program***

The First-time Voter Program is a social, informal program about voting. First, the young person leading the session introduces herself and presents herself as a young person in a similar situation to the students in the room. She asks them about their perceptions of voting and Election Day and explains why she first decided to vote. The presenter is casual and social. She invites them to participate – no need to raise your hand, just jump right in. This is a casual

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<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, because the schools select into the program – many more schools are invited to participate than actually accept the offer – there is an external validity problem inherent in the research design of this study. A strong effort has been made to conduct the program in a wide variety of schools, in different states, in different electoral environments, and in different SES communities. But, the problem remains that the program was not conducted randomly across the country, and the schools that participated had enough interest/motivation prior to the program to respond to the invitation to participate.

conversation, more like gym class than chemistry class. Students are encouraged to ask questions as they think of them throughout the presentation. The presenter remains upbeat and positive about voting throughout the session and attempts to make the session fun and comfortable for the students. The First-time Voter sessions tend to run about 40 minutes, and they tend to serve about 20 to 30 students per session. An effort is made to keep the sessions as small and intimate as possible. The number of sessions per school varies with the total number of students to be accommodated.

Then, the presenter talks about why people vote, the offices that are up for election at the local, state and federal levels, and the policy areas that are controlled by public officials at each of these levels. The presenter spends about ten minutes asking the students questions about what they know about voting and whether they have ever gone to vote with a parent, friend or guardian. The lack of exposure to the voting process is echoed in almost every school that participates in the Program. Although some schools hold mock elections and register their students to vote, most of the students who participate in the First-time Voter Program say they have never been to an official polling site. Some students do have memories of going to the polls with their parents. They recall the curtains hung across the machines, the levers and the signs, and (as they often mention) the elderly people who monitor the polls. Yes, everyone seems to say, when they think of voting – they think of old people. Most students say that they have never seen an official voting machine, they do not know how to vote, and although they will soon turn eighteen, nobody has offered to teach them about voting or called on them to participate in the voting process.

In an effort to connect the voting process to the students' lives, the presenter discusses the relevance of voting to issues students often care about. For example, the presenter discusses the widespread authority of public officials – who are voted into office – by pointing out that these officials have control over policies affecting drivers' licenses and driving concerns, town curfews, using cell phones in public places or while driving, and the amount of money available to fund the sports and arts programs in public schools. In one lively exchange, the presenter asks the students whether or not they want to attend college. Most of the students say that they do want to attend college. Then, the presenter asks whether or not the students would like financial aid to attend college. Again, most of the students vigorously shake their heads in the affirmative. Then, the presenter notes that politicians at the state and federal levels, who are voted into office, often make decisions that affect the amount of money available for college scholarships and the amount of money available to improve public universities. The students seem to enjoy the realization that just about every area of their lives is affected by public officials who are voted into office. In one school, a student told a story about how she doesn't think it is fair that she gets parking tickets for parking in front of her house. In another, a student mentioned that she travels to a neighboring state because the sales tax on clothing is cheaper in that state. The purpose of this part of the program is to build connections between voting and daily life, thereby encouraging the students to turn out to vote.

The presenter also talks to the students about young voters as a group. She talks to them about how eighteen-year-olds received the right to vote in the wake of the Vietnam War. She talks to them about how young people at that time believed that if they could be drafted and called upon to serve their country then they should be able to select the leaders that would make these

decisions. She asks the students what issues they care about. They frequently notice that they have similar concerns to one another, and they frequently talk about themselves as a group. Several students in each presentation start their responses with, "We care about." They begin to see themselves as a team, and they recognize that they all have to come out and vote in order to be effective.

In the next part of the program, for about fifteen minutes, the presenter explains the voter registration requirements and procedures. For example, the presenter discusses who can register, the age at which one can register and vote in the state, under what circumstances a person can or cannot vote, and what one needs to bring to vote. The presenter passes out voter registration cards, explains where to get the cards, explains how to fill them out, and (in some of the schools) collects the completed voter registration cards of eligible students. The presenter also explains the rules for absentee balloting and what to do if the student is away (at college) on Election Day. Finally, the presenter explains the importance of becoming informed about the candidates, asks the students how they might learn about the candidates and the issues relevant to the election, and describes the sources available to them to learn about candidates and issues. The students tend to respond that they would look to the internet, signs on the street, conversations with family and friends, and to the radio and television to find out about the candidates.

Finally, in the third part of the program, the presenter opens the voting machine and shows the students how the machine works, carefully explaining the various uses of the buttons and levers. The presenter invites the students up to the machine. One by one, the students are given the opportunity to practice voting on the machine. The students seem to enjoy the actual voting part of the program, and many ask if they can cast second or third votes. It often becomes a game for the students to vote for certain candidates or to write-in the names of their friends and teachers in the write-in slots on the voting machines. In each class, there are a few students who ask the others to write in their name for president or secretary of state. Invariably, the students also ask to see the back of the machine, if it is a voting machine, or to test the machine if it is an optical scanner, to examine how these votes are recorded. It is fun and invariably the students are laughing, joking and playing around as they are learning.

Although students are not forced to register or to cast a practice vote, they are encouraged to do so. Generally, about 90 percent of the students cast a ballot and about 20 percent cast more than one ballot. In fact, reluctant students often end up teaching others how to vote at the end of the session. In one school, a shy student refused to participate and seemed uninterested in the discussion for the first half of the class. Several students had cast a practice vote, but this student held back from giving it a try. Finally, encouraged by the other students who told him that they were not going to let him sit on the sidelines, he decided to cast a vote. It was remarkable to see the degree to which his disinterest changed to interest once he realized it was not too difficult to vote and once he felt a part of the group. As soon as he left the voting machine, he immediately turned to the person behind him to tell her what to expect from the process. Then, he voted a second time and asked to see the back of the machine, so he could figure out how it really worked.

After the students have voted, the presenter congratulates the students for casting their first vote. Invariably, several of the students announce that they cannot wait to go vote on Election Day.

### *Voting Instruction Sites*

The voting instruction program has been conducted in 16 high schools located in Connecticut, Kentucky, and New Jersey. See Appendix 1 for a description of each school and the community in which it is located. The total population for the study (i.e., number of participating seniors) is 1,946 but only 263 students were old enough to vote at election time and only 241 have been included in the statistical analysis.<sup>41</sup> The program was run in different states at different times to allow for variation in the degree of competitiveness of the election, the type of the election, and the socio-economic level of the population under study. The following details the programs described in the context of these variables. See Appendix 2 for a classification of the schools by the competitiveness of the election cycle in which the presentation was conducted and by the socio-economic status of the community in which the school is located.

#### *Highly-Competitive Electoral Context in Low to High Socio-economic Conditions*

The First-time Voter Program was conducted in three high schools in Connecticut in the fall of 2002 just prior to a highly competitive gubernatorial race in the state. In addition to governor, candidates for state-wide constitutional offices, state senators and state representatives were also on the ballot.

Two of the schools that participated in this round of experiments, Berlin High School and Coginchaug High School, are classified as having a high socio-economic status given their median household income levels of \$68,068 and \$77,639, respectively, in the towns where the schools are located. One school, Rocky Hill High School, is classified as having a moderate socio-economic status given its household income level of \$60,247.

Similarly, in the fall of 2003, the program was conducted in three schools in Kentucky prior to a highly competitive gubernatorial race. One of the schools, Jeffersontown High School, is classified as having a mid-level socio-economic status given average household incomes of \$51,999 in the area, and two of the schools, Louisville Male High School and Dupont Manual High School, are classified as having a low socio-economic status given household income levels of about \$28,843.

#### *Moderately-Competitive Electoral Context in Mid to High Socio-economic Conditions*

In the fall of 2003, the First-time Voter Program was also conducted in four high schools in New Jersey just prior to moderately competitive state-wide elections. The socio-economic status of the towns in which the participating schools are located ranged from high (Passaic Technical

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<sup>41</sup> In several schools in the study, none of the students (from the treatment and control groups) voted, so these schools were dropped from the statistical analysis. Such selection on the dependent variable is problematic in a linear probability model. But, as research on rare events by Tomz, King and Zheng (2003) shows, in non-linear models, such as the bivariate probit model used in this paper, analyzing rare events leads to bias. Linear probability models produce an expected value of the dependent variable. In this context, a zero outcome implies that the treatment had no effect. However, in the probit model, a zero outcome does not necessarily imply that there is no treatment effect. It only signals that the treatment effect is undetectable and that the treatment effect – which could still be large – does not cross the threshold of detection because the intercepts are too low. Random assignment to the treatment/control groups, which took place in this study within each school, and the inclusion of school dummy variables, ensures that dropping the cases has no effect on the results.

High School and Cresskill High School), with a median household income of between \$83,600 and \$84,600, to medium (Hawthorne High School and Passaic Valley High School), with incomes of around \$55,300 to \$58,900.

#### *Weakly-Competitive Electoral Context in Low to Medium Socio-economic Conditions*

Finally, in the spring and fall of 2003, the First-time Voter Program was conducted in high schools in Connecticut just prior to weakly-competitive municipal elections. They were conducted in two schools – Naugatuck High School and Waterford High School -- of moderate socio-economic status, \$51,247 and \$56,047 respectively, and one school, High School in the Community, in a city classified with a low median household income of \$29,604.

Although the various sites do not constitute a random sample of schools across the country and the subsequent elections do not constitute a random sample of elections, the results of the study are bolstered by the fact that the program was conducted in very different electoral contexts and demographic settings. Some of the elections were highly competitive while others were less competitive. Some of the schools are located in communities with predominantly white residents while others are located in more racially and ethnically diverse communities. Some of the schools are located in very affluent communities while others are located in communities with scarce resources. This variety allows one to calculate average turnout effects of the program in various electoral and demographic contexts while it also allows for more certainty about the average effects of participating in the First-time Voter Program.

#### *Statistical Model*

This paper hypothesizes that participation in the First-time Voter program will have a positive impact on the probability of turning out to vote in the following election. In order to test this hypothesis, this paper regresses the voter turnout decisions of 241 voting-age, high-school seniors from nine schools on whether they attended the First-time Voter Program.<sup>42</sup> However, the binary nature of the dependent and main independent variables affects the choice of a statistical model for analysis. For example, the dependent variable – the decision to vote -- takes on the value of one if a person votes and zero otherwise. The main explanatory variable – whether or not a student participated in the voting instruction program – is also a binary response variable, taking on the value of one if the person attends the voting instruction program and zero otherwise.

The binary nature of the variables is particularly problematic in this instance because the level of voter turnout of high school students tends to be very low. Ordinary Least Squares may produce predictions that voting will occur with less than zero probability. In order to measure the results of the treatment on voter turnout even in schools where the propensity to vote is so low that the treatment – even if effective – may be hard to detect, a more refined method of analysis must be used. The probit transformation ensures that predicted vote probabilities are confined to the range between 0 and 1. The resulting probit coefficients imply that an eligible senior in high

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<sup>42</sup> The schools included in the statistical analysis are Berlin High School (CT), Naugatuck High School (CT), Coginchaug High School (CT), Waterford High School (CT), Cresskill High School (NJ), Passaic Valley Regional High School (NJ), Hawthorne High School (NJ), Jeffersontown High School (KY), and Louisville Male High School (KY).

school, who would otherwise have a certain chance of voting, would have an additional chance of voting after participating in the First-time Voter Program.

Another constraint of analyzing the effects of the voting instruction program stems from the fact that the decision to vote and participation in the program are presumably influenced by some of the same variables. For example, a person who is more likely to vote could also be more likely to attend class. An estimate of the program's effect on the likelihood of voting will therefore be biased because unmeasured variables simultaneously cause both attendance and vote. For studying questions like this one, Wooldridge (2002) proposes a two-stage probit estimator – a bivariate probit analysis. The bivariate probit model is a simultaneous equations model that controls for the endogeneity of two related choices and accommodates the binary nature of the dependent variable and the independent variables (Greene 2003, Wooldridge 2002).

In the first equation of the bivariate probit model, voter turnout serves as the dependent variable and whether or not the student attended the presentation serves as the independent variable. In the second equation of the bivariate probit model, whether or not the student attended the presentation serves as the dependent variable and whether or not the student was assigned to the treatment group serves as the independent variable. Since treatment group status is determined randomly and is exogenous to the decision to vote, there is no endogeneity bias in the resulting attendance variable.

The model also incorporates a variable that measures the competitiveness of the election in an effort to determine the impact of the program on voter turnout in the face of varying levels of election competitiveness. The election was coded high for gubernatorial elections, medium for state-wide races, and low for municipal races. See Appendix 2 for a classification of the schools by the competitiveness of the electoral context in which the voting presentation was conducted. Prior literature suggests that the more competitive the election, the higher the level of voter turnout (Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1975). It is plausible that a more competitive election could enhance the effects of the voting program if, for example, the students' heightened knowledge of the election increases their receptivity to the voting program. However, it is also plausible that the program would have a stronger effect in a less competitive election environment, if, for example, the program fills a mobilization vacuum and induces the students to vote even though there is not much hype about the election around them.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, the model incorporates a variable measuring the socio-economics status (SES) of the town in which the school is located in order to determine the impact of the program on voter turnout in the face of varying levels of socio-economic status. The town was characterized as having a low SES if the town had an average annual family income of under \$50,000, medium SES if the town had an average annual family income of between \$50,000 and \$65,000, and high SES if the town had an average annual family income of above \$65,000. See Appendix 2 for a classification of the schools by the socio-economic status of the communities in which they are located. Prior literature suggests that high socio-economic status leads to higher levels of voter turnout (Milbrath and Goel 1977, Olsen 1982). However, as with the election competitiveness, this paper holds that the effects of this variable could be positive or negative. A high socio-

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<sup>43</sup> In light of the fact that electoral competitiveness could influence the voting program positively or negatively, this paper examines the impact of this variable using a two-tailed hypothesis test.

economic community could enhance the effects of the program if, for example, the school reinforces the students' exposure to electoral participation through various voting-related program activities. Alternatively, the program could have a larger effect in a low socio-economic community, which may not have the resources to mobilize students to vote in the absence of the First-time Voter Program.<sup>44</sup>

The process by which the students were assigned to the treatment or the control group was random, which guarantees that on average this study will converge on the true parameter in each school. Further, the number of students assigned to each group was equal, and there is no systematic difference between the treatment and the control groups.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the number of students eligible to vote in the treatment and the control groups varies by school. This difference in voting-age students occurred in part because there are few eighteen-year olds in a senior class (until the end of the year) and in part because randomization was done at the level of the entire senior class or several classes within the senior class, rather than with only voting-age seniors. Further, the difficulty of scheduling schools at the beginning of the school term often meant that the program was not set up in time for the registration deadline. In some schools, the students were registered to vote by their teachers before the program. In other schools, the students were registered to vote during the program. Finally, in others, the students registered to vote on their own, resulting in only a few students who were able to vote in the subsequent election.

This variation across schools has the potential to induce a correlation between treatment group assignment and the base rate of voting in each school, which could lead to biased results. To correct this potential problem and consistent with the fact that randomization occurred within each school, dummy variables for each school are included as covariates at both stages of the bivariate probit regression. This inclusion of school dummy variables has the further benefit of improving the efficiency of the model and allowing the treatment to be estimated with greater precision. Each school has a different base rate of voting, but including dummy variables for each school drives down the disturbance variability.

As mentioned above, several schools are not included in the statistical analysis. Rocky Hill High School (CT), Passaic Technical High School (NJ), and Dupont Manual High School (KY) are dropped from the analysis because none of the students who were eligible to vote turned out to vote in the subsequent election. Therefore, there is no way to determine the effects of the program on these students. Wood-Ridge High School (NJ), Ballard High School (KY), and St. Francis High School (KY) were excluded from the analysis because none of the students who participated in the First-Time Voter Program were eligible to vote in the subsequent election.

## ***Results of Analysis***

### *Intent-to-Treat Effect*

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<sup>44</sup> Given that socio-economic status could influence the voting program positively or negatively, this paper examines the impact of this variable using a two-tailed hypothesis test.

<sup>45</sup> A chi-square test reveals that there is no systematic difference between the treatment and control groups; a chi-square value of 9.11 with 8 degrees of freedom is not significant at the .05 level.

A simple calculation of the intent-to-treat effect provides insight into the effects of the First-time Voter Program. The intent-to-treat effect is calculated by comparing the turnout rates of the students assigned to the control group with the turnout rates of the students assigned to the treatment group. See Appendix 3 for the voter turnout rates for the treatment and control groups at each school and for an analysis of the intent to treat effect in each school. At every school but one, the treatment group turned out to vote at a higher rate than the control group. The exception to these findings can be found at Hawthorne High School in New Jersey where the program was conducted after the registration deadline and where only three students were eligible to vote in the subsequent election.

A simple probit estimation of voter turnout on whether a student was assigned to the treatment or control group, controlling for the effects of each school reveals that, on average, the voter mobilization experience has an intent-to-treat effect of 19 percentage points. The finding is statistically significantly different from zero with a two-tailed p-value of .004.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, if a student with a 42 percent chance of voting in an upcoming election was assigned to participate in the First-time Voter Program, he or she would then have a 61 percent chance of voting. See Appendix 4 for a probit calculation with and without adding the school dummy variables.

It should be noted that given that the group assigned to the treatment includes students who attended the voting instruction program and students who did not attend the program, the intent-to-treat estimate provides a conservative assessment of the average effects of the program on voter turnout. Nevertheless, because the program was conducted by the school and students were assigned by their teachers to attend this voting program, the average contact rate was fairly high. In this way, although this study has a relatively small number of voting-age, participating students, this strong contact rate contributed to a statistically significant intent-to-treat effect with a relatively low standard error.

#### *The Effects of Participation in the First-time Voter Program: Bivariate Probit Analysis*

As explained above, a bivariate probit model allows for estimation of the effects of actually attending the First-time Voter Program. The bivariate probit model implies that the voter turnout level for the students who actually attended the First-time Voter Program was 24 percentage points higher than for the students in the control group, controlling for the effects of each individual school.<sup>47</sup> This estimate is statistically significant with a p-value of .009, using a two-tailed test. See Appendix 5 for a bivariate probit calculation with and without the inclusion of school dummy variables.

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<sup>46</sup> The intent-to-treat effect was calculated by taking the probit of vote on assignment to the treatment/control group (controlling for the unobserved differences among schools with school dummy variables). The coefficient on the treatment/control variable was .5583 probits, which when added to the constant, .3381, resulted in a treatment effect of .8964 probits or 82 percent. Subtracting the effects on the control group (constant) of .3381 probits or 63 percent provides a difference of 19 percentage points between the effects of the program on the treatment and the control groups. Without the dummy variables the intent to treat effect is 12 percentage points (with a two-tailed p-value of .023).

<sup>47</sup> The actual treatment effect was calculated by adding the coefficient on the attend variable (.6619) with the constant (.106) for a result of .7679 probits or 78 percent. Then, the coefficient on the constant (.106 probits or 54 percent) was subtracted from this figure, resulting in a difference between the voter turnout rate of the treatment and the control groups of 24 percentage points.

### *The Effects of SES and Election Competitiveness on the Voting Program Treatment*

The drawback of the bivariate probit method of analysis, however, is that it is difficult to incorporate additional endogenous variables such as the interaction between attendance and SES. With the goal of analyzing the impact of covariates like election competitiveness and SES, this paper conducts a likelihood ratio test. The idea behind the likelihood ratio test is that if variables are important to the estimation of a model, this should be evident in differences between the log likelihood functions of the models when the variables are included and excluded. In this study, if SES or election competitiveness affects the treatment effects of the First-time Voter Program, it should be evident from a comparison of a model with these variables and a model without these variables.

With this end, this paper proceeds by determining the log likelihood of a bivariate regression of vote on attendance in the voting program, incorporating dummy variables for each possible interaction effect: (1) highly competitive election and high SES community, (2) highly competitive election and medium SES community, (3) highly competitive election and low SES community, (4) moderately competitive election and high SES, (5) moderately competitive election and medium SES, and (6) low competitive election and medium SES.<sup>48</sup> The log likelihood for this restricted model is then compared with an unrestricted model. The unrestricted model adds the log likelihood for each bivariate regression of vote on attendance and attendance on assignment (where the data constitute only those in a specific interaction category, e.g., high competitive election and low SES).<sup>49</sup> A Chi-square test reveals that there is no significant difference between the two models.<sup>50</sup> There is no evidence that variation in the socioeconomic status of the community or variation in the competitiveness of the electoral context in which the program is conducted affects the degree to which the program has an impact on the voter turnout of the 18-year-olds who participate. However, more data would increase the power of these findings and allow for a test of the relative weight of each of the covariates. See Appendix 6 for a presentation of the results of the likelihood ratio test.

In sum, the First-time Voter Program registers strong effects. The study finds that 18-year olds, who are mobilized to vote in a way that incorporates interpersonal, communal, purposive, convivial, and instrumental experiences, turn out to vote at a statistically significantly higher level than those who are not afforded this mobilization. Participating in the First-time Voter Program increases the probability that an 18-year old will vote by 19 to 24 percentage points.

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<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, there were no schools with eligible voters in three of the categories: (1) moderately competitive election and low SES, (2) low competitive elections and high SES, and (3) low competitive elections and low SES. The inclusion of the dummy variables in this model allows the treatment to be the same across schools while the starting point (baseline probability of voting) may differ. In other words, a treatment effect of 24 percentage points may be found in both wealthy and poor schools, but in a wealthier school the base rate of voting may be 20 percent (raised to 44 percent by the treatment) and in a school with less resources the starting point may be 10 percent (raised to 34 percent with the treatment).

<sup>49</sup> This model allows for differences in slope, recognizing that if the SES or election competitiveness variables are significant, they may affect the level of the treatment recorded at each school (e.g., 24 percentage point treatment effect in a highly competitive election environment and 13 percentage point difference in a less competitive environment).

<sup>50</sup> A chi-square value of 6.18 with 6 degrees of freedom was not significant at the .05 level.

It registers these large effects regardless of the level of competitiveness of the election or the SES of the community where the school is located. Nevertheless, at this time it cannot be inferred whether the effect of the First-time Voter Program is a result of the interpersonal call to vote by a fellow young person, the creation of a young voter community for the students, the sense of purpose imbued in the program, the social atmosphere during the session, and/or the way in which voting became accessible to them and they learned what voting held for them. Because the students in the study were encouraged to vote in several ways, the results cannot be used to determine which aspects of the study were more or less important, or whether similar results might have resulted if only one of the elements were included. However, the approach will be refined in future trials.

It is vital to an effective democratic process that citizens vote. If fewer and fewer eligible voters exercise their right to vote or if only certain groups vote, there is an increasing risk that those who are elected will not be seen as legitimate representatives of the people and may not, in fact, be reflective of the will and wishes of the majority. Ultimately, this can endanger the stability of the democratic process. Further, if young people fail to vote, their views and concerns are likely to remain underrepresented, contributing to the level of inequality of political participation in the United States. If these young people continue to vote at lower levels, the United States may see a decline in the overall number of people voting in the country over time.

In this way, the findings of this study are significant, both statistically and substantively. Policy-makers can raise the level of youth voter turnout at the polls by implementing this simple, hands-on program in high schools across the country. Will these eighteen-year-olds, who have participated in the program, continue over time to vote at higher levels than the students assigned to the control group? If so, this study also provides evidence to the habit-forming benefits of exposing eighteen year-olds to the voting process in a social, communal way before they vote for the first time.

#### **IV. An Interpersonal, Communal, Purposive, Convivial, Instrumental Effort to Attract People to the Polls on Election Day**

A century and a half ago, casting a vote was a celebratory experience, as voters at the polls engaged their friends, imbibed free booze, listened to lively entertainment, and generally had a good time. Americans have lost touch with the raucous and engaging elections of the past. As historian Richard Benseel points out, by comparison to the elections of the nineteenth century, contemporary polling places have a mausoleum-like atmosphere (Benseel, 2004).

Our polling places have been drained of their celebratory elements, and the 90%-plus rates of voter turnout that accompanied them have disappeared from our collective consciousness. But the disappearance of festive elections is felt in ways that go beyond diminished rates of voter turnout. Like other aspects of community life, poignantly described by Robert Putnam (Putnam, 2000), the community ties that elections once provided are gone. Certainly, working on a campaign brings people together, but rarely does campaigning bring together the community as a whole. Indeed, campaigns often split communities apart, sometimes in ways that have long-range implications. Can the festive, social environment surrounding old-fashioned elections be recreated in ways that increase voter turnout? What would it mean to change the polling

environment to provide communal, social and instrumental reasons to come out and vote? Would it increase voter turnout? Might it change the orientation of people toward their community?

A series of field experiments were conducted to bring the package of characteristics – interpersonal, communal, purposive, convivial and instrumental – to the polls on Election Day.<sup>51</sup> In these experiments community members would call on fellow community members to come and vote. Members of the community would be invited not just to a sterile voting environment of years past, but to a social poll party where their friends and neighbors would be gathering to celebrate and enjoy Election Day. This was not an event for voters alone – it was an event for the entire community. All were welcome at the poll party; children of all ages were invited to enjoy the music, the clown and the merrymaking. Also, there was no need to prepare dinner on Election Day. There would be food, drinks and sweets for all who came to the party. Plus, there would be a free raffle and prizes would be awarded to the lucky winner. These prizes were generously donated by local businesses who also wanted to support their community and Election Day.

An Election Day festival was conducted in Hooksett, New Hampshire, during its spring 2005 local elections and in New Haven, Connecticut, during its fall 2005 local elections.<sup>52</sup> New Hampshire was chosen because it allows its citizens to register at the polls on Election Day, which means that every adult citizen attending the festival would be eligible to vote in the election. Hooksett, a middle class, relatively small, suburban town, was selected from a group of similar towns, which have only one polling location for the entire town. This arrangement made it possible to direct the advertising for the poll party toward an entire town and yet hold a festival at a single polling place. Connecticut was selected because it holds municipal elections in the fall of odd years, which coincided with the research timeframe. New Haven was selected because its demographic profile differed markedly from Hooksett's in terms of race and affluence. New Haven has single member electoral districts called wards. Each odd year in the electoral cycle, thirty new members of the New Haven Board of Aldermen, the legislative body for the City, and the Mayor of New Haven are elected. This structure permitted two wards (each with one polling location) to be selected. These wards both have fairly low income residents, a constituency base that is approximately 85 percent African-American, and a long history of low voter turnout. The Party at the Polls was held in one ward and the other was used as a control group.

### ***Poll Party in Hooksett, New Hampshire***

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<sup>51</sup> I conducted these research experiments with Donald Green, Professor of Political Science at Yale University, Jim Glaser, Professor of Political Science at Tufts University, and Tim Ryan, undergraduate student at Tufts University. Pamela Lamonaca also provided extensive support to the organization of the poll parties.

<sup>52</sup> New Hampshire and Connecticut state law prohibit any form of payment for voting. However, if properly advertised (i.e., no relation between voting and gaining a benefit), food and free music equally available to all (whether one votes or not) would not violate the New Hampshire and Connecticut statutes. Thus, in conformity with contemporary norms and laws, the experimental festivals lacked the partisan attributes of their 19<sup>th</sup> century counterparts. And unlike the social activities surrounding elections in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which were men only affairs, the Party at the Polls was for general audiences.

Using data supplied by state and local elections officials, voter turnout records for towns throughout New Hampshire were compiled. After stratifying towns by population and voter turnout rates, two similar towns were identified, Hooksett and Hanover, which hold local elections on the same day in a single polling location. According to the 2000 census, Hooksett's population was 8,872 compared to 9,211 in Hanover. In the local elections of 2004, 836 people voted in Hooksett as compared to 854 in Hanover; the year before, Hanover's local elections attracted 1,473 people to the polls, as compared to 912 in Hooksett. A coin flip assigned Hooksett to the treatment group and Hanover to the control group. The procedure of assigning the festival at random ensured that there was no systematic reason to expect turnout to be higher in the treatment group. A third town, Newmarket, was similar to the other two but had a slightly smaller population (6,250) and somewhat higher voting rates (1,016 voters in 2004). Newmarket was not part of the random assignment but nonetheless serves as a useful statistical purpose. Newmarket was not used to estimate the effect of the treatment but does help with the estimation of the year to year variability in turnout rates, which in turn helps in the calculation of the probability that the estimated treatment effect was obtained due to chance.

The experimental intervention was conducted with a view to incorporating the five characteristics mentioned above. There was a publicity campaign conducted prior to the Election Day festival. An effort was made to incorporate personal invitations to the party. Specifically, members of the Parent-Teacher Association at the school where the party was held were asked to invite their friends and neighbors to the event. The school principal and teachers were asked to invite friends. The town administrator circulated the invitations to the poll parties at neighborhood meetings prior to the big day. And, local business owners were asked to pass out invitations to their customers.

Traditional, more impersonal advertising methods were used as well. But, each invitation reiterated a call to join fellow community members, friends and neighbors – incorporating the goal of creating a sense of belonging and community for all who attended. On the Saturday before Election Day, the regional newspaper, the *Union Leader*, contained a flyer advertising an “Election Day Poll Party,” giving the location and time. The local paper, the *Hooksett Neighborhood News*, also advertised the event. On the Sunday before Election Day, a story describing the party appeared in the *Union Leader*. At the same time, three dozen lawn signs advertising the event were planted on busy streets in town. Finally, two pre-recorded thirty second phone calls were directed to 3,000 Hooksett households. The first call was made on Saturday and the second on Election Day. Both extended an invitation to the party and gave details about its hours (3:00 to 7:00 PM) and location. More than 89% of the calls were successfully completed, with approximately two-thirds of the completed calls reaching answering machines.<sup>53</sup>

On Election Day, the festival took place immediately outside the polling place, on the front lawn of the local middle school. The weather was sunny and 68 degrees. A large tent was set up

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<sup>53</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that the prerecorded phone calls had no effect on attendance at the poll party. This is consistent with experimental evidence that has shown repeatedly that automated calls have negligible effects on voter turnout (Green and Gerber 2004). There is little reason to believe that the prerecorded calls for the poll party, by reminding people of the upcoming election, explain the apparent effects of the festival. Whether newspaper publicity generated turnout, however, remains unknown.

surrounded by signs encouraging people to enjoy free snacks, drinks, and raffles. A cotton candy machine attracted a steady stream of children. People who showed up at the party were encouraged to call other friends and neighbors to let them know about the party. “Tell them to come on down. They won’t have to cook dinner!”

A tremendous effort was made to create a social atmosphere at the polling site. A professional DJ played upbeat, family-friendly music. He encouraged people to go to vote and then to come back and dance. People of all ages milled about the party tent. Young children danced and played catch. Elderly couples took advantage of the chairs around the tent to sit, listen to the music, and to eat the sandwiches provided. Mothers and fathers juggled cookies and potato chips and mingled with their friends and neighbors. Several people expressed enthusiasm for the festival and said they would try to convince their town leaders to recreate the event next year.

There was not a large effort to incorporate a purposive character to Election Day. But, it is envisioned that future iterations of the poll party will incorporate announcements of a solicited monetary donation that would be granted to a local charity in increments for every 50 people who turnout to vote in the election.

In classic rational voter terms, the Hooksett ballot presented voters with very little reason to turnout to vote. According to town officials, there was not much of significance on the ballot that year. Hooksett voters elected town councilors, members of the budget committee, a member of the cemetery committee, a library trustee, a moderator, a sewer commissioner, and a trustee of trust funds. Each of the candidates for these offices ran unopposed. Hooksett voters also evaluated ballot measures concerning the town budget, planning and zoning, growth management, the purchase of new fire trucks, and the appropriation of funds for projects like converting a school into town offices. The low salience of the election was evident in the mobilization efforts surrounding it. Outside the polls in Hooksett, two or three people stood with handmade signs for or against one of the ballot measures. On Hooksett’s main roads, there were only a handful of lawn signs concerning the election.

The elections in Hanover and Newmarket were similarly nondescript. In Hanover, voters selected two selectmen, a treasurer, a library trustee, and a trustee of funds. In Newmarket, voters evaluated the budget and requests for expenditure, and they elected new selectmen and a town clerk. The weather in both Hanover and Newmarket was similar to Hooksett, 68 degrees and sunny all day.

The effect of the experimental intervention was calculated using regression analysis. The sample consists of 18 data points: 3 towns observed annually across 6 local elections. The dependent variable was defined in two different ways. The first is the turnout percentage, defined as the ratio of voters to the population of adults.<sup>54</sup> The second is the log-odds of the turnout percentage. The log-odds transformation is commonly used when predicting percentages, particularly when

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<sup>54</sup> A measure of the voting age population is used, not the voting eligible population, as the denominator due to the small number of noncitizens and disenfranchised felons living in these towns. The 2000 census figures were adjusted to account for population growth.

percentages in question are below 25%.<sup>55</sup> The independent variables are as follows: a dummy variable scored 1 if the election is Hooksett in 2005 and zero otherwise; a dummy variable scored 1 if the election is 2005 and zero otherwise, a dummy variable scored 1 if the election took place in Newmarket in 2005 and zero otherwise, and a dummy variable scored one if the election took place in Newmarket in any year. The first independent variable represents the experimental treatment. The second distinguishes the 2005 experiment from the nonexperimental years that preceded it. The third independent variable accounts for the fact that Newmarket is not part of the 2005 experiment per se; its role is to help estimate the year-to-year variability in election outcomes. The final independent variable accounts for the fact that Newmarket's historical voting rates are higher than Hooksett's or Hanover's.

The results suggest that the intervention succeeded in stimulating turnout. Hooksett's turnout was 1,498 as compared to Hanover's 401. The regression results presented in the first two columns of Appendix 7 indicate that the intervention increased turnout by 10.4 percentage-points. When all 18 observations are used, this estimate is associated with a large standard error of 6.5 percentage-points. Despite the small sample size, the estimate borders statistical significance ( $p=.06$ ). Excluding the Newmarket cases has no effect on the estimate but slightly diminishes the p-value. The statistical results are slightly stronger when the dependent variable is scored as the log-odds of turnout.<sup>56</sup> With Newmarket included the p-value is .03; excluding Newmarket raises the p-value slightly to .06. The regression results, in sum, suggest a promising positive effect of borderline significance.

### *Poll Party in New Haven, Connecticut*

A similar poll party was organized for New Haven, Connecticut, in fall 2005. Using data supplied by local officials, the thirty New Haven wards were stratified by population, ethnicity, voter turnout history, and degrees of competitiveness in the current and prior municipal elections. Two similar wards, 20 and 21, were identified. Ward 20 has a population of 4,010 people, which is 89 percent is African American, compared to Ward 21's population of 3,942, which is 87 percent is African American. Wards 20 and 21 are both economically depressed. In the local elections of 2003, which was the first election after the latest redistricting effort, 420 people voted in Ward 20 (22 percent voter turnout) compared to 300 voters in Ward 21 (16 percent turnout). Although members of New Haven's legislative body are elected from single-member districts, which are often competitive, wards 20 and 21 have not had a competitive municipal election since the 2001 race for Mayor, which was competitive city-wide. A coin flip assigned Ward 21 to the treatment group and Ward 20 to the control group. The other New Haven wards served together as a parallel case for statistical purposes.<sup>57</sup>

As with Hooksett, the experimental intervention consisted of a publicity campaign and a festival at the voting site. An effort was made to have members of the community invite others to attend

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<sup>55</sup> The log-odds transformation takes the observed voting percentage ( $P$ ) and creates a dependent variable using the formula  $Y = \log(P/(1-P))$ .

<sup>56</sup> Substantively, the coefficient of 1.37 indicates the extent to which the treatment increased the voting rate, expressed in terms of log-odds. In this case, the log-odds of 14.6% minus the log-odds of 4.2% is 1.37. Note that this coefficient implies that a festival potentially turns a 50% turnout into an 79.7% turnout.

<sup>57</sup> The other wards will not be used to estimate the effect of the treatment but will help in estimating the year-to-year variability in turnout rates. As shown in Table 1, their inclusion has little effect on the results.

the poll party. The local alderwoman invited her friends, neighbors, and constituents to the poll party, and she asked them to put lawn signs in front of their houses advertising the event. She asked the local churches to advertise the event and to put up flyers announcing the event. The principal from the elementary school where the party was held also distributed flyers to parents, students and teachers. Three pre-recorded phone calls were directed to Ward 21 registered voters' households. The first call was made on Friday before Election Day, the second on Sunday before Election Day, and the third on Election Day. The calls extended an invitation to the party and gave details about its hours (3:00 to 7:00 PM) and location.

On Election Day, the festival took place immediately outside the polling place, on the front lawn of a local elementary school. The weather was sunny, but cool. A large tent was set up surrounded by signs encouraging people to enjoy free hamburgers, hotdogs, hot chocolate, and to participate in the free raffle. A cotton candy machine and a popcorn machine attracted many local children.

In an effort to create a social environment, a local, favorite DJ, Mr. Chips, played upbeat, family-friendly music while he doubled as a clown. At points during the party, Mr. Chips danced around the neighborhood with his wife, also dressed as a clown, calling for neighbors to join the party and to vote. The neighborhood has its share of neighborhood violence and gang activity, so school officials asked that a police officer remain on duty during the hours of the poll party. Another police officer sat on watch inside the school building. Despite these fears, the party was a huge success. People of all ages milled about the party tent. Children danced to old favorites like the Chicken Dance and to relatively new favorites like the Electric Slide. An impromptu dance contest broke out, the prize being fourteen dollars collected from the audience. Elderly residents took advantage of the chairs around the tent to sit, listen to the music, and to eat the hotdogs and hamburgers we provided. Mothers and fathers mingled with their friends and neighbors.

There was a strong sense of community at the party. Several local leaders attended the event – the alderwoman, local ministers, and local political party officials. The DJ frequently called out on the microphone that “Ward 21 was in the house!” People at the party seemed to be aware of the event prior to coming to the polls to vote. Many stated that they were lured to the party by the music and the smell of barbecue cooking throughout the neighborhood. Others said that they had heard about the event from other residents. Several people expressed enthusiasm for the festival and the alderwoman said she would try to obtain funding to hold the event next year.

As with Hooksett, there was nothing competitive or controversial on the Ward 21 ballot. Ward 21 voters elected a mayor, a town clerk, and an alderman. The incumbent Democratic mayor faced token opposition from an independent candidate. Each of the other candidates for these offices ran unopposed. The low salience of the election was evident in the mobilization efforts surrounding it. Other than the Party at the Polls, there was very little mobilization activity before and during Election Day. The election in Ward 20 (the control district) was similarly nondescript. In Ward 20, voters also elected a mayor, a town clerk, and an alderman, but with the exception of the nominal opposition to the Mayor, each of the candidates for these posts ran unopposed. Nevertheless, the alderman from Ward 20 ran an energetic Get Out the Vote

campaign to encourage his constituents to come to the polls. Of New Haven's 28 other wards, seven had competitive elections for alderman on Election Day.

The effect of the experimental intervention was calculated using regression analysis. The sample consists of 34 observations. For the two most recent elections, turnout from Wards 20 and 21 was examined along with fifteen other wards that, like the experimental wards, did not have contested aldermanic elections in 2003 and 2005.<sup>58</sup> Because the two experimental wards had different baseline turnout rates (unlike Hooksett and Hanover), the dependent variable was constructed somewhat differently. Instead of predicting the turnout level, the change in the percentage of voter turnout from 2003 to 2005 was predicted, defined as the 2005 ratio of voters to the number of registered voters minus the 2003 ratio of voters to the number of registered voters. The independent variables are as follows: a dummy variable scored 1 if the election is Ward 21 in 2005 and zero otherwise; a dummy variable scored 1 if the election is 2005 and zero otherwise, a dummy variable scored 1 if the election took place in a ward other than wards 20 and 21 in 2005 and zero otherwise, and a dummy variable scored one if the election took place in a ward other than wards 20 and 21 in any year. The first independent variable represents the experimental treatment. The second distinguishes the 2005 experiment from the non-experimental years that preceded it. The third independent variable accounts for the fact that the 15 non-experimental wards do not identify the treatment effect but serve to help estimate the year-to-year variability in election outcomes. The final independent variable accounts for the fact that, historically, wards in new Haven have variable rates of voter turnout.

The results suggest, albeit with a fair amount of statistical uncertainty, that the intervention succeeded in stimulating turnout. Ward 21's turnout was 3.4 percent higher in 2005 than 2003 as compared to Ward 21's 2.1 percent. The regression results presented in the first two columns of Appendix 8 indicate that the intervention increased turnout by 1.3 percentage-points. When all 34 observations are used, this estimate is associated with a large standard error of 6 percentage-points. Excluding the other New Haven wards has no effect on the estimate but alters the p-value.

Although the regression analysis is equivocal about the size of the treatment effect in New Haven, other features of the data provide a clearer indication that the festival shaped voter behavior. New Haven party officials keep tallies of voter turnout periodically during Election Day. These tallies, for example, record the number of votes cast in each ward by 3:00 PM, when the festival started, and 6:00 PM, as the party was winding down. In the control ward, Ward 20, just 42 people (8.9% of all voters casting ballots that day) voted between 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM. In the treatment ward, Ward 21, 130 people (35.1% of all voters casting ballots) voted during this interval. This pattern suggests that, in addition to increasing turnout, the poll party may have caused people to rearrange their schedules to attend the event.

### ***Interpersonal, Communal, Convivial, and Instrumental Techniques Boost Turnout***

The initial results of the poll parties in Hooksett and New Haven suggest that incorporating interpersonal, communal, convivial, and instrumental aspects to Election Day activities may substantially increase voter turnout in a local election. Although these field experiments did not

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<sup>58</sup>The elections in 2003 and 2005 were the only municipal election after the last redistricting effort.

really incorporate purposive reasons to come out and vote, future iterations of these experiments could add this to the intervention. Future replications of the experiment will increase confidence in the findings. Further, a series of festivals in the same location will reveal whether the effectiveness on voter turnout increases over time as more of the community comes to anticipate the events. Finally, as with the school voting experiments, it is not clear which aspect to the treatment is drawing people to the polls – interpersonal, communal, convivial, purposive or instrumental. Nevertheless, it is clear that a program which embodies each of these characteristics does serve to increase the turnout on Election Day. Some aspects of nineteenth century elections – petty bribes and drunken brawls – are best left in the past. Nevertheless, contemporary America has something positive to learn from its distant past.

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## **Appendix 1: Description of First-time Voter Program by School**

### Connecticut Schools

- (1) Berlin High School, Berlin, Connecticut (239 students participated, 56 eligible to vote in the subsequent election)

On October 18, 2002, the First-time Voter Program was conducted in Berlin, a fairly affluent suburban town with a median household income of \$68,068. In the November 2002 election, voters selected a governor and state-wide constitutional officers. The election is classified as highly-competitive because the incumbent Republican governor faced a Democratic challenger, who had come close to winning the election in a prior gubernatorial election. The students at Berlin High School are predominantly white.

Berlin High School was the first school to participate in the program. Throughout the day, groups of 25 to 30 students were assigned to the auditorium to attend the voting program. The entire senior class was involved in the study. The Registrar of Voters in the town agreed to hold the registration cards of 17 year olds and to register all eligible 18 year olds, so interested members of the target group were provided the opportunity to register to vote. The students in the target group were all afforded an opportunity to cast a practice vote on a voting machine. Interestingly, boys tended to be more eager to try the voting machine, and they were more likely to ask to repeat the practice vote.

- (2) Coginchaug High School in Durham, Connecticut (35 students participated, 2 eligible to vote in the next election)

On October 29, 2002, the Program was conducted at Coginchaug High School, which draws students from two towns, Durham and Middlefield. Both towns are predominantly white suburban communities. Durham is more affluent than Middlefield, although as it turned out, only students from Durham were eligible to vote in the subsequent election. The average household income in Durham is \$77,639.

As stated above, in the November 2002 election, voters selected a governor and state-wide constitutional officers. The election is classified as highly-competitive because the incumbent Republican governor faced a Democratic challenger, who had come close to winning the election in a prior gubernatorial election.

Two senior social studies classes participated in the Program. One of the classes was an advanced placement history class. Unfortunately, this experiment was conducted after the registration deadline so few students were eligible to vote. It was also conducted in a classroom, and one of the teachers was present for the presentation. Although 29 of the students who participated were residents of Durham and 6 were residents of Middlefield, only two students (both from Durham) were eligible to vote in the upcoming election. Nevertheless, all students in the target group had an opportunity to cast a practice vote on a voting machine.

- (3) Rocky Hill High School, Rocky Hill, Connecticut (21 students participated, 2 eligible to vote in the next election)

On October 30, 2002, the Program was conducted in Rocky Hill, a predominantly white, middle-class community with a median household income of \$60,247, which has been classified as a middle-level community in terms of socio-economic status. As stated above, the Connecticut 2002 gubernatorial election has been classified as highly competitive.

At Rocky Hill High School, one class of 23 seniors participated in the experiment, which was conducted after the voter registration deadline. The presentation was made in the school auditorium, and all members of the target group were able to cast a practice vote on a voting machine. Unfortunately, only 2 students were eligible to vote in the subsequent election and neither student turned out to vote.

- (4) Naugatuck High School in Naugatuck, Connecticut (94 students participated, 87 eligible to vote in the next election)

On April 14, 2003, the voter presentation was conducted in Naugatuck, prior to the town's spring municipal elections. The town is a predominantly white, middle-class community. Although the election, a local one, has been classified as minimally competitive, the students were fairly aware of the upcoming election. In fact, they even knew about a local resident that planned to run as a write-in candidate for public office.

Overall, 94 students participated in the study, and 87 students were eligible to participate in the next election. The presentations were conducted in a classroom of a fairly popular psychology teacher, and the participants consisted of several senior classes (rather than the entire senior class).

- (5) Waterford High School, Waterford, Connecticut (202 students participated, 20 eligible to vote in the next election)

On Oct. 21, 2003, the school voting presentations were conducted at Waterford High School in Waterford, which is a predominantly white, middle class community. The upcoming election was for municipal offices, classified as weakly-competitive for the purposes of this study.

The presentations were conducted on the stage, the Principal introduced each presentation, and the Registrar of Voters was present for the first presentation. Unfortunately, a person was tuning a nearby piano during several of the voting presentations. When asked what they knew about voting, several students mentioned the lever machines, the curtains, receiving stickers after voting, and the presence of elderly people at the polls.

- (6) High School in the Community, New Haven, Connecticut (82 students participated, 17 eligible to vote in the next election)

New Haven is a racially diverse, low-income urban area. In the November 2003 election, voters selected a mayor and a member of the Board of Alders, which is New Haven's city council. It is

classified as a weakly-competitive electoral context because although the Mayor and several of the Alders faced challengers in the primary election, they did not tend to face challengers in the general election in November.

The First-time Voter experiments in High School in the Community took place on two different days with half of the students participating each time. The participating students – the entire senior class -- were largely African-American and Latino. Representatives from the school newspaper videotaped the event. The presentations were conducted in the cafeteria, which provided poor acoustics and made it very difficult for all the students to see the voting machine. Several students sat on the sidelines and appeared disinterested in the presentation. The assistant principal was present for both sessions and prodded the students to answer questions and to pay attention.

### Kentucky Schools

The experiments in Kentucky were conducted in the fall of 2003 after the state's registration cutoff date of October 6. The November 2003 election was a highly competitive gubernatorial race and the electoral context has been classified as high for the purposes of this study. Unfortunately, the late date of the presentations prevented voter registration, so the number of students eligible to vote in the upcoming election was small.

- (1) Jeffersontown High School, Louisville, KY (182 students participated, 9 eligible to vote in the next election)

Jeffersontown High School is located in a very large county with a median household income of \$51,999. Although the affluence in the county varies, the students at Jeffersontown High appeared to be at the lower end of the middle-class range. The program took place on October 7, 2003, one day after the registration deadline. The students who participated in the program were predominantly white, although there were several minority students and a couple of non-citizens as well.

The presentations took place in a large seminar room. In general the students were lively, talkative and participatory. However few students were eligible to vote in the upcoming election. This was the only program conducted in Kentucky where the voting machine was available for the students' use.

- (2) Louisville Male High School, Louisville, KY (381 students participated, 32 eligible to vote in the next election)

Louisville Male is reputed to be a first-rate magnet school with a racially and socio-economically diverse population of students. The voting presentations were held on October 21. Unfortunately, the presentations were held after the voter registration deadline on October 6, 2003, and they were conducted without a voting machine (although we did have sample ballots for the students to use). Further, several of the presentations during the day were in the cafeteria and the library, which due to other activities going on at the same time were not as conducive to

the voting program. Many students seemed distracted and inattentive. In this way, the students did not get the full experience of the First-time Voter program.

(3) Dupont Manual High School, Louisville, KY (52 students participated, 1 eligible to vote in the next election)

We were told that this high school, a magnet school, is the best in the county. It is a diverse school with a sizable minority population. Unfortunately, there was no voting machine available for the voting presentations (although the students did fill out sample ballots), and the program, presented on October 23, 2003, occurred after the registration deadline of October 6, 2003.

(4) Ballard High School, Louisville, KY (29 students participated, 0 eligible to vote in the next election)

The presentations were conducted at Ballard High School on October 24, 2003, after the state registration deadline of October 6. The voting sessions were conducted in a small group setting, and the students seemed very inquisitive about the voting process. We did not have a voting machine available for the sessions, although the students were able to practice filling out a ballot sheet.

(5) St. Francis High School, Louisville, KY (28 students participated, 0 eligible to vote in the next election)

The First-time Voter Program was conducted at St. Francis High School on October 27, 2003, after the registration deadline of October 6, 2003. The individual voting sessions were small and interactive. The students asked questions about voting, as well as about the idea of Jessie Ventura and Arnold Schwarzenegger as public officials. Unfortunately, no voting machine was available for these sessions (although we did have sample ballots for the students to use).

### New Jersey Schools

The experiments in New Jersey were conducted in the fall of 2003, prior to elections for state-wide offices. The competitiveness of these elections has been classified as medium for the purposes of this study. Only two schools participated in the voting program prior to their registration cutoff day, so the number of students eligible to vote in the upcoming election was small.

(1) Cresskill High School, Cresskill, New Jersey (83 students participated, 19 eligible to vote in the next election)

On September 25, 2003, the Program was conducted at Cresskill High School in Cresskill, which is an ethnically diverse, affluent community with a median household income of \$84,692. The presentations were conducted in the cafeteria. The machine was a mechanical, ATM-like machine (the AC Advantage). Several of the students participating in the program stated they were not U.S. citizens (at least three to five in each voting session). In the first session, the

students were reluctant to come up and practice voting, especially the girls. The students seemed to be a bit more willing to practice voting in the second voting session.

(2) Passaic Valley Regional High School, Little Falls, New Jersey (147 students participated, 13 eligible to vote in the next election)

On Sept. 30, 2003, the Program was conducted at Passaic Valley Regional High School in Little Falls, which is a middle-class community with a median income of \$58,857. The entire senior class participated in the program, and six sessions were conducted over the course of the day. Each of the presentations was very interactive, with the students asking many questions and offering many comments. The presentation was videotaped by students from the school's media club.

The Passaic County Board of Elections provided a voting machine, identical to the machines used throughout the county. All attending students were given an opportunity to cast practice votes on the machine. Many seemed to enjoy writing in names rather than voting for one of the names on the machine. It is quite easy to cast a write-in vote in New Jersey.

(3) Wood-Ridge High School, Wood-Ridge, New Jersey (68 students participated, 0 eligible to vote in the next election)

On October 28, 2003, the entire senior class of Wood-Ridge High School participated in the First-time Voter Program. However, the program was conducted after the registration cutoff day and none of the students were registered to vote in time for the election.

Wood-Ridge is a lower middle class community of only about one square mile. The Principal said that for between 15% and 20% of the high school's student body, English is their second language. Two of the students participating in the program said they spoke English as a second language. Although two students were eighteen, neither student had registered to vote prior to the registration deadline. The principal introduced both of the two presentations. The presentations were held in the cafeteria, and the acoustics were very poor.

There were two presentations during the day's first two class periods, each of which lasted about 45 minutes. In each presentation, the presenter quickly engaged the students in a discussion of voting and of the various decisions that are made at each level of government. Despite the less-than-ideal acoustics, the tables had been re-arranged so that the students were all close to the presenter. All students were given an opportunity to cast a practice vote on the voting machine.

In the first session, every student filled out a registration card except for one student, who would not turn age 18 until after November 2, 2004. In the second session, 11 of 16 students filled out cards, 4 elected not to do so and one was not a citizen. Two students insisted they were already registered, even though it turned out that they were not officially registered with the county. All of the registration cards were sent to the Bergen County Board of Elections after the November 2003 election.

The Bergen County Board of Elections provided a voting machine, identical to the machines used throughout the county. All attending students were given an opportunity to cast practice votes on the machine. Many seemed to enjoy writing in names rather than voting for one of the names on the machine.

(4) Hawthorne High School, Hawthorne, New Jersey (82 students participated, 3 eligible to vote in the next election)

This experiment was conducted on Oct. 31, 2003, after the voter registration deadline, in Hawthorne, an ethnically diverse, middle-class community with a median income of \$55,340. During the presentation day, there were four voting sessions held, but each group was fairly small ranging from 5 students to 15 students. In general, the boys were more talkative and more eager to practice voting than the girls. In one session, the students guessed that it takes about 15 minutes to vote. Several students stated that they had gone to vote with their parents. While a handful of students declined to participate and acted uninterested in the voting presentation, others seemed really engaged with the presentation. One student stated that she, “likes pressing the buttons. I feel important.”

(5) Passaic County Technical Institute, Wayne, New Jersey (221 students participated, 2 eligible to vote in the next election)

On October 30, the Program was conducted in Wayne, a fairly affluent, ethnically and racially diverse community with a median household income of \$83,651. The school was the first technical school to receive the Program. Unfortunately, the program was conducted after the registration deadline and only 2 students were eligible to vote in the next election.

The presentations were held in the school auditorium. The acoustics were fine, but it was a bit cold in the room. In the beginning, there was a problem because although a representative from the Passaic County Board of Elections had arrived to set up the machine, the machine had not been delivered to the school. While waiting for the machine, the presenter started the first voting session, and the machine arrived before the presentation was over.

The students were largely minority students of African-American, Latino and Asian descent. There were also a couple of students who were not U.S. citizens. A teacher was present at all of the sessions, and she was very active about asking and answering questions and about prodding the students to pay attention.

A mock ballot had them voting for historical figures. Several children asked about the historical figures. One child was reluctant to vote, and the teacher prodded him to do so. Another was excited, exclaiming that “I learned to vote!” In the end, the kid who was reluctant to vote was teaching others how to vote. The students were very interested in working the polls once they realized you could get paid for it.

**Appendix 2: First-time Voter Program Participating Schools  
by Level of Election Competitiveness and by Level of Socio-economic Status (SES)**

Affluence Competitiveness	High SES	Medium SES	Low SES
High (Election for Governor)	Berlin HS (CT), 11/02 (239) <i>median household income: \$68,068</i> 25 students (treatment) 31 students (control) 18.32% Intent to Treat Effect <b>30.53% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>60% Contact Rate</b>	Jeffersontown HS (KY), 11/03 (182): <i>median household income: \$51,999ck</i> 6 students (treatment) 3 students (control) 16.67 Intent to Treat Effect <b>100% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>16.67% Contact Rate</b>	Louisville Male HS (KY), 11/03 (381) <i>median household income \$28,843ck</i> 11 students (treatment) 21 students (control) 16.02% Intent to Treat Effect <b>17.62% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>90.91% Contact Rate</b>
	Durham (Coginchaug, CT) 11/02 (35) <i>median household income: \$77,639</i> 1 student (treatment) 1 student (control) 0% Intent to Treat Effect <b>0% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>0% Contact Rate</b>	Rocky Hill HS (CT), 11/02 (21): <i>median household income: \$60,247</i> 1 student (treatment) 1 student (control) 0% Intent to Treat Effect <b>0% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>100% Contact Rate</b>	Dupont Manual 4 (KY), 11/03 (24): <i>median household income \$28,843ck</i> 1 student (treatment) 0 student (control) 0% Intent to Treat Effect <b>0% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>100% Contact Rate</b>
Medium (Election for State-wide offices)	Cresskill HS (NJ), 11/03 (83): <i>median household income: \$84,692</i> 12 students (treatment) 7 students (control) 25% Intent to Treat Effect <b>27.27% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>91.67% Contact Rate</b>	Passaic Valley HS (NJ), 11/03 (147): <i>median household income: \$58,857</i> 3 students (treatment) 10 students (control) 23.33% Intent to Treat Effect <b>34.99% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>66.67% Contact Rate</b>	
	Passaic Tech HS (NJ) 11/03 (221) <i>median household income: \$83,651</i> 1 student (treatment) 1 student (control) 0% Intent to Treat Effect <b>0% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>100% Contact Rate</b>	Hawthorne HS (NJ), 11/03 (82): <i>median household income: \$55,340</i> 2 students (treatment) 1 student (control) -50% Intent to Treat Effect <b>-50% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>100% Contact Rate</b>	
Low (Election for Municipal positions)		Waterford HS (CT), 11/03 (202): <i>median household income: \$56,047</i> 10 students (treatment) 10 students (control) 10% Intent to Treat Effect <b>16.67% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>60% Contact Rate</b>	HSC (New Haven, CT), 11/03: <i>median household income: \$29, 604</i> 7 students (treatment) 10 students (control) 0% Intent to Treat Effect <b>0% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>57.14% Contact Rate</b>
		Naugatuck HS (CT), 05/03 (94): <i>median household income: \$51, 247</i> 42 students (treatment) 45 students (control) 10.32% Intent to Treat Effect <b>11.71% Actual Treatment Effect</b> <b>88.10% Contact Rate</b>	

### Appendix 3: Turnout Data by School

	Treatment Group	Control Group	Intent Treat	Contact Rate	Actual Treatment Effect*	One-tailed P-Value**
<b>CONNECTICUT (18-YEAR OLDS and OVER) presentations prior to registration cutoff</b>						
<b>Overall Vote Results</b>	<b>19 of 84 (22.62%)</b>	<b>10 of 96 (10.42%)</b>	<b>12.20%</b>	<b>62 of 84 (73.81%)</b>	<b>16.53%</b>	<b>0.02</b>
Berlin	7 of 25 (28%)	3 of 31 (9.68%)	18.32%	15 of 25 (60%)	30.53%	
High School Community	0 of 7 (0%)	0 of 10 (0%)	0%	4 of 7 (57.14%)	0%	
Naugatuck	9 of 42 (21.43%)	5 of 45 (11.11%)	10.32%	37 of 42 (88.10%)	11.71%	
Waterford	3 of 10 (30%)	2 of 10 (20%)	10%	6 of 10 (60%)	16.67%	
*Actual Treatment: Intent to Treat/Contact Rate						
**Fisher's Exact Test (the level of confidence that the effect observed was different from zero)						

	Treatment Group	Control Group	Intent Treat	Contact Rate	Actual Treatment Effect	One-tailed P-Value
<b>CONNECTICUT (18-YEAR OLDS and OVER) only people registered prior to registration cutoff</b>						
<b>Overall Vote Results</b>	<b>1 of 2 (50%)</b>	<b>1 of 2 (50%)</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>1 of 2 (50%)</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>1</b>
Coginchaug (Durham)	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)	0%	0 of 1 (0%)	0%	
Rocky Hill	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	0%	1 of 1 (100%)	0%	

	Treatment Group	Control Group	Intent Treat	Contact Rate	Actual Treatment Effect	One-tailed P-Value
<b>NEW JERSEY (18-YEAR OLDS and OVER) presentations prior to registration cutoff</b>						
<b>Overall Vote Results</b>	<b>4 of 15 (26.67%)</b>	<b>1 of 17 (5.88%)</b>	<b>20.79%</b>	<b>13 of 15 (86.67%)</b>	<b>23.99%</b>	<b>0.13</b>
Cresskill	3 of 12 (25%)	0 of 7 (0%)	25%	11 of 12 (91.67%)	27.27%	
Passaic Valley Regional	1 of 3 (33.33%)	1 of 10 (10%)	23.33%	2 of 3 (66.67%)	34.99%	

	Treatment Group	Control Group	Intent Treat	Contact Rate	Actual Treatment Effect	One-tailed P-Value
<b>NEW JERSEY (18-YEAR OLDS and OVER) only people registered prior to registration cutoff</b>						
<b>Overall Vote Results</b>	<b>1 of 3 (33.33%)</b>	<b>1 of 2 (50%)</b>	<b>-16.67%</b>	<b>3 of 3 (100%)</b>	<b>-16.67%</b>	<b>0.9</b>
Hawthorne	1 of 2 (50%)	1 of 1 (100%)	-50%	2 of 2 (100%)	-50%	
Passaic Technical	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	0%	1 of 1 (100%)	0%	

	Treatment Group	Control Group	Intent Treat	Contact Rate	Actual Treatment Effect	One-tailed P-Value
<b>KENTUCKY (18-YEAR OLDS and OVER) only people registered prior to registration cutoff</b>						
<b>Overall Vote Results</b>	<b>10 of 18 (55.56%)</b>	<b>11 of 24 (45.83%)</b>	<b>9.73%</b>	<b>12 of 18 (66.67%)</b>	<b>14.59%</b>	<b>0.38</b>
Dupont Manual	0 of 1	0 of 0	0	1 of 1	0	
Jeffersontown HS	3 of 6 (50%)	1 of 3 (33.33%)	16.67%	1 of 6 (16.67%)	100%	
Male	7 of 11 (63.64%)	10 of 21 (47.62%)	16.02%	10 of 11 (90.91%)	17.62%	

#### Appendix 4: First-time Voter Program Probit Calculation, Intent to Treat with and without Covariates

Variables	Probit Est. Model 1 (with school dummy variables)	Probit Est. Model 2 (without school dummy variables)	Probit Est. Model 3 (covariates without school dummy variables)
Assigned to Treat/Control-Intent-to-Treat Effect	.56*** (.196)	.40** (.178)	.63 (.888)
Socio-economic Status High	X	X	-1.12*** (.395)
Socioeconomic Status Med	X	X	
Socioeconomic Status Low	X	X	Omitted Dummy
(Intent to Treat) (SES High)	X	X	.28 (.605)
(Intent to Treat) (SES Med)	X	X	-.15 (.614)
(Intent to Treat) (SES Low)	X	X	Omitted Dummy
Election Competitiveness High	X	X	.93 (.590)
Election Competitiveness Med	X	X	.15 (.480)
Election Competitiveness Low	X	X	Omitted Dummy
(Intent Treat) (High Compet)	X	X	-.22 (.750)
(Intent Treat) (Med Compet)	X	X	.37 (.679)
(Intent Treat) (Low Compet)	X	X	Omitted Dummy
Berlin HS	-1.55*** (.543)	X	X
Coginchaug HS	Omitted Dummy	X	X
Naugatuck HS	-1.63*** (.531)	X	X
Waterford HS	-1.23*** (.448)	X	X
Cresskill HS	-.859* (.480)	X	X
Passaic Valley HS	-1.52** (.663)	X	X
Hawthorne HS	-.29 (.891)	X	X
Jeffersontown HS	-.86 (.661)	X	X
Louisville Male HS	.53 (.378)	X	X
Constant	.34 (.509)	-.89*** (.128)	-.99 (.651)
N= 241	241	241	241

\*p<.10, two tailed test. \*\*p<.05, one-tailed test. \*\*\*p<.01, one-tailed test. Standard errors in parentheses.

Schools dropped from analysis due to lack of students voting from treatment and control group: Rocky Hill HS (CT), High School in the Community (CT), Wood-Ridge HS (NJ), Passaic County Tech (NJ), Dupont Manual (KY), Ballard (KY), St.Francis (KY)

**Appendix 5: First-Time Voter Program Bi-Variate Probit Calculation, without Covariates**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Bi-Variate Probit Calculation Model 1 (with school dummy variables)</b>	<b>Bi-Variate Probit Calculation Model 2 (without school dummy variables)</b>
Attended First-time Voter Program	.66*** (.252)	.529** (.243)
Berlin HS	-1.26 (.497)	X
Coginchaug HS	6.25 (10714.21)	X
Naugatuck HS	-1.44*** (.486)	X
Waterford HS	-1.01** (.415)	X
Cresskill HS	-.82* (.473)	X
Passaic Valley HS	-1.28** (.630)	X
Hawthorne HS	Omitted Dummy	X
Jeffersontown HS	-.31 (.625)	X
Louisville Male HS	.57 (.368)	X
Constant	.11 (.459)	-.89*** (.128)
N= 241	241	241
*p<.10, two tailed test. **p<.05, one-tailed test. ***p<.01, one-tailed test. Standard errors in parentheses. Schools dropped from analysis due to lack of students voting from treatment and control group: Rocky Hill HS (CT), High School in the Community (CT), Wood-Ridge HS (NJ), Passaic County Tech (NJ), Dupont Manual (KY), Ballard (KY), St.Francis (KY)		

**Appendix 6: First-time Voter Program Likelihood Ratio Test of the Influence of SES/Election Competitiveness**

<b>Variables</b>		<b>Bivariate Probit Estimate of Log Likelihood</b>	<b>Log Likelihood Estimate for Model</b>
<b>Model 1: Restricted Model or Vote on Attend/Assign with Dummy Variables for Each Covariate</b>		-173.53	-173.53
<b>Model 2: Unrestricted Model or Vote on Attend/Assign with Data from each Covariate</b>			-170.44
	High Compet/High SES	-45.08	
	High Compet/Med SES	-7.98	
	High Compet/Low SES	-23.99	
	Med Compet/High SES	-9.89	
	Med Compet/Med SES	-10.49	
	Med Compet/Low SES	No Variables	
	Low Compet/High SES	No Variables	
	Low Compet/Med SES	-73.01	
	Low Compet/Low SES	No Variables	
<p>H<sub>0</sub>: Restricted Model equal to Unrestricted Model  H<sub>a</sub>: Restricted Model not equal to Unrestricted Model</p> <p>The Likelihood Ratio Test is conducted by subtracting the Restricted Model Log Likelihood (-173.53) from the Unrestricted Model Log Likelihood (-170.44). This difference, 3.09, is multiplied by 2 for a Chi-Square test statistic of 6.18. A check of the significance of this statistic (with 6 degrees of freedom) reveals that it is not significant at the .05 level. So, the null hypothesis of no statistically significant difference between the models cannot be rejected.</p>			

**Appendix 7: Regression Estimates of the Effects of an Election Day Festival in Hooksett, New Hampshire, on Voter Turnout (standard errors in parentheses)**

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable			
	Turnout Percentage		Log-odds of Turnout	
	Sample Excludes Newmarket	Sample Includes Newmarket	Sample Excludes Newmarket	Sample Includes Newmarket
Treatment (1=treated, 0=control)	.104 <sup>a</sup> (.075)	.104 <sup>b</sup> (.065)	1.369 <sup>c</sup> (.807)	1.369 <sup>d</sup> (.684)
2005 Election Dummy (1=2005, 0=other years)	-.076 (.056)	-.076 (.048)	-1.018 (.599)	-1.018 (.508)
Newmarket Dummy in 2005 (1=Newmarket 2005, 0=other cases)	N/A	.047 (.070)	N/A	.810 (.734)
Newmarket Dummy (1=Newmarket, 0=other towns)	N/A	.058 (.025)	N/A	.566 (.265)
Constant	.118 (.017)	.118 (.015)	-2.115 (.180)	-2.115 (.153)
Root MSE	.053	.046	.571	.484
<i>p</i> -value, Breusch-Pagan test	.67	.36	.66	.34
N	12	18	12	18

<sup>a</sup> One-tailed *p*-value = .09.

<sup>b</sup> One-tailed *p* -value = .06.

<sup>c</sup> One-tailed *p* -value = .06.

<sup>d</sup> One-tailed *p* -value = .03.

**Appendix 8: Regression Estimates of the Effects of an Election Day Festival in New Haven, Connecticut, on Voter Turnout (standard errors in parentheses)**

Independent Variables	Turnout Percentage Change, 2005 minus 2003 (Dependent Variable)	
	Sample Excludes Other Wards	Sample Includes Other Wards
Treatment (1=treated, 0=control)	.0126 <sup>a</sup> (.002)	.0126 <sup>b</sup> (.06)
2005 Election Dummy (1=2005, 0=other years)	.145 (.002)	.145 (.052)
Other Wards Dummy in 2005 (1=Other Wards 2005, 0=other cases)	N/A	-.014 (.055)
Other Wards Dummy (1=Other Wards, 0=Wards 20 and 21)	N/A	.012 (.032)
Constant	-.124 (.001)	-.124 (.03)
Root MSE	.002	.043
N	4	34

<sup>a</sup> One-tailed *p*-value = .059

<sup>b</sup> One-tailed *p*-value = .418