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Youth voter mobilization techniques and their effectiveness in the 2008 Iowa Democratic caucuses

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Youth voter mobilization techniques and their effectiveness in the 2008 Iowa Democratic
caucuses

by

Jacqueline Amy Dycke – Norris

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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2008

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The aim of this project is to explore the impact of specific youth voter mobilization techniques as potential reasons for the increase in youth voter turnout in the 2008 Iowa Democratic caucuses. Through a focus group with high school and college students and young professionals as well as interviews with presidential and interest group staff, campus coordinators and youth leaders, I will investigate the following questions: *Why did young people attend the caucuses? What role did peer-to-peer contact and social networking opportunities play during the caucus season? What role did campaigns and civic groups play in voter training and caucus information? What role did the candidate and their staffs play in asking people to participate in the political process?* To begin, it is essential to be familiar with the political landscape of Iowa.

Iowa, with its first in the nation status on the presidential nominating calendar, has the honor and the inconvenience of receiving a great deal of attention from the media, presidential candidates, and campaigns alike. Historian Richard Norton Smith has described the Iowa caucus process in the following manner:

This is the state historically where someone can come in with very little in the way of financial resources or name recognition and, because it is a small, rural state where people take very seriously the process of vetting these candidates, it is theoretically possible for someone to catapult themselves into the front rank (January 3, 2008, News Hour with Jim Lehrer).

On January 3, 2008, and for the full year previous to that, Iowa took center stage as the careful inspector of presidential candidates.

The 2008 Democratic presidential candidates included the well known, the lesser known, and the dark horses. The field of candidates has been described on different occasions as “a great field of candidates,” “historic in nature,” and “extremely capable” (*The*

Washington Post 2007, A2 and NPR 2008). Political pundits and researchers alike have questioned whether the nature of the times, the open-seat presidential election, the harsh partisan era, or a rise in civic involvement increased voter turnout in the 2008 Iowa caucuses. In fact Democratic voter turnout in the 2008 caucuses shattered the previous attendance record set in 2004. In that year, 124,331 people attended the Iowa Democratic caucuses, while in 2008 there were almost double that number with a record-breaking attendance of 239,582 (Iowa Democratic Party 2008). This is significant as caucuses have long been perceived as confusing and only for “die hard” Democratic activists. While the numbers have increased, the turnout is still small. For perspective, in 2004 only 18% of eligible Democrats participated. In 2008, 34% of the 701,285 registered Democrats, which also were open to registered Independents and Republicans (Iowa Democratic Party 2008).

Increased voter interest in the 2008 presidential primary has spread across the nation: since the kickoff of the 2008 primary season in Iowa, 3.5 million new voters have registered to vote in order to participate in presidential primaries and caucuses across the country (Thomas 2008). The overall voter turnout numbers themselves are striking, but the demographics of new voters statewide and nationally tell an exciting story about youth involvement. Iowa’s precinct caucuses saw youth voter turnout (voters 17.5 to 29 years old) increase from 4% of eligible youth voters in 2004 to 13% of eligible youth voters in 2008 (CIRCLE 2008). The typical “apathetic youth voter” seems to have awakened. In the 2008 Iowa caucuses, young people caucused at about the same percentage as older Iowans (Connery 2007).

In identifying the root causes of increased turnout, this project can impact the way campaigns and candidates treat young voters in the future. Increased youth voter turnout has

the potential to change the political playbook of the past and rewrite the rules of campaigning for elected office. Indeed, increased youth voter turnout could have a dramatic effect on democracy as a whole and on the way people in power address issues and needs important to young voters. Typically, the less active in government are often heard less and their issues ignored. An increase in youth voter turnout could dramatically shift the political landscape and strategy for those in power and those seeking power.

Thanks to the work of political scientists using field experiments, civic organizations and campaigns are benefiting from research on youth voter mobilization strategies that work. In the past several years there have been reports titled: “A Guide to Reaching Young Voters: Are You Talking to Me?”(Harvard IOP n.d.), “Make Them Pay Attention to Us” (Walker 2006), “Young Voters: Lessons Learned” (Harvard IOP 2005) and “Young Voter Mobilization Tactics: A Compilation of the Most Recent Research on Traditional and Innovative Voter Turnout Techniques” (GWU 2005). Civic organizations have aggressively worked to move these publications from the world of journal publications and research into the campaign arena for candidates, staff, and political parties to review.

The objective of this project is to explore the reasons for increased youth voter turnout in the Iowa caucuses. As such, this project begins with a summary of prior research on voter turnout and voter behavior theories. Next, information on youth participation in political and civic life and historical trends in youth voting is provided. I conclude with a review of in-depth studies on voter mobilization, including an analysis of the effectiveness of specific youth voter mobilization techniques. The underlying assumption and research questions posed seek to address why Democratic youth voter turnout in Iowa increased. The section provides three clear research questions to be evaluated. Specifically, that peer-to-peer

contact, voter training, and a candidate “asking” someone to be involved in the political process are three techniques utilized that caused youth voter turnout to increase. With the foundation of past research, the data and methodology sections introduce the dependent and independent variables that will be studied; provides information on the data obtained through the focus group, individual interviews, and survey data; and looks at the case study methodology used for analyzing the information. Using qualitative and quantitative data and journalistic reports, the results are documented and then analyzed in the discussion section. The conclusion of this work ends with addressing future areas of research in the area of voter mobilization techniques.

Chapter 2. Previous Research

It is necessary to study voter behavior theories and voting demographics and understand analysis on the impact outside influences have on the individual decision making process. This information sets the groundwork for my inquiry that looks at a specific voting population, youth voters, to identify similarities and differences within the larger voting population.

This first part of the literature review looks at theories and data on why people vote. There is an emphasis on the political socialization process, theory, and socioeconomic status (SES) variables that describe likely voters. I then move to study how political efficacy, anxiety, and civic duty influence an individuals' ability or desire to vote. Subsequent to that, youth voter trends and theories are explained and the civic engagement and apathy of youth is analyzed. This review ends with a discussion of youth voter strategies, mobilization techniques, and messages targeted toward young voters.

Many political scientists have attempted to apply formal theory to address the question of why people vote. On one extreme, Downs' paradox of voting (1957), using the rational choice framework, supposes that if individuals are rational, they would not vote. Applying that theory, the costs of information collection and processing are too high for the realization that voters will only receive collective benefits. It is known that Downs' assertions tend to be more false than true as many people do vote, and there have been several attempts to solve the paradox such as Riker's consumption benefits (1968), yet none completely answers the question of why individuals vote. Records tell us that most people are not voting for the purpose of gaining material benefits.

James Q. Wilson (1973), on the other extreme, studies the rewards an individual receives from their participation in the political process, and tends to counteract Downs' theory on the paradox of voting and enhances the role that rewards play in the political process. Wilson's framework seeks to find out if people participate to receive something tangible (material), to maintain or strengthen friendships or social interaction (solidary), or to receive an intrinsic satisfaction from participation (purposive). A discussion of solidary benefits is beneficial as I will later reflect on the influence of social networking and peer-to-peer communications on youth turnout at the polls: "Social networks, in short, create solidary rewards and bestow them, selectively, on those who act in the common interest" (Wilson 1973 as cited in Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

When theoretical approaches were not able to accurately assess why people voted, scientists such as Verba and Nie (1972) began to look at certain variables to explain individual turnout decisions. Using demographic descriptors such as income, education, and occupation, these scientists set up a SES model to identify trends in voting over time. These factors play a role in the development of one's perceptions about politics and often provide clear indicators of who votes. The wealthy vote more than the poor, and the more educated are more likely to take part in politics than the less educated (Verba and Nie 1972). It makes sense that those who are in educational settings where skills such as newspaper reading, debate, and public speaking are refined would be more likely to seek out and discuss political information. Well educated individuals are also more likely to be able to sort through voter registration requirements and bureaucratic obstacles such as those documented by Richard Timpono (1998). Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) paint a detailed picture of those involved in political activity in both electoral and governmental politics. They highlight that whites are

more likely to vote than African Americans and those individuals with the most financial resources are more likely to vote. The older you are, the more likely you are to vote. In addition, your occupation and your occupational interests may increase your likelihood of voting.

It was Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) who began to push further to look at the correlation of individual demographic characteristics of education, income, and age and their relationships among each other and question how turnout “will be felt in the fate of policy proposals” (114). To date, one of the most complete voting behavior models has been proposed by Miller and Shanks (1996), which used the National Election Study (NES) data from 1980 – 1992. They created a building block model which gives importance to: “voters’ social and economic characteristics; party identification; policy related predispositions; current policy preferences and perceptions of the economy and other conditions; retrospective evaluations of the incumbent president; evaluations of candidates’ personal qualities; and prospective evaluations of the candidates and their parties” (313). This information is helpful in thinking through how to gauge the contribution of these variables to voting decisions throughout the process. Beyond particular demographics, there are certain indicators that influence how a person thinks about the political process.

Political socialization, a lifelong process through which our political cognition, attitudes, and opinions are shaped, is impacted by a host of things including family and instilled family values, mass media, religion, political party affiliation, schools, and friends. The breadth and depth of information on this subject is extensive. The decision to participate is impacted by family, friends, and neighbors and individual interactions with them on voting topics (McClurg 2003). In fact, research shows that party identification and candidate

selection are often impacted by the views of a spouse or parent (Nickerson 2008). In addition, political knowledge can be formed through life experiences and by interpersonal interactions and conversations that are validated through media reports which “constitute a citizen’s web of communicative engagement” (Kaid, Tedesco, Bystrom, McKinney 2003, 1281). Using NES data, Yang Lin (2003) found a significant positive relationship between internal political efficacy and communication between voters:

This finding demonstrates that citizens who engage in interpersonal discussion about politics with a greater number of fellow citizens are more likely to have confidence in their ability to make sense of and to get involved in the political process (59).

The effect that political efficacy, an individual’s confidence in his or her political knowledge, impacts individual voter turnout must also be considered. This is a critical concept -if voter participation is to increase, political efficacy of voters must increase. Lack of information about the candidates and political issues are cited most often by non-voters as the most important reason for not voting. Indeed, the research shows that the less information individuals have, the less likely they are to participate in the electoral process (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Therefore, it is of great importance to unpack the concept of political knowledge. Using NES data and survey questions, Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) work to break this idea down by creating a series of quizzes that seek to measure individual factual knowledge of candidates, issues, and political institutions. They find the average level of individual political information is low.

While Delli Carpini and others see a quiz of political information as an effective tool in measuring political knowledge, critics are quick to point out that knowledge is not the only thing that impacts political participation; many factors, including political socialization,

political efficacy, emotions, and enthusiasm, play a significant role in the choice to vote and get involved in campaigns (Marcus and MacKuen 1993).

Political efficacy, as a theory, has been defined as an individual's feeling that he or she can affect or influence the political process, and researchers have broken this concept down to distinguish between internal and external influence on the political process (Campbell 1960, Bandura 1977). External efficacy addresses the responsiveness of political institutions to individual demands, while internal efficacy addresses one's own confidence in political knowledge and feelings about the ability to participate (Niemi, Craig, and Mattei 1991). Kaid, Tedesco, and McKinney (2007) honed in on the idea of internal efficacy by providing a new theory of political information efficacy. In their research, they explore certain campaign communications and focus on "whether the voter's confidence in his or her own political knowledge and its sufficiency to engage the political process (to vote) improved" (1096). In her research, Kaid (2004) concludes that as individuals' exposure to particular campaign messages increases, information efficacy is positively impacted. There is promise in research that shows people with increased internal political efficacy are 1.7% more likely to volunteer, 2.5% more likely to donate money, 2.9% more likely to vote, and 5.6% more likely to persuade others (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). These numbers make a strong case for campaigns and educators to provide a strong pedestal for the future electorate.

In an examination of another internal efficacy factor, Rudolph, Gangl, and Stevens (2000) studied the effects that anxiety has on political learning and conclude that there is an interactive effect between anxiety and voting. When people are anxious or threatened, they tend to pay more attention. Moreover, Marcus and Mackuen (1993) presented data that indicate that enthusiasm directly affects voting preference and positively affects campaign

involvement. A sense of civic duty also plays a role in the prediction of who votes. Campbell et al., in *The American Voter* (1960), pointed out that many individuals have been exposed to the idea throughout their lifetime that voting is a duty as a citizen in the country, and those with a strong sense that voting is a responsibility are more likely to vote.

While the research on voter decision making assists in voter prediction, in the last three decades of the 20th century the predictions have not held true as overall turnout has waned regardless of generally accepted predictors. Voter turnout in presidential elections has declined since the 1960s. In 1988, only half of the electorate cast a ballot in the presidential contest (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). With voter participation steadily decreasing, political scientists seek to further understand the nature of intrinsic and extrinsic influences on voter behavior.

Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995) put forth an explanatory resource model of political participation which seeks to look at individual skills that are essential to political activity -time, money, and civic skills. In compiling a large-N citizen participation study, the research focused on voluntary activity in politics, churches, and organizations. The civic skills acquired from these organizations are documented to be transferable and of benefit to increase political efficacy. Civic skills, or skill acts, show a significant direct correlation to level of education and home life. In their findings on resources and political acts, the research finds a continuing high correlation between education and voting, but encourages the reader to pay attention to a “revised picture of voting as an act that is driven very strongly by political interest” (Brady, Verba and Schlozman 1995, 283).

This inquiry now turns its focus to the youth voter. The dependent variable in this research is youth voter turnout, so it is critical to lay the foundation and understand the over

time information on youth voting. In looking historically at low youth voter participation rates, researchers cite voting behavior theories such as generational theory (Craig and Bennett 1997) and the life cycle theory (Campbell, et al. 1960; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Others argue youth apathy is a result of a cycle of neglect between political leaders and young voters as posed by Richard Thau, president of Third Millennium (2000), the leading national organization of young adults that offers solutions to long-term domestic economic problems. The generational theory states that those with a strong attachment to the political process which was developed early in life, such as the FDR New Deal generation or the 1960s protest generation, remain called to participate in record numbers throughout their lives. The life cycle theory posits that young people become more active as they get older and settled in homes and with families. Moreover, the benefits of voting appear to be more tangible as voters get older. Prior research, however, suggests that it is difficult to find support for either the generational or life cycle theory as there are so many variables which influence political behavior. During the 2004 election, “neglect” (Third Millennium 2000) was often cited as the reason for low youth turnout, stating that a cycle of neglect takes place when politicians do not pay much attention to young adults because they do not vote enough; and, to some extent, young adults do not know enough to vote because political ad campaigns and candidates ignore them.

Kaid, Johnston, and Hale (1989) use the term “political malaise” to address data that shows there has been a significant decline in political activism between 1960 and 1992 (Wattenberg 2002). While the 26th amendment in 1972 broadened the electorate to include 18, 19, and 20 year olds, the proportion of the overall voting population experienced a decline and the trend has continued beyond the 1970s. Since 1980, people under the age of

30, according to NES data, have shown a significant decline in “following what’s going on in government and public affairs” (NES 2004). A 2002 Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) study highlighted that only one of every three youth voters saw voting as a civic obligation or duty while far more saw voting as a choice or a right. While this study is not generalizable due to its small dataset, Martin Wattenberg (2008) is quick to point out that the concept of voting as a choice rather than a duty poses a new threat to the continuing reduction in youth voter turnout numbers not seen in prior studies.

The typical research profile of a young person is that they don’t vote and they are not involved in the political process. Declining youth voter turnout has been well documented by the media. In 2004, a content analysis on media coverage of youth during the presidential election found 372 stories over an 11-month period. While many of the stories were neutral or positive and focused on youth civic engagement, anywhere from 30-40% of the stories were negative and included portrayals of youth as “insignificant, apathetic, frivolous, or ignorant” (Williams 2007). Does the message young people receive from the media impact their perception and political efficacy? It may, and other reasons for low turnout among youth include poor quality civics education, changes in socialization experiences, and changes in the media through which individuals receive information (Patterson 2002).

While youth voter turnout has remained low for decades, a hotly contested presidential election in 1992 brought a spike in youth voter turnout only to return to a low rate in 2000. However, 2004 saw an 11% increase in which 47% of 18-24 year-old eligible voters voted (CIRCLE 2007), 2006 saw midterm election turnout increase from 22% of eligible voters in 2002 to 25% in 2006 (CIRCLE 2007), and 2008 continues to exhibit record

youth turnout in the primaries. A 2007 Harvard University Institute of Politics (IOP) Fall Survey found that 41% of young adults (18-24) would definitely be voting in their primary or caucus, while 61% would definitely be voting in the general election. Sixty percent of those surveyed said they were following national political news, and 35% considered themselves to be politically engaged or active. In the Spring IOP 2008 Survey, 64% said they would definitely be voting, while 16% said they would probably be voting. It is possible that the Millennial Generation is charting a new course. For example, a CIRCLE study showed that voter mobilization in 2004 was high with political parties and student groups registering student voters, and an impressive 62% of college students—the Millennial Generation—said they encouraged someone else to register to vote (Niemi and Hammer 2004).

This Millennial Generation (ill-defined, but most commonly considered people born between 1985 and 2004) and the tail end of Generation Y (also ill-defined, but most commonly considered people born between 1977 and 1994) have shown a significant increase in volunteerism rates (Longo and Meyer 2006). In fact, at the same time voting rates were decreasing in the 1990s, volunteerism rates were increasing. It is unclear if this is the result of massive volunteer opportunities promoted in the schools and made available to young people or if this increase in volunteerism was a tangible outlet for young people to feel the direct impact of their work. Individual connections with the community through volunteerism have led many to speculate that young people are looking for the best avenue to participate and make a difference because voting was not providing that outlet (Strama 1988).

In assessing student attitudes over time, CIRCLE highlights changing views on civic engagement. In the early 1990s, students considered politics irrelevant to their lives, but in

2006 and 2007, students talked about politics as a vehicle for change and recognized its importance, yet still felt inadequately informed to participate (CIRCLE 2002; Spiker, Lin, and Wells 2003). Could it be that Putnam's (2000) call to action led educators, scientists, and government to seek institutional changes to promote civic engagement beyond volunteerism to include politics? The country has changed in the last few years and that may be why attitudes have shifted over time. Since 2000, Americans have found themselves in a divided partisan country, and immersed in war, terrorist attacks, and debt. Perhaps to young people, the nature of the times seems different and more serious. Indeed, turnout prediction models, such as the "mobilization based" model (Jones, Barth, Kropf and Parry 2008), have demonstrated and included the importance of "campaign context, partisan environment, polarized political parties, the presence of a close race and robust campaign expenditures" (99) in predicting voter turnout. Moreover, in studying the competitiveness of presidential campaigns between 1952-1988 using NES data, Rosenstone and Hansen's (1993) analysis reveals that competitiveness at the top of the ticket increases turnout: citizens are 3% more likely to vote and 7.8% more likely to attempt to persuade each other when the race is perceived as competitive.

The way that young people process information and respond to peer-to-peer contact is quite important in their decision to vote, and research on young voters' political information and efficacy in the 2004 election confirm that young citizens turned often to friends and family to have conversations about politics and important issues (Wells and Dudash 2007). This supports a 2005 report by Thomas Patterson that shows that 39% of students in college talked politics on a regular basis (Patterson 2007). As previously mentioned, researchers have repeatedly shown that, in young people, confidence in their political knowledge is strongly

correlated to whether or not they turned out at the polls on Election Day (Kaid, McKinney, and Tedesco 1996, 2000).

With this research in mind, Strachan (2007) encourages political parties to engage youth by using active cognitive processing techniques, such as inviting young people into face-to-face interpersonal interactions where they are able to sort through contradicting evidence and have a discussion about their own political agenda and issues they care about. But, in order for active processing to take place, young voters must have positive internal self efficacy. Strachan states, “the underpinning reason for young people’s lack of internal political efficacy can surely be traced at least in part to the fact that they received their political socialization during a time of declining associational life” (2007, 87). But when internal self efficacy is present, campaigns can use cognitive processing techniques to talk to young people about voting issues. Lodge et al. (1991) highlight that there are many different types of decision processing for different types of voters. For some, their decision to support candidates may be on the basis of the person and their attributes and others on the basis of issue positions. Skaggs and Anthony (2002), however, show that the most compelling factor in determining who to vote for is a candidate’s stand on issues. In a 2004 issue salience study, Tedesco, McKinney, and Kaid (2007) state that both older and younger voters similarly identified their top ranked issues such as the war, education, terrorism, economy, and health care. The nuance in the study was that the youth voters were more focused on how those issues would impact them individually and less focused on the broad implications of the issues.

Even when young people are called to action by a hotly contested political race, youth voters seems to seek an alternative type of politics that is participatory, inclusive, open,

creative, and deliberative. Some call this “the politics that is not called politics” (Matthews 1994). The IOP 2007 report provides context and verification that young people are signing petitions, writing emails or letters advocating a position, attending rallies, donating money, volunteering, or blogging (IOP 2007). Youth voters want a serious conversation that is free from bias, and, over time, they have found themselves increasingly more centrist (Harvard IOP 2007). In the Harvard survey data, less partisan messages seemed to work better with young voters. More than 4 out of 10 young voters decline to identify themselves as members of a political party, while just over 50% of college freshman consider themselves moderates or “middle of the road” (IOP 2007). I now transition away from why young people vote to study broad voter mobilization theories.

Mobilization, as defined by Rosenstone and Hansen (1993), is “the process by which candidates, parties, activists and groups induce other people to participate” (25). In their analysis, voting is seen as a two-way street in that it is necessary to have strategic mobilization and individual motivation for participation to occur. Using Rosenstone and Hansen’s framework, examples of direct mobilization include phone calls, mail solicitations, and door-to-door canvassing, while indirect mobilization includes the identification and mobilization of leaders who, in turn, mobilize people in their individual networks. Mobilization is a strategic choice made by candidates, campaigns, and groups that seek to include the largest number of people with the least amount of effort or resources. With targeted mobilization, heavy emphasis is put on identifying people who are centrally positioned within large social networks and individuals who are likely to respond to outreach efforts.

Using targeted mobilization in electoral politics means identifying enough votes to elect a candidate to office. It is not uncommon to see political parties, campaigns, and interest groups all implement identification and GOTV (Get out the Vote) programs. Modern day GOTV operations are equipped to turn out candidate and issue supporters based on the limited campaign resources available. First, the most likely voters are encouraged to vote. This is confirmed by Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) who cite that strong partisans are about 5.3 % more likely to be contacted in a presidential year and that people mobilized by the Democratic and Republican parties are 7.8 % more likely to vote.

The contextual situation of whether a person has been asked to participate must remain a factor in mobilization as other intrinsic and extrinsic variables are reviewed. In addition to being asked, it is important to look at who asks – the political party, the campaign, or the candidate. In his study of the relationship between internal and external efficacy, Yang Lin (2006) provides the framework for the two types of political contact -first, that between a candidate (and individuals working for the candidate in the campaign) and voters, and, second, interpersonal communication between voters. In his framework, candidate visits, coffees, door-to-door canvasses by staff, and email all qualify as communication with the candidate (and campaign). Conversations between individuals that assist in the interpretation of information they receive from the mass media consist of interpersonal communication. While there is limited research on the effectiveness of being asked, in a 1966 report by Bowman and Boynton, 26% of local political leaders responded that they had become active in their political party because they were asked to get involved. Of that, at least half had been asked by a neighbor, friend, or relative.

In order to effectively comprehend a candidate or campaign “asking,” the researcher must go beyond actions and assess the words and rhetoric of a candidate. In an assessment of candidate speeches and messages, researchers tend to look at policy-making rhetoric (Howard & Hoffman 2007) that was used by candidates. These rhetorical strategies tend to address both the issues and “asking” to get involved. It is quite possible that there is a reciprocal relationship between support of a candidate’s platform and asking to participate. There seems to be little, if any, research on the direct ask of a candidate to an individual to participate. Trent and Friedenbergr (1995) analyze political campaign communication between national candidates and voters and state that interpersonal contact allows for a relationship and allows the candidate to be seen as accessible and available. Prior research on the role that a sitting president utilizes in office has documented that the president clearly has the capacity to mobilize large numbers of people directly based on the size and scope of his office (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) state that candidates, through the use of new technologies such as television and political ad campaigns, are more apt to speak directly to the electorate. Prior research supports the idea that political advertising exposes voters to relevant information which influences voters’ evaluations of the candidate (Kaid, et al. 2007).

Presidential campaigns have the ability to call attention to the high stakes and magnitude of the election. As pointed out by Rosenstone and Hansen (1993), presidential elections captivate the media and offer individuals the opportunity to be a player in the national government. Presidential candidates are more apt to mobilize the public not for its own sake, but for the purpose of winning elections and influencing policies. Regardless of motive, the candidates and campaigns are asking people to vote. These voters are more likely

to be inspired by a campaign or candidate as greater resources are spent and individual contact with voters increase. By far the most effective means of mobilizing voters is face to face contact (Green and Gerber, 2000a). In addition, through the use of technologies such as television, internet, email, and cell phones, campaigns and candidates are more able to directly connect with the voter.

To portray a complete picture of political participation, it is equally as important to study the significance of being asked as to understand the political opportunity structures that individuals have available to them in the political process. Hansen (1985) argues that people get involved when there are opportunities or avenues available to them. If campaigns provide those avenues, more people will get involved. In additional supporting information, both Verba and Nie (1972) and Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) acknowledge the significant role that activity in voluntary organizations plays in laying the groundwork for providing a trained individual, with a set of leadership skills, to the political realm.

Since the decline of the youth vote and the call to action to identify ways to improve youth voting across the country, several researchers, most notably Nickerson, Green, and Gerber, and civic organizations such as CIRCLE, have worked to study the effectiveness of certain types of youth voter mobilization techniques used by campaigns and third party groups. This work highlights research on peer-to-peer contact, telephone calls, door-to-door canvasses, internet and email use, text messaging, and hands-on voter training as well as issues of timing and messaging.

By far the most cost effective and meaningful technique studied has been the use of peer-to-peer contact. Electoral campaigns have found great success in youth voter mobilization techniques that involve a peer-to-peer element which provides a social network

opportunity. Campaigns that focus on social networks seek to capitalize on the bonds of friendship; the basic premise is that it is difficult to say no to someone you are familiar with or someone with which you have something in common. According to a 2004 New Voters Project analysis, peer-to-peer voter registration drives have significant impact, and multiple peer-to-peer contacts increase individual likelihood to vote. In a review of criterion for targeted mobilization, the most likely people identified as leaders were those who were well known, were centrally positioned, had established social networks, were easy to identify, were visible, and knew many people (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

Moreover, Nickerson (2006) highlights the effectiveness of volunteer phone calls and speculates that the nature of the caller and the type of script matters very much as he saw an increase in turnout depending on the age of the volunteer caller. Telephone conversations with a peer increased turnout 3-5% (Green and Gerber 2005; Young Voter Strategies 2008), and youth callers were more effective than paid, commercial callers, but less effective than other techniques. Automatically dialed pre-recorded calls, or “robo calls,” are seen to have no effect or a negative effect (Green and Gerber 2004). Door-to-door canvassing is the best approach compared to phones and direct mail (Green and Gerber 2005).

In most of the randomized field experiments, turnout results increased when there was face-to-face contact, and greater results were seen when the contact was a peer. In fact, door-to-door canvassing from a peer increased turnout 8 -10 % (Green and Gerber 2005, Young Voter Strategies 2008). Other studies have found an increase in turnout of 10-20 % in response to face-to-face mobilization, peer-to-peer or otherwise (Green and Gerber 2000a). While highlighting the success of peer to peer contact, Nickerson (2007) also draws on two experiments which did not prove the strength and depth of peer contact, when the peer is not

known, but of the same age. A general conclusion drawn would be that peer to peer contact is effective; however, there are times when it has not proven as conclusive as others.

Internet communication also plays an important role in voters' decision making. In 2004, more than a quarter of young adults used the Internet to get information on the candidates and issues, visit Web pages, and send campaign related messages (Pew Internet and American Life Project 2004). The most effective online voter mobilization tools are ones where the young voter either opts into the conversation or gets to interact some way (Young Voter Strategies, Project with GWU/CIRCLE 2008). Bucy (2004) distinguishes content interactivity as when a user interacts with the Web technology and participates in interpersonal interactivity, which could involve user-to-user interaction such as Web logs (blogs) and online chats. The emphasis on online techniques, which are highly interactive, has been shown to increase political information efficacy (Tedesco and Kaid 2000, Tedesco 2006). As a result, our country has seen an increase in campaigns and voting organizations using interactive, two-way forms of online communication among young people. Websites usually ask for feedback and offer ways for users to share their opinion. This interactivity is seen as a means to reduce cynicism and increase political efficacy among young people.

In a 2004 content analysis on the use of blogs, only 8% of the official campaign posts were youth targeted (Trammell 2007). Trammell speculates that blogs could be utilized more effectively to target youth as blogs are seen as "hip" technology (1255). Indeed, almost half of blog readers are under the age of 30 (Pew Internet and American Life Project 2005). It was noted that the number of youth-oriented electoral engagement Websites also increased from 22 in 2002 to 35 in 2004. These websites offer political information, issue discussions, links

to other sites, and an interactive experience to solicit feedback and comments (Bennett and Xenos 2004).

As for email, in a series of 13 email experiments across eight states, David Nickerson (2006) found no evidence that emails increased voter turnout or boosted rates of registration among young voters. Moreover, research shows that old fashioned direct mail—mail sent to an individual household—had little impact on youth turnout (Ramirez 2005). Parry, Barth, Kropf, and Jones (2008), in a voter turnout survey of competitive 2002 U.S. Senate races, found that receipt of targeted campaign materials improves the probability that otherwise unlikely participants (seldom voters) will cast ballots up ticket. Moreover, one study shows that a quarter of Americans under the age of 25 were mobile-phone only in 2006 (Blumberg and Luke 2007), and a study by In-Stat/MDR (2004) predicts that the mobile-phone only population will reach nearly 30% of the entire American public by the 2008 presidential election. This is important and should push campaigns to consider how to reach out to young people in future elections. There have been several studies which cite the efficiency and cost effectiveness of texting, potentially an important way to reach young people, although that research seems somewhat early and inconclusive (Dale and Strauss 2007).

Many third-party groups, such as *Rock the Vote* or *Vote or Die*, have sought to include celebrities as a mechanism to generate an increase in youth voters. In a case study of Pennsylvania in 2004, researchers sought to identify whether celebrity appearances and endorsements were effective in raising voter turnout or political efficacy. The conclusion was that the nature of the race made it difficult to ascertain why people chose to participate. The speculation was that young people found a celebrity that they admired or identified with, and in turn would support that candidate as a result of the celebrity support. In 2004, however,

John Kerry was given the edge in celebrity endorsements only to lose the election (Payne, Hanlon, and Twomey III 2007).

People respond when given the opportunity to receive solidary benefits. In their research through two pilot studies, Addonizio, Green, Glaser, and Ryan (2006) found that having a party at the polls and making voter participation social was a promising mobilization technique worth more research. In these studies, the researchers held community gatherings that enabled people to vote and to celebrate the act and provide solidary benefits such as a visit with neighbors or members of their community. When studying youth voter participation, especially with high school students, the training is equally as important as the socializing with peers.

There seems to be a paltry amount of information available on voter training or civic skills training with high school and college aged students, but there has been great attention played to the role that civic education in the classroom plays in increasing voter turnout. It is important to distinguish between the teaching of civic skills, defined as “abilities necessary for political actions” (Comber 2007, 4), as opposed to teaching knowledge and information about civics. Elizabeth Addonizio (2006), in an experiment in which high school students were taught to use a voting machine, notes that participants’ subsequent voter turnout rose dramatically. In this experiment, first-time voters were brought together for an informational meeting that had a social and casual feel to it. In this session, young people were shown how to use a voting machine and read the ballot. Based on participation in these sessions, the probability that someone would vote increased 19 -24%. Similarly, Green and Gerber (2004) highlight the effectiveness of “supertreatments,” those techniques that combine education, voting machine demonstrations, and voter registration.

In contrast, Philips (2004) finds that a civic education program for high school students had no statistically significant effect on turnout or registration of voters. Moreover, the Spring 2008 Harvard Institute of Politics Biannual Youth Survey of Politics finds that 42% of young people aged 18 -24 thought their high school education adequately prepared them to be an active participant in the political process, while 37% disagreed with that statement. The survey results highlight the vast inequities in civic education (Galston 2000), which tends to fall along socioeconomic lines. Since so many young people receive political information through the Internet, there is also a growing digital divide that separates the wired and wealthy from the typically minority, lower socioeconomic status, less educated individuals. This divide would seem to hold true because research on adults state that the more wealthy and well educated one is, the more likely they are to vote (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

In addition to particular techniques used to reach voters, the timing of the voter contact is one factor that has significant impact on the youth vote. Research shows that contacts with youth close to Election Day matter most. A 2004 New Voters Project reported that 80 -85% of potential voters contacted were likely to vote when contacted within the last 72 hours before polls closed. Those results can be compared to voter contact four to eight days prior to an election, in which 79% of potential voters were likely to vote. This finding is confirmed by David Niven (2002) who found that the effects of mobilization were dependent on the timing of the contact as more distant efforts to mobilize had a much weaker effect on turnout. In both studies, the success rate of the contact was higher with voters who had a past commitment to voting or to a registered party. Mobilization of the seldom voter proved more difficult (Niven 2002).

There has been a great deal of research on the types of messages that are included in voter contact and whether partisan or nonpartisan messages are more effective. For instance, John McNulty (2005) has tested whether a partisan or nonpartisan message was more effective with youth, and he concludes that nonpartisan messages were more likely to impact turnout. Similarly, Elizabeth Bennion (2005) finds greater effect for student-based canvassing with nonpartisan GOTV messages with young people and no effect with older voters, while Gerber and Green (2000) find that unaffiliated or independent voters respond best to nonpartisan messages. Young people have also made it clear that they dislike harsh partisans, spin, and polarized debates and seek authentic opportunities for discussing public ideas (CIRCLE 2007).

While research tends to suggest that nonpartisan messages are most effective, randomized field experiments have not provided a similarly clear picture. For example, several studies compare partisan vs. nonpartisan and positive vs. negative messages and found no statistically significant impact one way or the other (Nickerson, Friedrich, and King 2006). The same holds true for television advertising (Green 2004). Green and Vavreck (2006) studied *Rock the Vote* GOTV ads and found them to be effective, while Krasno and Green (2006), on the other hand, found that campaign ads –positive or negative –had no significant impact on turning out the youth vote in the final weeks of the election. Researchers such as Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar (1995) argue that these advertisements are effective and contain information useful in decision making. However, others such as Basil et al (1991) argue that negative advertising is counterproductive in that it has the effect of having the message heard but could have harmful effects on the candidate.

The effort to fortify the youth vote has led to a large market of nonpartisan issue groups. These programs have been sorted into five rough categories by Shea and Green (2007): the entertainment industry, with projects such as *Rock the Vote*; foundation funded initiatives, such as *New Voters Project*; liberal interest groups, such as *New Voter Alliance* and *America Coming Together*; those involved in new technology or an institution such as *Harvard Institute of Politics*; and those programs directly associated with major political parties such as *Young Democrats of America*. In 2004, several groups, such as *Declare Yourself* and *Rock the Vote*, spent more than 40 million dollars in promoting a coordinated message (Walker 2006). Privately funded 527 organizations, such as *The Young Voters Alliance* and *College Democrats* formed in 2004 to focus solely on turning out the vote of likeminded youth. In addition, both the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee had youth outreach directors and written youth outreach plans (Walker 2006). Further, specific outreach was done for traditionally low-turnout groups through voter registration drives, including youth voters. As Thomas Patterson points out in *The Vanishing Voter* (2002), simplified registration works to the advantage of those with less income and education. These are the voters who typically vote less, but by registering these voters, they are more easily contacted because their information is available through Secretary of States' offices.

While field studies and research have helped campaigns and candidates reach out to young people more effectively, there are still several barriers to successful mobilization. Because voter registration and voting history is available, it allows campaigns to focus and micro target the people they think are most likely to vote. As young people have traditionally voted less, they are not considered the traditional voters or "base" for either party. Young

people are also more transient, have unlisted cell phone numbers, and are hard to reach during traditional evening calling hours. This can lead to a mobilization bias toward older voters (Ware 1985).

This micro-targeting theory is confirmed by Rosenstone's (1993) study of the decline in voter turnout in presidential election years between the 1960s and 1980s. He reviewed a potential list of causes for declining voter turnout and pointed out that in the 1980s, even though individuals had a higher level of education and were less likely to encounter legislative barriers, a large part of the decrease in turnout was because strategic electoral mobilization declined. The 1960s saw political parties mobilizing at least 25% of the electorate, whereas the 1980s saw political parties shifting to paid media strategies and mobilizing fewer voters through grassroots door-to-door techniques. In his 1942 book, *Party Government*, E. E. Schattschneider talks about the critical positive relationship between local party or intermediary organizations and high levels of political participation. However, using a survey of local party leaders across the country, Shea and Green (2007) identify that while many leaders see youth outreach as important, less than half were actively involved or gave priority to mobilizing youth voters. They point out two reasons for the decrease in voter mobilization from local parties: local parties are weaker and less funded and local parties have seen a change in purpose and focus.

Moreover, Strachan (2007) identifies a failure on the part of the local political parties to play a more substantial role in citizenship education as opposed to just serving as the seller of candidates and winner of electoral activities. Almost one-half of local party leaders said youth were very difficult to mobilize, while as many said youth were somewhat difficult to mobilize. In addition, David Nickerson (2002) points out that youth are roughly three times

more difficult to contact than older voters as seen in six voter mobilization field experiments. Nickerson's data also shows that the parties gave lower priority to mobilizing youth compared to seniors. Yet, there is a great deal of evidence that mobilization by political parties increases voter turnout in national, state, and local elections (Strachan 2007). In research that documents county party outreach to youth voters collected by Green and Shea (2007), the conclusions drawn from the successful experiment have led many political organizations to recognize the electoral possibilities if they make youth a priority.

There are critics who believe that a decrease in party mobilization techniques is not the reason for decreased turnout, but instead, that a change in the quality of the contacts with the use of impersonal techniques is to blame (Goldstein and Ridout 2008). Putnam (2000) confirms that in-person mobilization techniques are more effective than phone contacts. But making youth voters a priority may require some changes in traditional strategies because young people tend to rely on a variety of resources to obtain information beyond traditional sources. The 18 -24 age group is more likely to turn to alternative media sources such as the Internet and comedy television shows for their news than past generations (Kaiser Report 2004). This trend is confirmed by the Harvard IOP study in Spring 2008 which showed that 36% of young people age 18 -24 turn to cable television for news while 26% turn to the Internet. These techniques require a shift in the traditional approach by candidates and campaigns alike.

Based on prior research, a strong case can be made for youth voter outreach techniques that are specific to that voting bloc. The increase in youth voter turnout in the Iowa caucuses provides an opportunity to review a case study with the hopes of identifying

best practices and themes for future research. The next section provides the overarching premise and research questions to be analyzed.

Chapter 3. Proposition and Research Questions

The underlying proposition of this project is that youth voter mobilization techniques increased youth voter turnout in the 2008 Iowa Democratic caucuses. Specifically, three research tested approaches; peer-to-peer contact, voter training, and candidate/campaign direct request for support -were utilized by campaigns and interest groups and resulted in increased turnout among youth voters.

Field experiments and campaign research on voting confirm that friends and peers play an instrumental role in individual voting decisions and behavior. In 2008, the Democratic campaigns in the Iowa caucuses sought to capitalize on two things that were quite important to young people: social networking and receiving information through a technology medium that is an ingrained part of their culture. As a result of these two focal points, campaign and candidate events and the caucuses were promoted as social, fun events where young people could fulfill their civic duty and support a candidate who best embodied their message. In 2008, it appears that Democratic campaigns effectively identified a youth-centric medium and used technology to communicate, organize, and set goals for youth voters.

While some individuals had learned from their parents about the caucus process, many others were not informed on how the caucus process worked. Based on commonly used political consultant knowledge, campaigns and civic groups organized hands-on voter training for potential caucus attendees that was accessible and available. The key concepts of the training were the same for young and old voters alike, however, the medium was often different. On one end of the spectrum, a citizen could receive their information through text

messages and You Tube or on the other end of the spectrum, they could be trained over the phone or in person.

While extrinsic techniques such as peer-to-peer contact and voter training get individuals to the polls, equally as important when studying youth voter turnout is the intrinsic motivation of why they voted. The conundrum of why people vote must recognize that there are multiple factors which influence a persons' decision to vote.

Prior research states two well-known ideas: 1) that young voters are not voting at the same rates as other eligible voters and 2) politicians do not view youth as a voting bloc that impacts their campaign strategy or public policymaking strategy. As a government teacher, I often have conversations with young people about the chicken and the egg in the case of circular cause and consequence. *What would it take for young people to feel like they were being heard and for candidates to speak to young people in a way that was authentic, rich, and relevant? Will candidates have to reach out to young voters first, or will young voters turn out, grabbing the attention of candidates? What issues, messages and techniques did candidates and campaigns use to reach out to young voters and what did young voters do in response to the invitation?* The Iowa caucuses and the nature of the competitive race demonstrate that candidates, some more than others, can successfully make the first move and reach out to the core, untapped constituency of young voters to seek support for their candidacy. As seen in the literature review, previous studies have shown that individuals tend to vote more when they are asked to participate than those who were not asked. Therefore, it seem likely that young people turned out in the 2008 Democratic caucuses because they were courted and invited, much like the rest of Iowa caucus-goers.

From this assumption I can propose the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Did peer-to-peer contact and social networking opportunities increased youth attendance at the Iowa caucuses. The campaign and the caucus process provided an opportunity for friends to talk to friends and coworkers to talk to coworkers - both in person and online. Many of the political events and the caucuses itself were promoted with the allure of being “the” thing to do.

Research Question 2: Did voter training made the caucus process seem simple and accessible? The effort to prepare first-time caucus attendees for what they would encounter demystified the process and made the caucus process seem quite easy and painless. In 2008, it seems likely that caucus training improved internal political efficacy and increased turnout in the Iowa caucuses.

Research Question 3: Did young voters attend the 2008 Iowa caucuses because they were asked and felt wanted? The electoral process has often ignored young voters based on their electoral performance rate. A two-way street was created when politicians reached out to young people and in return young people listened and got involved. Young people are aware that politicians have in the past ignored them and as a result were quite receptive to candidates that directly solicited their support.

Chapter 4. Data and Methodology

Data

This research seeks to understand why youth voter turnout increased in the 2008 Iowa Democratic caucuses. A total of 65,230 Iowans under the age of 30 participated in the 2008 Iowa caucuses. Within that universe, 52,580 young people participated in the Democratic caucuses (CIRCLE 2008).

My goal in this research process was to use qualitative methods including a focus group, individual interviews, public information, and journalistic reports to understand how youth voters came to their decision to attend and participate in Iowa's 2008 Democratic precinct caucuses. Therefore, in assessing the overall voter participation data, the decision was made to look solely at Democratic caucus-goers. This decision was based on three important criteria. First, the 2008 Democratic caucus saw a threefold increase in youth participation. This year, 52,580 youth participated in the Democratic caucuses while only 12,650 participated in the Republican caucuses. Second, the unique characteristics of the Democratic presidential field seemed to call a great deal off attention to the historic nature of the field. Third, according to electoral results and voter registration numbers, Iowa is trending Democratic.

After the record-breaking turnout at the Iowa caucuses, the Democratic Party has amassed a voter registration advantage that has grown to more than 90,000 in Iowa.... It's been a relatively quick shift from Republican dominance in Iowa to one where Democrats hold a majority of congressional seats, the governor's office and both chambers of the Iowa Legislature (Charlotte Eby, Waterloo Cedar Falls Courier, July 2008).

Accordingly, the dependent variable in this study was youth voter turnout in the 2008 Iowa Democratic caucuses. Information and voter records about the dependent variable can

be retrieved for replication through the Iowa Democratic Party, which has the official attendance records for the Iowa caucuses. In addition, new voter registrations were verified and processed by the Iowa Secretary of State's Office and are part of a public database. There are three independent variables that may have induced or explained the increase in voter turnout: peer-to-peer communication, voter training, and the request to an individual to participate in the political process. To operationalize these variables, each will be explained in terms that can be measured and defined.

The two primary ways that variables were operationalized were through focus group and individual interviews and, second, through themes identified and collected from survey information. Specific responses were identified that addressed each of the stated research questions. These discreet response units were then evaluated and categorized into dominant themes that helped provide a more descriptive picture of youth voters. To provide more background on specific voter mobilization techniques, individual candidate preferences, and information about the caucus-goer, each individual was asked to fill out a survey. This information, while not a large enough sample for generalization, allowed for a more thorough and systematic analysis of individual voter mobilization techniques (See Appendix D).

Peer-to-peer contact, young people talking to other young people, was defined as face-to-face conversations about a political candidate, email exchanges that included involvement or persuasion. This technique, used by campaigns and interest groups to invite voters into the political process and persuade for their candidate, took many formats: Facebook profiles that showed candidate preference, peer-to-peer phone calls, text messages, emails, and conversations. Voter training is defined as the process of informing a person about how the caucus worked and where and how to attend a caucus. Individuals were

trained through a variety of mechanisms including watching a video, attending an in-person training, reading a brochure, or receiving an explanation over the phone or through email. The individual ask will be defined by looking at individual perceptions of candidate asks as well as resources allocated to this task.

It was critical to unpack “Democratic youth voters” by studying the behavior and attitudes of high school students, college students, and young professionals. Together, this group of voters encompasses 17.5 to 29 year-olds who participated in the Democratic precinct caucuses in Iowa in 2008. In recognizing that these groups were at three different stations in life, the hope was that any trends or nuances that were unique to one group could be identified. A focus group was assembled to target this demographic in addition to doing interviews and surveys with young leaders, campaign organizations, campus coordinators, and those active in high school. For the focus group and interviews, there was no reward for participation except for pizza or snacks.

In order to identify a pool of young Democratic caucus-goers, I contacted youth delegates and participants in attendance at the Iowa Democratic State Convention and invited them to participate in a focus group. I contacted them in advance through email and word of mouth and handed out flyers the morning of the convention. The focus group was open to anyone from the ages of 17.5 – 29 who had participated in the Democratic caucuses. The general limitations of the focus group were that individuals who take the time to attend a Democratic state convention tend to be the most active, and indeed a bulk of my focus group included leaders in the youth community. There were very few “typical caucus-goers.” However, this research remedies another problem. Past research has focused a great deal of effort on college students, seemingly to the detriment of high school students and young

professionals. Therefore, the results here aim to provide a more descriptive picture of an average youth voter as opposed to an average college voter.

This project used findings from a focus group investigation that sought to understand young voters' attitudes and reasons for participating in the Iowa caucuses. A facilitator guide was used for the group, using moderator discretion to poke and probe in different directions depending on the comments of the group (See Appendix A). The focus group participants ranged in age from 17.5 to 29, with a heavy emphasis on high school and college students. There were 5 high school students, 8 college students and 3 young professionals. Of that group, there were 9 Barack Obama supporters, 4 John Edwards' supporters and 3 Hillary Clinton supporters. The individuals represented all four corners of Iowa, including rural and urban communities. Several of the participants had come to the convention with their parents, who were activists in the Democratic Party, while others attended on their own or with a friend. Of the high school and college participants, many were currently involved in some type of political student group.

The second aspect of the project included 15 interviews with campaign leadership, campaign campus coordinators, youth and interest group leaders to learn more about the types of outreach they employed and their effectiveness. In order to get information from a cross section of campaigns, individuals who held a leadership position in all presidential campaigns or someone they recommended were contacted. I was successful in securing interviews with the Clinton, Edwards, and Obama campaigns. The designated youth coordinator for each campaign, either by title or job description, and each campaign's Iowa State University campus coordinators were interviewed. I completed 3 interviews with the Clinton campaign, 4 interviews with the Obama campaign and 2 interviews with the Edwards

campaign. It was very interesting to speak with the presidential candidates' designated youth representatives who worked in the Des Moines campaign headquarters and compare their strategy and outreach to the actual on-the-ground process as described by the presidential candidate campus coordinators. The interviews represented a very good blend of theory and reality (See Appendix B).

By most accounts in individual interviews, there were very few interest groups that played as active a role in recruiting youth voters as the presidential campaigns. Rock the Vote, the ONE campaign, Iowans for Sensible Priorities, and Save Darfur were all individually mentioned by youth as organizations they had seen at one time or another during the presidential campaign in their classrooms or at Democratic functions. The one group that was specifically mentioned numerous times for doing targeted outreach on college campuses was Iowa PIRG. Representatives of all five of these organizations were interviewed in addition to the staff at the Iowa Democratic Party who could speak to what, if any, involvement or perspective they had on youth voter turnout. With the exception of Iowans for Sensible Priorities, who endorsed Senator Edwards, all of the interest groups were neutral and did not endorse a candidate. In terms of limitations of my interviews, it was difficult to identify any willing or relevant individuals who could speak on behalf of the Dodd, Biden, and Richardson campaigns. As they were second tier candidates, the limitation is unlikely to skew the information gathered; however, those campaigns may have used a particular technique worth noting that will not be mentioned here.

In addition to the qualitative research gathered, thanks to the efforts of Iowa State University's departments of political science and statistics, quantitative data was gathered in a 2007-2008 pre/post caucus poll. The Iowa State University Pre/Post Caucus 2008 Poll was

not done in conjunction with this thesis, yet there are certain questions that provide support or information for my research. 695 Iowa State University and University of Iowa students were polled and from that, 265 attendees who had caucused in the 2008 Iowa caucuses provide data to offer a richer description of Iowa's college caucus attendees (See Appendix C). There are several questions identified that provide context for the research. The questions cover topics such as where students chose to caucus, either in their college town or another location. The survey sought to identify the role that friends' and neighbors' support of a candidate and their persuasion efforts had on individual choice. The survey asked respondents to identify the most important issue in their decision to support a candidate, and asked students to select the characteristic that was most important to them in a candidate, such as personal integrity, experience, electability, or position on the issues. The last relevant question asked the respondent to describe themselves on a political spectrum from liberal to conservative.

Methodology

This project utilizes a qualitative approach that relies primarily on quotes, comments, and stories to provide evidence and support for arguments. This case study was an observation of three unique age groups at a single point in time, following the Iowa caucuses. The interviews involved retrospection where participants were asked to report their thoughts and cognitive process after the event.

The use of a focus group provided for rich peer-to-peer interaction and prompting, which might not have otherwise been provided in individual interviews or survey data. The free flowing discussion allowed for opportunities to disagree, reflect, and suggest additional

ideas that had not been already suggested. The information collected helps provide context and emotions and immeasurable themes to be evaluated in the decision making process that might be missed in quantitative data studies.

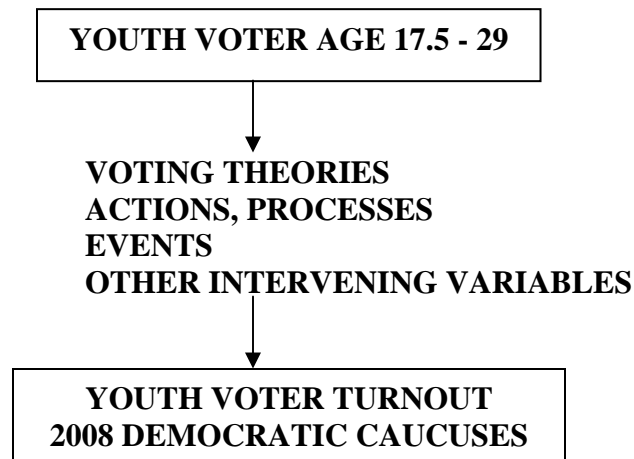
Interviews have specific advantages over survey research. Most notably, interviews confirm information and accuracy collected from other sources. These interactions allow for cross checking as well as identification of any weaknesses in particular sources. Additionally, they identify additional participants, stories, or documents that can enhance the case study.

George and Bennett's (2005) method of process tracing is used to analyze this qualitative data, as detailed in *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. In process tracing, "the researcher examines histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in that case" (6). Using this process helps reduce the vast number of variables to a more manageable number. This methodology allows for a focus on the causal mechanisms that link causes to effects and helps generate and analyze data central to the issue. George and Bennett define causal mechanisms as "ultimately unobservable physical, social, or psychological processes through which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific contexts or conditions, to transfer energy, information, or matter to other entities" (2005: 137).

Using the framework of George and Bennett (2005), the diagram adopts process induction, which allows for observation of apparent causal mechanisms as potential hypotheses for future testing. Figure 1 will allow us to explain the decision process and identify how youth voters at Point A got to Point B where they were participating in record numbers in the Iowa caucuses. To begin, we look at processes, events, actions, and other

intervening variables that may have impacted the causal dependent variable. This diagram provides a basic frame for process induction to take place. Using process induction to explain the decision process, the following sequence took place. First, the variables which impacted the dependent variable were identified and studied. Second, the behavior that occurred was recorded. Third, the effects of particular variables were assessed with an attempt to explain their explanatory power.

Figure 1. Voter Decision Making Process

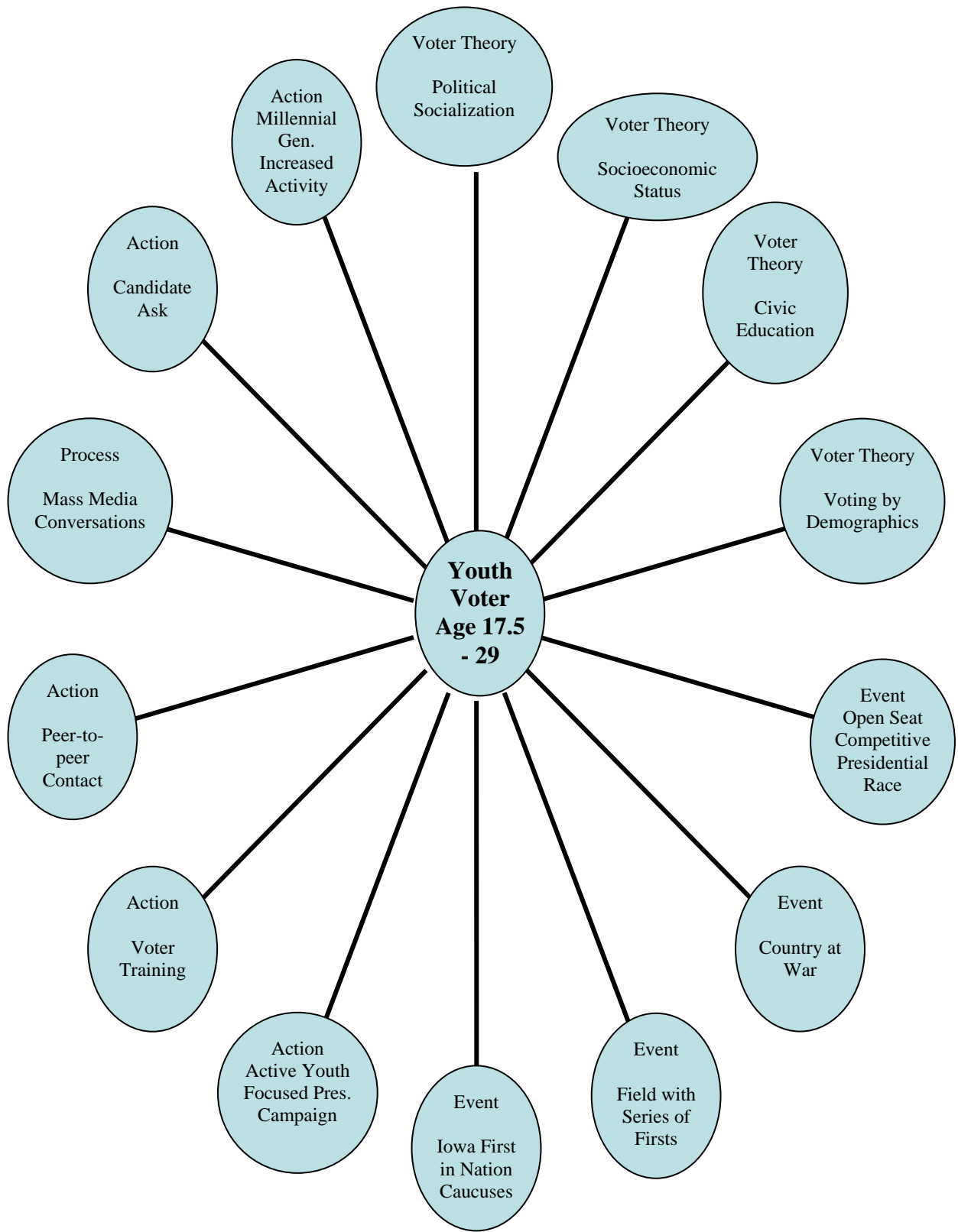


It is important to use the foundation of voting behavior theories to take into account certain things we already know about the electorate. George and Bennett (1997) state, “Even theories for which no process tracing evidence is accessible must be considered in the analysis of a case if there are reasons to believe that they are relevant”

(<http://www.polisci.wisc.edu/~kritzer/teaching/ps816/ProcessTracing.htm>). Each theory brings its own set of predictions. In identifying the theories prior to determining causation, it will be helpful in distinguishing variables that result in covariation as opposed to causality between the dependent and independent variables.

Figure 2 provides a visual frame to identify the causal elements which impact the decision making process. There are certain things we know about voting behavior from theories highlighted in the literature review. Namely, political socialization influences political attitudes, ideology, and participation. In the case of the youth voter, parental attitudes on participation might heavily influence the decision to participate. In terms of demographic factors such as socioeconomic status, age, and geography, we know that low socioeconomic status, young age, and location of residence all directly impact the likelihood of voting.

Next, a review of the events, actions, processes, and other intervening variables that might have caused youth voter turnout to increase in the 2008 Iowa Democratic caucuses is provided. There are many events going on in the world around us that impacted how people perceived the presidential primary process. With regards to events, the highly competitive open seat presidential election, our country at war, the media hype of the Iowa first-in-the-nation caucuses, and a strong Democratic field of candidates with the potential to make history provide the foundation for increased voter interest. Next, actions such as highly active presidential campaigns and interest groups specifically targeting youth voter turnout may have provided focused resources to lead to higher youth voter turnout. Targeted actions such as peer-to-peer contact, voter training, and candidate ask communicated the message directly to voters. As a result of events and actions, mainstream media attention focused on presidential campaigns and was a common discussion thread in high schools, college campuses, and dinner tables throughout Iowa. Lastly, it is important to take into account emerging research that portrays the Millennial Generation as more politically aware and active than previous generations.



Using a case study approach focusing on process induction, and the list of potential variables (theory, events, actions, process, intervening variables) that may have increased voter turnout, the statements and surveys allowed me to make inferences about variables which seemed more central to the outcome of the dependent variable.

In summary, while the case study method has its shortcomings, such as its inability to observe individuals prior to the activity and its inability to control for certain intrinsic and extrinsic factors, it identifies information and findings that would often be ignored because of research design problems. This research recognizes the potential of qualitative data while also allowing for a relevant, yet limited, amount of supporting data which provides a richer, quantitative view of college caucus attendees.

The next section of this thesis provides a comprehensive report of the focus group with individuals age 17.5 – 29 as well as individual interviews with youth activists. It begins with a brief overview of the caucus process and how it differentiates itself from voting. Next, a brief snapshot of each segment of youth voters is provided. Included in the youth voter subheadings are topics that the investigator brought up specifically with youth voters to include: Why youth voter turnout increased, issues of importance to youth, mobilization techniques that worked such as peer-to-peer contact and voter training, why the caucuses were perceived as “the event,” and lastly, why youth voters caucused for a particular candidate.

The story then broadens by pulling in conversations with key Iowa staff and interest groups involved in youth outreach to learn about the programs that they wrote and implemented. The campaign subheadings add the description of the strategic decisions and resource allocations made by campaigns, the youth voter mobilization techniques that they

implemented and viewed successful, how they allotted candidate time as it relates to youth outreach and their candidate's image and appeal to youth.

Following the campaign section, interest groups are provided an opportunity to discuss their role in youth voter turnout in Iowa. The discussion of all of these topics provides the background necessary for a discussion and analysis of the research questions presented.

Chapter 5. Results

In coffee shops and classrooms, through emails and cell phones, young people in Iowa assisted in telling the story of Democratic youth participation in the 2008 Iowa caucuses. In 2004 an estimated 20,740 young people showed up to the Iowa caucuses as opposed to 2008, when it is estimated that 52,580 young individuals showed up to caucus (CIRCLE 2008). To understand the significance of this number, it is important to highlight the distinction between voting and caucusing, as the caucus commitment is greater in duration and more intricate in process.

On Thursday, January 3, 2008 at 7:00 p.m., depending on which of the 1,784 precinct locations you attended, a caucus-goer engaged with tens, hundreds, or thousands of individuals all seeking to be involved in the selection of the Democratic presidential nominee. In many cases, there were long lines and confusion, limited seating, and overheated rooms. The process lasted at least one hour, but the average time commitment in 2008 was 2.5 hours (Iowa Democratic Party, 2008). The commitment to caucus by an individual was a political act unlike a 15-minute visit to the voting booth, and this research seeks to identify the underlying motives that sent young people to the caucuses in large numbers.

This story begins by looking at a snapshot of voter eligibility of Iowa high school and college students and young professionals. Next, general observations are provided by youth about why youth voter participation increased. Third, a focus on issues and the roles that partisan/non partisan messages played in the individual decision making process are discussed. This inquiry then discusses individual outreach techniques such as peer-to-peer contact and caucus training. Then, an in-depth look at individual rationale for supporting particular candidates is provided.

The format begins with observations from youth voters, then campaign professionals and volunteers, then interest groups. Throughout many sections, “high school students,” “college students,” and “young professionals” are differentiated and their viewpoints are recognized as unique to their station in life. At other points, the commonalities of the three groups are combined under the description “young/youth voters.”

Youth Voters: A Profile of High School Students, College Students and Young Professionals

In acknowledging that youth ages 17.5 to 29 are in very different phases of their life during that 12 year period of time, campaigns sought out opportunities to find young people in their institutional or social settings. I begin with a snapshot of these young voters as it relates to their eligibility and participation in the caucuses.

Based on Iowa’s voting rules, any citizen who will be 18 by Election Day, November 4, 2008, was eligible to participate in the Iowa caucuses. This provision typically makes some portion of high school seniors eligible to participate in the Iowa caucuses. While challenged with the competing demands of sporting events, music, practices, and other extracurricular activities, there were different levels of campaign and interest group outreach to Iowa high school students across the state. There are 357 high schools in Iowa, providing an excellent opportunity to identify new caucus-goers for the 1,784 precinct caucuses around the state.

Unlike high school students, who are grounded in their home location and high school, college students by their very nature are transient individuals, typically residing in their college town for nine months and home town for three months. In Iowa, college students are often the focus of pundit speculation every four years when the Democratic and

Republican National Committees go through a series of meetings where they discuss the presidential nominating calendar. When the date and time are set, pundits and campaigns alike enjoy analyzing which campaigns stand to gain or lose support based on the date of the caucuses. When the date of Thursday, January 3, 2008 was set for the Iowa caucuses, one of the first assessments made were that college communities and their student residents were the big losers since a bulk of the colleges and universities would not be in session, when it is logically easier to mobilize students.

As a result, one of the common questions that college students often asked about was the location of their precinct caucus. College students who reside in Iowa have the choice of registering to vote at their campus address or home address. Campaigns made an extra push to obtain students' college and home addresses so they could reach them during their winter break from school.

College students, most notably out-of-state college students, often face barriers—real or perceived—in voter registration. Specifically in Iowa during the 2008 caucuses, Democratic presidential campaigns were involved in a tense discussion about what type of college student could participate in the Iowa caucuses. The debate centered on whether or not an out-of-state student who attended an Iowa college and therefore lived in Iowa nine months out of the year was considered an eligible caucus-goer. While it is indeed legal, there was a discussion in *The Nation* about whether or not it was “fair” or “right” (Connery, 2007). This ongoing conversation caused a great deal of confusion among young people about who could caucus and whether they were eligible to caucus. During the debate over participation and eligibility, Iowa PIRG, Rock the Vote, and College Democrats joined together to make clear their viewpoint that Iowa college students should be allowed to participate:

It has recently come to our attention that some presidential candidates are suggesting that students in Iowa should not caucus. We're shocked that any national figure would advocate for youth disenfranchisement. This goes against the very grain of our democracy and the core values of our nation. We live here in Iowa for the majority of the year and make our homes here; we are active participants in our communities—volunteering, giving back, and contributing intellectual and financial resources to the state. To say that students who didn't grow up in Iowa, but who now live here, shouldn't have the choice to participate in the caucuses is blatant voter disenfranchisement (Statement in Support of Full Voting Rights for Iowa Youth 2007).

It is also important to note that the overall registration gains of The Motor Voter Act has helped liberalize voter registration laws in Iowa and nationally over the past several years. Access to information from the Iowa Secretary of State and Iowa Democratic Party has made it easier for campaigns to integrate voter registration information into mobilization efforts.

Finally, we turn to “young professionals,” individuals aged 22 to 29. These are individuals who may be dealing with their first “real” job, first home purchase, first car purchase along with marriage and potentially a family. As a whole, this group is pulled in multiple directions by work obligations, social commitments and family responsibilities which often cause conflicts to their participation.

In addition to the criticism of the voter eligibility aspect of the caucuses, the caucus process has long been argued as undemocratic as it discriminates against working individuals and families. In not allowing a proxy vote or absentee balloting when someone is unable to attend, it limits individual participation. The caucuses are held in the evening, which can prohibit the participation of people who work at night and people with children who have no childcare available or cannot afford childcare. Most recently, Senator Clinton expressed her

disappointment with the caucus system with repeated criticism that it is undemocratic and caters mostly to party activists (Fouhy, 2008).

Youth Voters: Why Turnout Increased

While there were barriers to participating in the caucuses, we know that Democratic youth voter turnout increased. The fact that the 2008 election had the potential to produce the first woman, first African-American or first Latino president made the election more noteworthy and significant to the media and general population. It also seemed to appeal to a larger pool of multicultural voters –young and old. In addition to the other firsts, for many young people, 2008 was the first open-seat election in which they were eligible to vote. The stakes of the election, in large part due to the media coverage and campaign rhetoric, seemed higher for young people, who for most of their adult life have known our country to be at war and encountering increasing budget deficits and a slide toward a recession. In reviewing the assessments of why young people believe voter turnout increased, there was general consensus among all groups that the media attention, the war in Iraq, and the open seat election caused a great deal of conversation about who will serve as the next president. However, many young people did not find the historic nature of the candidates -in terms of race or gender -to be all that the pundits made of it. Many suggested that they were born in an era where women were doctors and could run for president and where young people are color blind in a way that previous generations were not.

In her interview, one female young professional activist added that while race and gender did not impact who she supported:

For some people who feel more marginalized by politics, they saw either a woman or a person of color who has also traditionally been marginalized in politics. And I think they were able to relate to that and see that “hey, if a woman might be elected president, or if an African American can be elected president, maybe my vote counts. So, I think that people who have not been traditionally interested in politics saw a face of someone unexpected and maybe that at least helped them get a little more involved.

Another female young professional activist in an interview stated:

I think the nature of the field energized a lot of people too. Even if they weren't supporting one of the 'first' candidates, you know, they saw that at least the Democratic Party had an open vision of what could be.

Others acknowledged the fact the caucuses were perceived as “the event” of sorts, as one female high school student leader responded, “Many of my friends were all going together. It was a reason to be social and to get out of the house and do something together.” A Clinton campus organizer stated about the caucuses, “you couldn't avoid it, you couldn't miss it -there was a countdown clock on the television screens and constant live coverage.”

In fact, some young voters were puzzled by the fuss made over increased youth voter turnout in 2008. For example, in the focus group a male college student responded with surprise when I brought up the historic nature of youth voter turnout:

I was brought up in a family and school system to care and to participate. I am sure there are still a lot of young people who don't participate, but I know that many of my friends and the people I hang out with are volunteering and voting.

Youth Voters: Issues of Importance

The focus group discussion spent time talking about the issue positions and characteristics that individuals were looking for in a president. The hype around the caucuses provided for more forums and avenues to learn about presidential candidate issue positions.

The national debate in Iowa tended to focus on three major issues: the war in Iraq and foreign policy as a whole, how to implement affordable health care, and the concepts of experience and change. In terms of issues, high school students and college students tended to identify themselves more with specific “youth issues” such as the environment and college debt while young professionals found the issues they cared about quite similar with mainstream voters above 30.

In interviewing a high school student leader whether or not there are “youth issues,” he responded,

I think so. There are issues that affect young people although they don't realize it. Things like social security and the national debt would be examples. But there are also issues that youth find immediately important: the war, voting rights, Pell Grants.

In the survey data, high school students identified the war and reform/change of system as the reasons they most supported the candidate that they did.

College students identified reform/change of system as their primary policy of importance with the war second. The Iowa State University poll data paints a slightly different picture of college students: 19% of college respondents identified the Iraq War as the most important issue, while 18% of the respondents said they cared most about a combination of issues such as the war, health care, the economy, and social issues. The ISU Poll of college students who participated in the Democratic caucus stands in stark contrast with 31% of Republican college caucus-goers who placed economic issues and 23% who cited social issues such as abortion and same sex marriage as key issues in their decision to support a candidate.

In ranking presidential characteristics, 37% of Democratic college caucus attendees said that the candidate positions on issues was most important, 35% said personal integrity was important, with 10% identifying experience as their most important characteristic in a president. It is interesting to note that anecdotally Senator Clinton seemed to campaign as the “experience” candidate and Senator Obama campaigned as the “change candidate.” The 10% of college students who see experience as the most important characteristic do not seem to match up with the overwhelming support that Senator Clinton received in the ISU Poll and those ideas seem to contradict each other.

Young professionals overwhelmingly identified reform/change of system as the policy they associated most with their candidate. In the summer of 2007, an Iowa poll showed that respondents overwhelmingly wanted “someone who is more likely to change things in Washington” and “someone who will reduce the influence of lobbyists and special interests” and that candidate was Senator Obama with 49% of eligible voters polled (Real Clear Politics 2007). In addition, 46% of the people under thirty polled (Real Clear Politics 2007) stated that they were most likely to vote for Senator Obama. However, the picture is not exactly clear on what young voters want to hear. During an interview, two young professional activists discuss “youth issues:”

- Female: I don't think there are youth issues. I don't think there are women's issues. There are people's issues. It's the same. We cared about the same things that older voters did, but it was...I think it was us paying attention to it for the first time. Or a larger body of people paying attention to those issues for the first time. And maybe the perspective is a little different. Um, because it's our friends that are fighting in Iraq. They are our age. But, it's the same issues.
- Female: Because I think of the 1960s when our parents were involved. I just remember their activism was around a war.

- Male: Take the war out the picture this time around, which is tough to do, but take it out. And what's going to draw you to vote vs. what draws you to vote vs. what draws you to vote? There's isn't...there doesn't seem...in talking to people I know, any... there doesn't seem to be any coalescing issue that draws a young person out to vote. Because I'm not worried about the retirement... or the Social Security check in the mail two years from now. I mean, if you talked to high school students, Social Security is gone. They're not worried about it. It's just not there.
- Female: So you are saying, like, there's no cohesive issue besides the war?
- Same male: Yeah.
- Same female: I would probably agree with that.

The young voters discussed in this section mirror *The Washington Post* entrance poll data in Iowa, which portrayed 17-29 year olds as divided among the top three issues with 34% stating the economy as most important, 33% stating health care as most important, and 32% stating the war in Iraq as most important. In the entrance poll data, nearly three-quarters (73 %) of 17-29 year olds ideologically describe themselves as liberal (including 29% very liberal) while 20% of the respondents consider themselves moderate (Agiesta and Cohen, 2008). The ISU Poll of college students provides substantiation of the entrance poll data in highlighting that 74% of Democratic college caucus-goers considered themselves as somewhat liberal (including 28% very liberal). In *The Washington Post* exit poll data, 26% of 18-29 year olds considered themselves independent and not identifying with a political party. At face value, this information seems to contradict the information from the Harvard Institute of Politics that most young people (age 17.5 – 29) tend to identify themselves as a moderate and middle of the road. However, the logical explanation is that those who caucus tend to be to be more active and more liberal than general youth voters.

Youth Voters: Mobilization Techniques That Worked

Ideological information about individual caucus-goers is important as it helps set the tone and message for mobilization techniques used by campaigns. As noted in the literature review, there is not clarity on whether a partisan or non partisan message works best.

However, young people seem to be attracted to less partisan rhetoric in their comments. What is clear from my discussions is that campaigns and candidates identified and implemented certain youth voter mobilization techniques. Many participants found it hard to recall the specifics of the outreach techniques they experienced; instead, techniques seemed to blend together, causing this “perfect storm” of information about a candidate. However, there were some very clear “winners” and “losers” in terms of effectiveness, even if any one technique did not single handedly convince young people to vote.

The most commonly used outreach technique was email encouraging someone to read an article, visit a website, watch a video, or make a donation. Receivers of the messages were clear to point out that while they skimmed all of them, they often only read the ones from someone they knew or that they had signed up to receive. In addition, all of the focus group participants had visited a candidate web page and highlighted certain features they especially remembered such as such the issues pages and the state specific homepages. One individual specifically mentioned the Obama website, which gave points for every individual activity and action. For instance, if you send an article to someone or make a phone call or donate money, you would receive points. The points are tallied and are publicly available to group members. They spoke with pride of the number of points they had earned. Almost all of the young professional and college students read political blogs, while high school students

tended not to read blogs. With the exception of two individuals, none of the participants did any individual blogging on candidate websites.

Across the board, young people are online and their cell phone and computers are an essential part their daily life and means of communication. Most focus group participants were members of Facebook, My Space, or some other type of social networking site. One young professional leader stated in her interview, “between Facebook and Gmail, I would never leave my computer.” Campaigns reached out to individuals by asking them to join an internet based campaign group and put the candidate logo on their Facebook or My Space page. This discussion of Facebook explains the indirect branding effect that campaigns were all hoping to attain in social networking sites:

I think...like we talked about Facebook groups, supporting someone. Having something like that where your friends see that you are supporting a candidate and that sort of put you out there as someone who has made this decision. You're not throwing it in anyone's face, but you've sort of sent a message that 'Hey, if you're interested in talking about this, here's where I am.'

It is important to note that campaigns used technology as one tool in the toolbox, yet still relied heavily on traditional outreach tactics. All participants enjoyed the door-to-door contact they received, although the contact was often not from a peer but instead a local volunteer, neighbor, or staff person. Most did not recall receiving any youth specific literature, but instead a general brochure with a biography of the candidate or issue positions on the candidate. Consistent with the research, all the participants thought automated “robo-calls” were the most ineffective and “annoying” ways to reach out to individuals.

In addition to using technology and door-to-door canvasses, campaigns strategically used the candidate to reach out to a targeted population. One point that was made very clear by college students and young professionals is that they appreciated when candidates or

representatives came to them in their settings. One survey comment stated, “He [Obama] came to us.” “He [Obama] sent a representative to campus organization meetings for freshman and dorm meetings” said another. Similarly, one young professional highlighted that Michelle Obama met them in a bar to speak to a young professionals gathering, and another highlighted that Governor Richardson attended a *Drinking Liberally* function, which is an organization that describes itself as “an informal, inclusive progressive social group.” In a related question, when asked if a candidate specifically addressed why young people should caucus, all but one respondent said yes. Each individual felt like they had been asked to participate in the political process – through an invitation, an event, and when the campaigns reached out to them after the event to get them involved.

One of the themes evident throughout this research is that young people want to be talked to, but also heard. Consequently, events where the candidate took questions resonated very well with young people. According to the group discussions, most candidates took questions while some candidates definitely seemed more accessible to questions. Individuals often looked at campaign staff and their ability to speak about the issues as a personal reflection of the candidate themselves. The expectation was that campaign workers were an extension of the candidate and therefore should be able to speak to their policy positions. As well, it was not uncommon that respondents highlighted the gender, age, or race of campaign staff in stating that they appreciated the message the campaign sent in having a diverse staff that represented the type of inclusiveness the campaigns hoped to achieve. A diverse staff also allowed for effective peer-to-peer outreach to take place by members of the staff in reaching out to the community.

Peer-to-Peer Contact

The focus group discussion and interviews confirm that peer-to-peer contact makes a difference in prompting young people to attend the caucuses and support a candidate. The most effective contact seemed to be from a personal friend, while the second most effective contact seemed to be from an unknown peer –a high school student, college student, or young professional who was in the same “station in life.” All the respondents had participated in at least one conversation with friends about the process, and all but three participants tried to persuade someone else to support a candidate.

This exchange between two young professionals in an interview highlights the significance of peer-to-peer contact and the role that it plays in choosing a candidate:

Female A: You want to talk about peer-to-peer. Erin A. (Female B) played a big role in my consideration of another candidate. I went into it in the very beginning of the process dead set on a specific candidate and then started to kind of sway a little, and I think Erin picked up on that, and without being intrusive or anything, she kind of put it out there: ‘If you want to talk, I’d love to have a conversation with you about this candidate.’ And that kind of got the wheels turning and then I did my own research. I thought for sure that I knew who I was supporting and then as the process played out because of a lot of, you know, peer-to-peer interaction, I ended up supporting someone else.

Female B: That’s how I made my decision, talking to friends who supported each of the candidates. I think I heard all the candidates or met one-on-one with all the candidates because they are hanging out everywhere, so why not. And then as I talked to my friends who were supporting them, I asked why. What were their top three reasons? And I had talked to a lot of Obama people, so when I was talking to Erin F. it was more like ‘I have my reasons and I have a standard email I can send you,’ but it was more like ‘I’m here to tell you why, and if you want to listen, great.’ And that was about it.

Additionally, one young professional male teacher in an interview stated:

I'm not out to evangelize. I got my candidate, and I really don't care who you support. I guess I'm a libertarian in that respect. You have your reasons. If you come to me...if you're asking questions, I'll give you my reason, but I'm not out to convert the masses, I guess.

In the information collected, the peer influence in colleges did not seem as pronounced as it did with high school and young professionals. Since 90% of the college students caucused in their home location, it might have reduced the effects of peer-to-peer contact and interaction. According to the ISU Poll, in the very few Democratic caucuses where candidates were not viable, there did not seem to be any correlation between candidate choice and friends and neighbors influencing that decision. While almost all college respondents in the poll state that they knew someone at their caucus, it seems that there was a limited persuasion role amongst their friends and neighbors.

Voter Training

The campaigns did an excellent job identifying supporters. Clinton and Obama personnel stated that anywhere from 70 -85% of the Clinton and Obama supporters had not attended a caucus before. Training new voters was a critical component as voting and caucusing are extremely different. The goal of each training was to provide the caucus attendee with just enough information to know where to attend, a little about the process and time commitment, yet not too much information to be intimidated. Therefore, a great deal of resources were spent to train these supporters –the young and the old –on how to attend the upcoming caucuses. Individual respondents agreed that the campaigns did try to explain how the caucuses work – most notably through in person trainings, brochures, and videos.

Several high school students recalled learning about the caucus by reading a brochure given to them by a campaign, by hearing about it while they waited to hear a candidate speak, or through a discussion with a parent or teacher. Interestingly enough, the individuals admit that they had more favorable feelings for the campaigns that took the time to train them to caucus at an event. For instance, one student active in a high school political group stated in his interview:

I want to be treated with respect and not like a number that's just there to watch everything, but at the same time, I want to be, like, really pumped up and excited about what's going on. I want to be involved in what's going on. I don't just want to be treated like the spectator who came and doesn't know anything.

One of the things that stood out was how much young professionals enjoyed the "Caucus and Coronas" events where they learned about issues and the political process in a social setting. In their interview, two young professionals who were active in a civic youth group stated:

Male: I think if you want to stand at the front and learn all about the issue or maybe you want to stand towards the back and have a conversation. And nobody is judging you either way, and you're having a beer and it's very low key. And it doesn't last very long.

Female: Yeah, I think that politics is just this completely...is this very foreign concept, and you think you have to be old and smart and wise to know what politics are, and my roommate was completely confused and almost, like, very intimidated. So they don't even want to mess with it. But I think something like Caucus and Coronas or Drinking Liberally, when people are your age...it won't be some old guy up in a suit explaining to you what politics are and make you feel stupid. That's really the reason she didn't like it...it made her feel dumb because she didn't understand it. And I think when you can put into simplistic terms and have a beer while you're doing it...or a martini or whatever...I think it's very relaxed and it is not as intimidating as people think politics is.

A few young professionals interviewed had viewed an online training video: “I don’t know what this says about my friends and I, but we sat down and watched some of the web videos. I liked the Clinton training video. It was funny.” The video the participant was referring to used the tagline “Caucusing is Easy,” and compared it to other tasks such as dancing, exercising, and singing, which are hard. In each part, there was a different cameo by President Clinton, former Iowa Governor Tom and Christie Vilsack, and Senator Clinton. Other young professionals attended a mock caucus that had been put on by the Young Professionals Civic Committee in which they role played what would happen on caucus night. In the mock caucuses put on by campaigns and interest groups, attendees would pretend caucus for pizza, soda, candy, or a favorite rock band. One Ames college student recalled that she attended a “caucus of the bands” where all the attendees had to caucus for the band of their choice upon conclusion of the band performances, “I will always remember that because the group with the most fans in attendance won. The worst band won, but they had the most friends there.”

Youth Voters: The Caucus Was “The Event”

In the focus group, respondents talked about the caucuses as if it were “the thing to do.” According to focus group members, several social events took place prior to and after the caucuses. Based on the responses, slightly over half combined the caucuses with a social event of some sort. Some had dinner at a friend’s house ahead of time or dinner with their family, while others went to a candidate caucus night party and others still went straight home to bed after the caucuses.

A female young professional who was a leader in the youth community stated the following about a social event she attended on caucus night:

I had friends who supported lots of different candidates, and we didn't go to parties put on by the specific candidates. We went and had drinks afterwards and kind of decompressed and talked about what our experience had been because the caucuses were intimidating before you went but this year. This was a very intimidating caucus during the process because there were so many people and because of the large numbers there was a fair amount of disorganization, so going through what someone's experience had been was helpful afterwards as well.

The feeling that the Iowa caucuses were “the event” was perpetuated by school faculty and parents who played a role in encouraging students to attend the caucus. The teachers were not pushing a candidate, they were just encouraging students to attend. One male high school student in the focus group stated, “My mom went to her first caucus in 1968 and she told me that. I went to the 2004 caucus and was an observer.” These comments illustrate how parents and teachers helped create a feeling that the caucuses were the “it” place to be.

In an interesting twist, a college sorority adviser shared her comments about Senator Obama's campaign on the Drake University campus:

I'm really cautious to say this, because I don't want to trivialize it or trivialize the youth vote because I don't think this is it at all by any means. But, I advise a college sorority, and it was amazing to watch...it's a pretty conservative group of women...but it was fun to watch the sort of Obama wave float through that chapter house. And I think a piece of it was, it became kind of the cool thing to do. You could put it on your Facebook. There were cute T-shirts. And suddenly it became hip to be involved in politics. If you had a candidate, you supported them or went to their events. It became something really acceptable to do.

Youth Voters: I Caucused For...?

While the intent of this project is to identify mobilization techniques that worked in mobilizing young voters, it is also clear that the candidate themselves played an important role in the individual caucusing decisions. According to *Washington Post* exit polls in Iowa, Senator Obama won 57% of support from voters age 17-29, followed next by Senator Clinton at 15% and Senator Edwards at 13% (Agiesta and Cohen, 2008). In many of the discussions with participants, they spoke with an air of emotion and excitement about their choice for president and each had their own personal reason unique to the others.

In her interview, a female young professional leader explained why she supported Senator Obama in the following:

It wasn't just that campaigns were talking to young people; they were empowering them in positions of leadership within the campaign. I think that was something that spoke specifically to me. It wasn't that they were only sending out young professionals to go knocking on doors; they were looking to them in advisory roles and really empowering them to be leaders within the campaign, not just sending them out to do the grunt work. And I think that that sent a very strong message that they were really genuinely interested in what young people were thinking.

In a statement about his support for Senator Edwards, a male high school student from the focus group said, "Senator Edwards appealed to young people who are tired of the Bush Administration and really called for a change." Another high school male in the focus group said, "Talk to me. Don't spew talking points. I liked Joe Biden because he would discuss the issues with me like an adult and not just give catch phrases." Furthermore, explaining her support of Senator Clinton, her volunteer campus coordinator said, "Personally, I just have liked her and have had a lot of respect for her, as a young woman interested in politics. She has always served as a role model to me."

Based on the survey responses of focus group participants, Obama was the overwhelming first choice, followed in the single digits by Clinton and Edwards. This information closely mirrors *The Washington Post* exit poll data. Interestingly, the ISU poll of likely voters prior to the caucus predicted Senator Clinton (30.8 percent) ahead of John Edwards (24.4 percent) and more than 10 percentage points ahead of Barack Obama (20.2 percent) in the Democratic race. At that point, nearly six percent of Democratic respondents don't know who their top choice will be.

When focus group participants were asked why they believed Senator Obama most effectively reached out to young people, comments included:

“He encouraged young people to caucus.”

“He was the only one who made the case that young people should caucus.

“Many other candidates tried to score points by discouraging out of state college participation.”

“A lot of young people are optimistic that we can change the system, as opposed to gaming it affectively. Obama’s message spoke to young people for that reason.”

These comments specifically about Obama are relevant because the underlying theme is that he sought out and pursued the youth vote, a central idea in this research.

Campaigns: Strategic Decisions and Resource Allocation

As in any campaign, candidates made strategic and resource allocation decisions in the Iowa caucuses. This section highlights conversations with campaign leadership and staff. Based on interviews, the Obama campaign put a significant amount of staff time and resources into the youth vote; the Edwards campaign, although limited in resources, targeted young people; and the Clinton campaign did not focus on the youth vote in any type of

systematic way. The one consensus area is that they worked hard to provide caucus education for their supporters, regardless of age.

Strategy plays a significant role in youth outreach. One Clinton youth organizer in his interview stated:

Conventional wisdom on the campaign is that no candidate has ever effectively increased turnout significantly and that Obama would be unlikely to do that. Remember Dean? Quite frankly, we wrote it off. Because of the early timing of the Iowa caucuses, we knew many college students would not be on campus to caucus. Historically, we also knew that youth don't show up. It was a strategic decision that was made - our best supporters were women over 50 and that is what defined our field program. It was a resource allocation decision.

In fact, two Clinton organizers were explicit that youth were not their target group. One field organizer in their interview stated:

I don't even know if I'm supposed to say this, but my regional field director specifically...when I got those results back from my intern about what people were saying in the (high) school, I wanted to organize around it and she told me not to. And so I think that part of it was strategic on the campaign's part, saying, 'You're not even going to get them, so don't waste your time.' And so we didn't.

The Edwards campaign staff recalls:

As we started the campaign, youth outreach was set as a priority. (As the campaign progressed) the youth vote had not been our strongest target as we were looking at research; therefore, we looked to the youth vote to expand our support in terms of persuasion and to build our volunteer and activist networks. The campaign also found that a wise strategy was the reach out to high school students in rural areas: I think we had an appeal in particular to many Iowa youth who had come from or continued to live in the more rural areas of the state in particular because they knew that John Edwards had also been in their shoes. In terms of resources, we were limited financially with what we could spend in Iowa due to public financing. Therefore we had to make some hard decisions, which did not allow us to spend as much money on youth outreach as we would have liked to.

In contrast, the Obama campaign had a full-time youth organizer with four field assistants, whose job was to “turn out youth voters, specifically those who attended educational institutions.” Part of Obama’s winning strategy was to identify new voters to the caucus to exceed past turnout. The most likely universes were young people, independents, and minorities. Toward that end, the Obama organizer in her interviews stated the following:

I had a lot of resources. The senior staff was behind this program and the field staff bought into it. I got a lot of back up. Here’s an anecdotal story....when the campaign manager went door knocking with a brand new field organizer and they passed a high school and the campaign manger asked the field organizer if he had gone to the high school yet. The campaign manager said, that school is going to be the key to your success. In that precinct, on caucus night, Obama only got one delegate, but it was because 15 students came and got him enough to get him a delegate. While some people are quick to think we were wasting our time on youth, there are so many anecdotes where we picked up supporters because they were so excited to see young people attending meetings and events.

Campaigns: Youth Strategy and Mobilization Techniques that Worked

Trying to identify new youth supporters who are not registered to vote or who are registered in their home community is a challenge to youth organizers across the country. While there are 365 high schools and 60 colleges and universities in Iowa, there is no dataset that is readily available for campaigns to utilize for identification and persuasion purposes. Therefore, the way for campaigns to identify and persuade student supporters is to get them to come to you.

Based on the interviews, high school outreach ran the spectrum from systematic to random. The Obama organizer explained the following about the campaign’s outreach:

Our field organizers were given a goal to set up BarackStar chapters in all the Tier I and Tier II counties in Iowa. The goal of the BarackStar chapter was to help create a buzz and get additional students who would commit to caucus

for Senator Obama. We really let the local field organizers figure out within their region what worked best. Some students put entries in parades, others had bake sales for Barack, while others may have had one meeting. We also always invited high school and college students to everything, and we always did a high school photo with Barack. The students took a photo with him and they were much more attached. We knew if they would caucus, who they would caucus for.

Both the Edwards and Obama campaigns' outreach focused on using young people as volunteers and both targeted rural high schools. When the caucuses were established, Democratic leaders set up a system that rewards individuals who campaign in rural areas. As Roger Simon of the Politico website (2008) describes it:

The turnout in some precincts is so small that a single family--let's say four people--can determine the winner. In other precincts, only one person will show up and win for his candidate by being the only person in the room. In small-turnout caucus meetings, ties are resolved by a coin toss or drawing lots. In 2004, four precincts saw literally no one show up to vote in the Democratic caucus. Strategically, based on the caucus math, a caucus in rural Iowa is significant and could provide significant gains in the overall caucus math.

In high schools across the state, students were just returning to school after winter break on caucus day, Thursday, January 3. The Obama campaign had a specific GOTV high school operation that worked diligently to provide a last-minute reminder to high school students and their government teachers. They provided high school students with stickers that said "Barack the Caucus" and sent out high school locker posters, "We wanted kids to have some way to show their support publicly within the confines of where they were," stated the Obama youth organizer.

Identifying supporters on college campuses presented more of a challenge. "Tabling, going to events, internet sign ups were the most common ways to gather data on college campuses," said a Clinton organizer. The Obama youth director stated:

Bringing Senator Obama to college campuses was a great way to bring people in – to get them to hear. Once we got them there and got them to hear, they would see the excitement and that they were a part of it. They never left without us obtaining their college and home addresses so we could follow up with them if school was not in session.

In response to a particular Obama college event, the Clinton organizer stated:

Obama had an advantage by coming in February for his announcement tour – not where he got all of his support but certainly a large group of people who liked him then stayed with him throughout. They didn't really go to see other candidates.

The Obama campaign had literature geared toward young people and a Students for Barack Obama DVD that they distributed to be shown at dorm meetings:

We had our out-of-state college students for Obama chapters call Iowa college students to ask for their support and identify them and their support level. We got a decent amount of supporters out of it. We had the resources – all the out-of-state students were anxious to help. The message from college students was 'we're in this together.' On caucus day, we also did GOTV specific calls to young people from out-of-state students which seemed a good way to remind them, 'this is a student, our moment is now.'

The most commonly used outreach technique to young people was through internet communications such as email, social networking sites, and You Tube videos. Each campaign used email, and that was reflected in the individual surveys from the respondents. The Clinton, Edwards, and Obama campaigns all produced comical and inspirational videos, often posted on YouTube, which included celebrities encouraging people to caucus or get involved in some way. Some campaigns also used Facebook as an organizing tool. The Obama youth director said:

I think that Facebook was absolutely amazing – we could create events and could communicate and build very quickly and always know what was going on. It helped us organization wise and we used it to get answers to questions.

John Edwards' campaign also recognized the value of online media as well, "We spent a great deal of time focused on online networking, blogging, etc. in order to reach students in their own lives through mediums that they utilized most."

Campaigns: Candidate Time Devoted to Youth

As mentioned earlier, campaigns must make strategic resource decisions which include how a candidate spends their time. In an assessment of how Senator Edwards used his time to reach out to youth, his campaign staffer said the following:

We utilized Senator and Elizabeth Edwards time to reach out to the youth vote in a number of ways: town halls addressing education, brain drain, etc. targeting issues that students care most about; college forums and events; small clutches with students to talk about the campaign and issues that matter to them; phone calls from Senator Edwards and Elizabeth Edwards...(We had a) student group that helped advise the campaign with regular calls that Senator or Elizabeth Edwards participated on, regular blogging, and online activities to keep the youth updated on the campaign.

Senator Obama's campaign pointed to the high-school photos that he did at the end of each event in which they combined caucus training so that young people would leave having learned about the upcoming caucuses. They stressed that he always took questions:

I always pushed for questions. Why? We didn't want to take students for granted that they were automatically going to support Barack....We had to show them some type of concrete reasons for Barack....After seeing Barack, these high school students would go home to their Edwards parents or Hillary parents or Republican parents and their parents were going to challenge them. Kids don't feel a lot of faith in the political world – and when they were inspired, well, we just wanted to give them some back up. They always left having heard from the candidate, taken a photo with him, and with some literature they could look at.

Senator Clinton's travel brought her to Iowa colleges and universities, but

often they were community events that were not necessarily geared toward college students. “The planting question thing made us a little more tentative,” stated the youth organizer for Senator Clinton. The organizer is referring to an incident that took place on November 6, 2008, in Newton, Iowa, where a campaign aide planted a question to be asked of Senator Clinton which referred to a particular aspect of her campaign plan that the campaign wanted to highlight that day. For several days following, individuals and pundits referred to this event as “Plantgate.”

Campaigns: The Candidates Image and Their Appeal to Youth?

Young people also look at characteristics and qualities such as age and image in addition to their position on issues. This perception often seemed to impact the way they favorably or unfavorably viewed a candidate. In discussing whether young people were attracted to Senator Clinton, her organizer said the following:

I don't think they were. I think one of the problems we had was that the Obama campaign did a very effective branding of their candidate. Senator Clinton is difficult to make her seem young, hip, and cool. HRC can't claim she isn't a politician. He [Obama] connected more. He was a little different, the way some saw Bill Clinton as a generational candidate...I think younger students and younger females don't have the same connection to HRC as older women do. They never really felt they were limited in any way or discriminated.

Posing the same question to the Obama organizer, she responded, “He seems fresh; he seems new; he seems younger, not their parents' age.” The Edwards campaign explained that he appealed to youth:

Because John Edwards and Elizabeth Edwards took the time to listen to their concerns—through our policies, which addressed the issues that they cared most about including college for everyone, a rural revitalization act, etc.

Interest Groups: Their Role in Youth Voter Turnout

Interest groups played an important supporting role to presidential campaigns in engaging and educating the caucus electorate. There were two different types of interest groups that were active during the Iowa caucuses. The civic participation groups such as Rock the Vote and New Voters Project mainly focused on voter registration and caucus participation, the former at high schools and the latter at the ten largest Iowa educational institutions. Other groups such as the ONE campaign, Save Darfur, and Iowans for Sensible Priorities targeted young people to attend their caucuses and support a particular issue.

In an interview discussing their tactics, an organizer for New Voters Project stated the following:

In April 2007 we announced a national campaign entitled ‘What’s your plan?’ to get presidential candidates talking about youth issues. We trailed candidates in Iowa at town hall meetings and through birdogging techniques, asked questions about how they will stop global warming and address the issue of college affordability. Students would ask the questions. This was both to show presidential candidates that youth were listening, and we also sought to grab media attention. We had over 20 conversations with presidential candidates. We had students who we recruited through pledge cards who asked the questions...

The techniques of most of the groups required finding supporters who would invite them into their high school or college, as was the case of the New Voters Project:

We did a class rap where you came into the class and a student or the New Voters Project staff will make a class announcement, pass out information, and fill out a pledge card to vote. The basic message was the New Voters message (of empowerment and involvement and making a difference). We had cards and asked people to identify the candidate(s) that they were interested in as well as to ask for volunteers.

In the interview with Rock the Vote, one of the people involved in the Iowa field strategy stated the following:

Rock the Vote had previous experience in high school organizing. We found that if you can get inside the school, get inside for assemblies that will be the most successful mechanism. We targeted the largest schools in the largest cities (Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Quad Cities). We tried to get into classrooms. It was touch and go – mostly cold calling – some teachers were much more receptive. Having the name Rock the Vote was always helpful. It was a brand. They know who you are and some of the most enthusiastic teachers understood the power of our brand and our organizing model. We pitched this as a ‘lets get information to your students about the caucus, how to caucus, and get them to pledge to attend the caucus.’ In some schools, we could do a five-minute presentation; in others, we could do an hour assembly. We always wanted to teach the basics, such as what is the caucus. It is a very confusing, hard to understand process, and if you don’t know where to go, what to bring you are much less likely to not attend. We worked to demystify the process.

By far, the event that Rock the Vote was most proud of and found the most successful were the two after-school parties they held on caucus day:

“We threw massive parties with DJs, allowed students to make your own public service announcements, had voting information, had pizza, and lots of materials. For some of these students, their caucus locations were in the school or library or in walking distance. We kept everyone there after school and then walked over to the caucus location. We had a few hundred students in each location. We were lucky; we had administration buy in and the student government promoted it. There was definitely an element of fun in this and there was the peer pressure element to this: if your neighbors and friends are going, you feel a little pressure to attend as well.”

Rock the Vote, through its partnership with Facebook, also invited all eligible youth voters to caucus. Based on the number of young people who are online with Facebook, this was probably the largest single email to young voters in Iowa, who in most cases were not yet identified in the Secretary of State data since many were first- time voters. They also used the technology to post information about the caucuses, according to the Rock the Vote coordinator:

Using the Facebook page, it was very interactive. They had to RSVP, but also this was a great place to get information, do wall posts, and use the message features. The wall post feature was great – people would post questions or

comments. It was fun to watch peer-to-peer convincing taking place unfiltered right in front of your eyes. Young people were trying to convince and also had some very practical questions. This was another tool to allow people to interact but didn't replace the necessary traditional organizing.

The issue-based campaigns all used the same mechanism, which was a pledge card. In each case, they would identify supporters and ask them to commit to caucus for their cause by filling out a pledge card. Supporters were then contacted through calls and email to remind them to turn out and caucus for their issue and provide any information and details on the caucuses. Save Darfur and Iowans for Sensible Priorities had a much more targeted youth strategy, whereas the ONE campaign seemed to focus on youth as just one piece of their outreach puzzle. Each organization had different goals, but they ranged from finding 1,000 to 10,000 supporters of their cause who would commit to participating in the 2008 Iowa caucuses.

In each of these cases, these organizations had a limited budget, anywhere from one to five staff, and were provided some basic materials and “schwag,” those trinkets, tee-shirts, and things that groups hand out for visibility. Based on the expenditures put into the state and the conversations with staff, there was a recognition that their strategy was more topical and free media based than a serious attempt at massive grassroots mobilization.

This is the story of Democratic youth voter turnout in the 2008 Iowa caucuses. If the general election contest stays on the trajectory of an Obama – McCain race in the fall, there will be numerous state narratives written about youth voter turnout in the primaries and what, if any, implications it had on the 2008 presidential general election.

Chapter 6. Discussion

The interconnected stories of Iowa's young caucus-goers, presented in the prior section, confirms my speculation that youth voters, when mobilized with specific research tested techniques, increase their caucus participation rate. To be clear, there are many underlying variables that influence the decision of young people to participate in the political process. This analysis recognizes the role that family, media, religion, socioeconomic status political party affiliation and the nature of the times play in shaping individual opinions and attitudes to participate. The significance of my work and its contributions to theory development will be to identify what techniques were most effective in getting young people to participate in the caucuses. Further, the story recounted by young Iowans brings home the point that young voters in Iowa are really not that different than regular voters, except in the medium or mechanism through which they are contacted.

This section begins with several overarching themes that have broad implications and support the overall theory that particular outreach techniques increased voter turnout in the caucuses. First, each age group - high school, college and young professionals responded to different types of voter mobilization techniques depending on their station in life. Next, the social nature of the caucus led young people to genuinely enjoy the political process. Also, political campaigns recognized the importance of improving the political efficacy of all voters. Lastly, campaign resources were allocated to youth voter turnout in varying degrees depending on their significance to the larger campaign plan. The discussion section concludes with an analysis of the individual research questions.

High school students took their job as an Iowa caucus-goer very seriously. In large part due to the media hype and attention, these students recognized the value and the honor

of the role they were able to play in being an eligible caucus-goer. Toward that end, as inspectors of presidential candidates, they attended events, asked questions, spoke with their friends and parents, and remain involved and keenly aware of the upcoming general election.

What was also striking was how many high school students were surprised at my historical comments on youth voter apathy and how irrelevant and non-descriptive they were of their generation - the Millennials. When students were invited to be a part of the process, they willingly and logically rose to the challenge. These students have actively been involved in their school and community, and several had volunteered or interned for a political candidate during the school year. Individuals were given an opportunity to serve in campaign leadership roles for their high schools and that assisted in teaching leadership skills to a new generation. This is important because it provides further evidence to the argument provided by Harvard Institute of Politics and The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement that the Millennial generation is paving a broader path in activism beyond just volunteering and civic activity such as signing petitions, but specifically in the political act of voting over the past three elections (2004, 2006, 2008). It also provides potential good news for increased voting rates and the Millennial Generation. The generational theory put forth by Craig and Bennett (1997) states that those with a strong attachment to the political process developed early in life remain called to participate in record numbers throughout their lives.

As we move from high school to college students, the research collected tells a slightly different story of campaign activism. It is difficult to know exactly how many of the 18.5-29 year olds who caucused were college students, yet the impression is that their campaign involvement heavily utilized social networking sites. The on-the-ground operations

were dependent on the activity level of the student leadership established at each college and university. While each campus had a field organizer who was responsible for a particular geographic area, it seems that there was a lack of on campus leadership to help channel and focus the necessary peer-to-peer interaction on college campuses. This is not to say that college students did not caucus or were not active, but instead to point out that the contextual situation they were in could have impacted their caucus experience dramatically. These students may have been more likely to sign up for Facebook groups or be involved in email persuasion and less likely to show up to a group meeting on campus. In terms of the bigger picture, the one thing that was clear from the college students is that they were asked to participate, they valued that and factored that into their decision making process. Most typically, the ask was in the form of a candidate coming to their institution or the campaign staff or student groups asking them to be involved.

As we move next to young professionals, it is important to remember that many of the participants in the focus group had attended a presidential caucus in 2000 or 2004. What was extremely evident and distinguished this experience from their former elections was that campaigns sought out young professionals as a group and tried to engage them in the political process while recognizing their station in life. The notion that a campaign would come to them, ask them to provide input on the issues that were on their minds and create a social setting to channel this behavior was held in high regard by young professionals. The assertion that campaigns identified specific avenues to reach out to high school and college students and young professionals is of critical importance to and supports my speculation that techniques and outreach should be specific to the audience and age group.

Young people had fun at the caucuses. While it is not critical that there is a correlation between civic duty and entertainment value, it was certainly helpful to encourage and continue to pull people into the political process. This result supports the work of Elizabeth Addonizio (2006) which recognized the correlation between political participation and the social aspect of the political act. As a result of a good first experience during the caucus process, it could be speculated that these young people will return to the polls again in the fall and in future caucuses and elections if mobilized and inspired.

In using the thoughts of Matthews (1994), campaigns sought to engage individuals in non-typical ways. They held community service drives such as Earth Day Action rallies where they planted trees. They sought to engage them in a conversation about issues by holding policy roundtables with the candidate, policy experts, or staff. These efforts support Hansen's (1985) conclusion that people get involved where there are political opportunity structures accessible and available to them. Research based techniques such as face-to-face discussions and conversations about youth agendas proposed by Strachan (2007) were effectively implemented. As stated in my research question, providing young people alternative avenues to participate in a social setting recognizes the value that young people place on social networking and peer-to-peer opportunities.

Campaigns recognized the value of improving individual political efficacy in young voters. In an effort to improve internal political efficacy, they implemented training programs to assist an individual in feeling confident about the political act of caucusing. This confirms the work of Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) which shows that voters are more likely to participate in the election if they feel confident in their political knowledge. Toward that end, a significant part of the caucus strategy was to educate supporters on the candidate, the

issues, and the process, usually in that order. The interviews with young professionals also confirm that the message that resonated most was a change in course from the direction the country was heading. One could speculate that in supporting a candidate who sought to change Washington and end the war in Iraq, the candidate improved their external political efficacy or belief in responsiveness of political institutions to individual demands.

Young people were very focused on the issue discussions between the candidates. The war dominated the issue discussion, but was followed closely with the economy and health care, and similarly reflected the research of Tedesco, McKinney, and Kaid (2007) in their issue salience study. While individuals have the same issues of importance, they tended to look at it through different lenses depending on their age and perspective. With young people, the relevance of the war often from the perspective of that of their friends who might be going to war or the way the world perceived us. Older individuals may view the war and the way they think about it using a moral or economic framework. Young people confirmed my theoretical assertion that when provided meaningful, effective opportunities for training and political information, they will take advantage of those opportunities.

Campaigns recognized the role that political socialization played in the development of individual attitudes. Individual viewpoints had been shaped and impacted by family members, teachers, and churches long before the presidential candidates came rolling into Iowa. The interviews clearly point to the important role that family members and teachers played in the caucus education process. This data supports past findings by (McClurg 2003) and Nickerson (2008) about the role of family and friends in political affiliation and candidate support. Recognizing the role of the influence of parents and teachers, campaigns encouraged young supporters to reach out to their parent or grandparent or teacher to talk

about their support of a particular candidate. However, several anecdotes confirmed that while parents and teachers expected them to go to the caucus, there was more dissension in the ranks this year over which candidate each family member would support. While it was not a large part of the discussion, individual interviews confirm that this election may have caused families to choose different political parties and different candidates within those political parties. Regardless of who supported what candidate, peer-to-peer contact was encouraged by the campaign as a valuable persuasion tactic.

Presidential campaigns made strategic choices given the time and resources available to them. Systematic, targeted mobilization of young people in their educational and social settings effectively increased youth voter turnout. Therefore, while every campaign may have had at least a token youth strategy, the interviews provided a much clearer picture indicating that some candidates put more time and resources into the promise of high school students, college students, and young professionals than others based on their strategic value to the campaign. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) have described their mobilization theory as a two-way street in that it is necessary to have strategic mobilization and individual motivation. The techniques and avenues that campaigns in Iowa utilized to engaged youth voters combined with the energy and enthusiasm that young people exuded for their candidates was an excellent example of the “two-way street.” Campaigns used direct and indirect mobilization techniques to activate supporters. Direct mobilization techniques such as person-to-person contact through door-to-door canvassing and other peer-to-peer forms of communication such as Facebook and email. Even more successfully, campaigns indirectly mobilized individuals by relying on individuals who are centrally positioned within large social networks. They identified people who were well respected with large networks of friends and

sought to persuade them to support their candidate. Examples of this include contacting the senior class president, the captain of the football team, the college sorority president or the head of a young professionals or young lawyers group.

Next, the research questions are answered.

Research Question 1: Did peer-to-peer contact and social networking opportunities increased youth attendance at the Iowa caucuses.

What was evident in the discussions was that peer-to-peer contact among high school students, college students, and young professionals were quite organic in nature. Since the Iowa caucuses had attracted so much attention, it was a common discussion topic in classrooms, dorms, and bars all across the state. The conversations show that teachers, parents, and friends alike were tuned into Iowa politics and prepared to have conversations about the candidates and the process. Campaigns, however, served as the catalyst and were responsible for setting the goals and providing the infrastructure for those who wanted to be involved in a systematic peer-to-peer voter outreach plan.

Campaigns, to various degrees, provided the goals for young people who wanted to be involved. Most notable was the systematic structure of the Obama youth outreach plan, in which each “station in life” had a field plan with specific goals. The high school plan was to create BarackStar chapters in Tier I and II counties and to find 20 members who would commit to attend the caucus. They were provided with incentives, “schwag,” and youth-specific information about the candidate to support the chapter. Obama’s secondary education outreach plan was to create a campus chapter at the sixty largest educational institutions, while the young professionals plan included hosting some type of social event in

each of the Top 10 metropolitan counties. The specificity and measurability of the plan is important to point out, because the difference between the Obama campaign and the Clinton and Edwards campaigns appears to be that the Obama campaign aggressively pursued these goals as a necessity to meet their win goal, while the Clinton and Edwards campaign responded rather than pursuing interest from high school students, college students, and young professionals. To be clear, this is not saying that the Clinton and Edwards campaign did not do any youth outreach. As the research shows, they did reach out into the youth community; however the distinction I am drawing is that it was not systematic, and without tangible, measurable, and specific tasks and goals.

Young people are online, regularly reading their email and checking Facebook and My Space on a regular basis. The ability of the user to check friends' online profiles, see what groups they joined, and what events they are attending, allows young people, in an indirect way, to announce the candidate they were supporting.

The interviews and research provide reinforcement to James Q. Wilson's theory (1973) that people participate to maintain or strengthen friendships or social interaction through receipt of solidary rewards. The number of individuals who went to the caucuses with friends, or at the request of friends, or participated in some type of social event prior to or upon conclusion of the caucuses strongly supports this idea.

As the caucus was so well publicized by the media, it had the feel of an event that young people did not want to miss that was unique to Iowa. As evidenced by the comments about sorority girls attending the caucus and Rock the Vote pre-caucus parties, these events took on a social feel. This is not to say that people did not comprehend the seriousness of the event, because the youth who took two hours of their time to attend the caucus obviously

assessed the costs and benefits associated with their participation. The perception, whether hyped or real, was that the caucuses were the thing to do in Iowa on January 3. Information and stories provided support for the idea that social networking and peer-to-peer contact influenced young individuals' decisions to participate in the Iowa Democratic caucuses.

Research Question 2: Did voter training make the caucus process seem simple and accessible?

Research shows that the greater the internal efficacy of an individual, the more likely her or she is to participate. Campaigns did an excellent job training individuals for the purpose of improving their political information, or internal efficacy, with the end result of youth attendance and participation.

To that end, the parties spoke about the caucus as a simple, easy process. Each campaign tried to outdo the other with funny videos, five-point fact sheets, mock caucuses, or other techniques to make the caucuses seem accessible. One campaign offered free babysitting (Obama), another campaign brought platters of food to the caucuses so missing dinner was not a barrier to participation (Clinton), while another campaign provided snow shovels in case there was a snow storm on January 3 (Clinton). The campaigns were acutely aware that there were a lot of barriers to participation in the Iowa caucuses and worked hard to alleviate any burdens on the individual caucus-goers.

With a large number of supporters who had not caucused before, the campaigns were running a multiple track campaign to ensure that the caucus-goer was effectively informed about what to expect. Most campaigns had help phone lines set up if people had questions at the last minute, could not find their caucus location, or were confused about the process. In

addition, the campaign precinct captains had been trained on the intricacies of the caucus rules and eligibility issues that might arise on caucus evening.

Campaigns were creative in using incentives to get their supporters educated about the caucus process. Using varying techniques which appealed to multiple learning styles, individuals were able to improve their political efficacy by learning about the caucus process in large groups or in the comfort of their own home.

The Obama campaign effectively used surrogate Oprah Winfrey as an education tool. If people wanted to receive tickets to the campaign event featuring Winfrey, they had to attend a caucus training session. At the event, they watched a “skit” about the caucus process. Iowans for Sensible Priorities held a “how to caucus” contest and asked for video entries with the winner being emailed out to a large membership list. All groups utilized educational strategies by making the caucus training interactive through use of a mock caucus. In these mock caucuses, individuals actually went through the process of making a public declaration about some type of item and became comfortable with the agenda and actions caucus night would entail. This information supports the idea that voter training improved internal political efficacy and led to increased turnout among Democratic youth caucus-goers.

Research Question 3: Did young voters attend the 2008 Iowa caucuses because they were asked and felt wanted?

Presidential candidates who campaign in Iowa have a long standing tradition of “courting” Iowa’s caucus-goers. The candidates take the time to get to know these individuals, to hear their ideas and concerns, and to share their vision for the country. Prior presidential candidates, such as Howard Dean in 2004, worked to establish a systematic

youth outreach program in Iowa. Presidential campaigns of the past have made efforts to reach youth voters through youth organizations on campus. However, a great deal of what a campaign or candidate did in Iowa was based on targeting and strategy using a list of past Iowa caucus-goers and their voting history. Therefore, Iowa's youth had long been ignored not only because they did not participate as much, but because they were not typical caucus-goers and often not on the voter registration or caucus attendee lists provided to campaigns. Pertinent to my research is the "neglection" theory postulated by Richard Thau, which cites a cycle of neglect that takes place when politicians do not pay much attention to young adults because they do not vote enough; and young adults non-voting because they do not know enough and candidates and political ad campaigns ignore them. The most striking and conclusive information comes from participants who caucused because a candidate asked them to caucus. To be clear, this is not to say that they caucused blindly for the first person who asked, but young people paid careful attention to the candidate that most effectively reached out to them in their station in life.

The 2008 Iowa caucus process saw some presidential candidates parading in front of youth the way they parade in front of powerful Democratic voting blocs such as American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL CIO) and League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). Indeed, this information is telling us that young voters should be approached and asked to get involved in the political process because the asking makes the difference. One of the most significant reasons for increased caucus participation among young people is because they were asked or invited into the process.

On final reflection, beyond the story of youth voter participation in the Iowa caucuses, it is important to note that overall voter turnout in the caucus process in Iowa almost doubled. This is significant because the same old strategies implemented by Iowa caucus campaigns of the past were not enough this year. “New” people and “young” people, traditionally nonvoters, became the secret weapon of presidential campaigns.

Young people participated at the same rate as older Iowans. “In Iowa, youth were 22% of the electorate, outperforming their share of eligible voters and comprising a higher portion of the electorate than the so-called reliable seniors” (Connery 2007). This provides an individual case that contradicts Verba and Nie’s (1972) findings that older people tend to vote more than younger people. This year, traditional nonvoters heard a different voice. Young people, while only one part of the targeted population for a winning strategy, were one of the key universes Senator Obama focused on to add new participants to the caucus process.

Over the next several decades, political scientists will look at the 2008 caucus turnout to assess if the numbers were an outlier or an emerging trend. It is imperative that they recognize that this was not just the story of Barack Obama, but more important, it was the story of how candidates and campaigns understood that all voters want to be asked, all respond to the same research tested mobilization theories, and young voters respond best to candidates who find them in their “station in life.”

Chapter 7. Conclusion

The increase in youth voter turnout in Iowa has broad, urgent implications for our country. Imagine a society where youth voters are voting at the same rate as older voters and the ramifications on the public policy and the political process are powerful.

First and foremost, the political terrain and roadmap to victory for candidates who seek elected office is no longer safe and obvious. It requires candidates to be in touch with the issues and ideas of a broader electorate and less able to be manipulated by special interests and powerful interest groups.

Second, youth voters who expand the electorate imply increased power in the hands of the Democratic Party. Youth voters of the late 20th Century and the present are typically more open minded and politically moderate to somewhat liberal. An expanded progressive electorate that seems to be more open and tolerant than its predecessors means the White House, United States Congress, and statehouses across the country will look even more like the America in which we live.

Third, an expanded electorate to include young people will elect multicultural, gender-balanced leadership that can more accurately pinpoint the issues our expanding country is facing. It will force meaningful debates on significant public policy issues such as immigration and trade that have been left on the sidelines as political hot potatoes. Since elections are no longer guaranteed, real action will be demanded and politicians held accountable.

Lastly, for many voters, what began as a first time “civic act” becomes a lifelong civic skill. With increased internal political efficacy, individuals are more likely to become recurrent voters, and also more active in their local communities and churches. This simple

act has the potential to rekindle the individual desire to be connected to a larger community and increased associational life.

In approaching this research question, my goal was to provide knowledge that would have a cumulative effect that could continue to advance scientific research in the field of political science. My research confirms that there is something happening out there, and it is the changing face of youth political activism. Toward that end, I have provided a brief insight into the types of techniques that campaigns are using and the way individual high school students, college students, and young professionals perceive these techniques. I think the most obvious, yet meaningful conclusion, is that when young people are asked to participate in the political process, they do.

While my research is qualitative and does not withstand the large n survey data test to make generalizations, there does seem to be a significant relationship between increased Democratic youth voter turnout and the role campaigns and candidates played in orchestrating peer-to-peer contact and voter training opportunities. These findings support my proposition that voter turnout in the Iowa Democratic caucuses increased because research tested mobilization techniques, specific to young people, were implemented in an effective and systematic way in Iowa to communicate to young voters. In sum, the focus group, interviews and surveys conducted for this project give us a good picture of this phenomenon, one that will need to be confirmed by subsequent research.

In thinking through the information gathering process I utilized in this project, there are four recommendations for future replication. First, recognize that high school students, college students and young professionals are at different stations in life and hold three different focus groups reflective of that. To the degree that it is possible, meet with these

individuals on their “turf,” – such as local high schools, colleges, and in the case of young professionals, after work in a social setting. Second, to accurately measure the effectiveness of particular techniques, utilize an over time research approach that does not only rely on a snapshot in time upon conclusion of the event. This technique may be useful in helping to draw out things which were more or less influential during the voter decision making process. Third, use extreme caution when interviewing human subjects, especially minors. When conducting research in an educational association, especially a high school, the consent of the Superintendent, as well as the school, in addition to approval from the subject and their parents is strongly recommended. Most institutions have research policies in place which require you to seek prior approval to collect information on their students. Last, include government teachers or educators who could speak to the civic skills and civic training process taking place in the classrooms which could speak more broadly to how outside groups are assisting in influencing internal political efficacy. In providing a brief overview of lessons learned, I now turn to focus on future areas of research.

While this case study focused solely on Democratic caucus participants, it warrants the question, “How different would your results have been if you had been able to talk to Republican caucus-goers, youth activists and staff?” History recalls that Democrats have not always been the winner of the youth vote. In the 1984 and 1988 presidential elections, Presidents Reagan and Bush both won over 50% of the youth vote. While the pool of Republican youth caucus attendees was smaller in 2008, it is quite possible that the two of the three assumptions would hold true. It warrants further investigation to confirm if peer to peer contact and the candidate ask improved youth participation. The one element that may

not increase turnout for Republicans is caucus training, as the nature of their caucuses are quite straightforward and similar to regular voting and require limited caucus education.

An additional area of research specific to certain youth voters would be to focus on the lesser known, neglected populations within the youth vote. Specifically, there is a plethora of research on college age voters, yet very little research information on high school students and young professionals. In high schools, the role that campaigns and civic groups play in engaging young people in the class room could be measured. The role that the government teacher plays in content education and civic skill training could be analyzed. A specific study of this voting group could help identify the role that social networking or peer to peer influence plays in the voter decision making process.

Lastly, in highlighting the past research of Elizabeth Addonizio (2006) and enhancing the interviews with Rock the Vote, what specific roles do “parties at the caucuses” play in increasing caucus turnout. This research could assess the role that campaigns and civic groups played in putting together such events. A research question could ascertain if it was more successful to gather people together in a neighborhood and then caucus together, or if instead, it was more effective to have people caucus, and then socialize upon ending.

In conclusion, it will be incredibly helpful to continue research in the area of youth voter mobilization techniques. As researchers continue to assess what the most predictable variable is in determining voter turnout, there are two factors which must be recognized. First, the presidential candidate and the nature of the times will impact youth voter turnout. Will Ronald Reagan and Barack Obama draw different responses than John McCain or John Kerry? The candidates themselves are a very significant causal factor in youth voter turnout. Second, the time and resources that a campaign or party puts into the youth vote will impact

turnout. I believe that any outreach pays some dividends, regardless of the candidate. However, the overlay of a “youth candidate” pays extremely high dividends for the campaign and the candidate.

I became a government teacher because I was passionate about involving young people in the political process. As someone who has worked in government and on political campaigns, I seem to continuously go back and forth between employment in education, government, and politics. In the winter of 2007, in large part because of my passion to involve young people in the political process, I made the decision to begin work with Senator Barack Obama’s presidential campaign. While I was teaching in the spring semester, I served as a part-time adviser to the campaign and then began full time as the senior Iowa adviser for Senator Obama. I served in that position through the end of the Iowa caucuses. Since then, I have served in a variety of other capacities with the Obama campaign.

I believe this disclosure is important, because much of the information shared in this research points to things that the Obama campaign did right in its outreach to young people. I want to be clear that all of this information and research was done in an unbiased fashion and outreach was done to individuals who were employed by or supported all the Democratic candidates. I would encourage anyone who is concerned about such bias to review comments, poll numbers, and observations well noted in the polls and by the punditry on a regular basis regarding Senator Obama’s appeal to youth.

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Appendix A Focus Group Moderator Guide

1. Sign In – Receive Name Tag. Point Out Bathrooms. Point out refreshments

2. Welcome. Thank you for coming. (00:00:00)

3. Announcements and information on session length.

4. Introduction and Role of the Moderator

5. Broad Statement of the Objective of the Group

“We are here to have a discussion about techniques used by presidential campaigns and civic groups and individual motivations for going to the Iowa caucuses. The purpose of this study is to study the reasons youth voter turnout (age 17 ½ - 29) increased from 4% in 2004 to 13% in Iowa’s 2008 precinct caucuses. This study will identify the use of different voter mobilization techniques and their effectiveness.”

6. Introduction of the use of audio.

7. Explanation that the objective of the group is to obtain the participants’ feelings about specific topics.

8. Give participants some sense of the rules for the group.

“One person talking at a time, no side conversations, speak loud, make sure everyone has a chance to be heard, seek to hear the truth so be respectful of all opinions and ideas.”

9. Introductions (First Name, Where they live, Where they caucused)

10. Warm Up Question

“As you know, youth voter turnout (described as age 17 ½ - 29) increased in Iowa during the presidential caucuses, can you think of reasons why that might be the case?”

11. Specific Topic Discussion

What different ways did you use to stay informed about the candidates and the caucus process?

Of those discussed, which do you think you relied on most heavily for information?

Did you interact with any groups that wanted to talk about caucusing as opposed to a candidate? Can you recall their name?

What was the message they used?

What do you think was the most significant technique in reaching out to you to obtain your support or get you to caucus? Why?

What do you think was the least effective or most annoying way of reaching out to you? Why?

How often did you talk about presidential politics or caucusing with your friends? Give examples?

What candidate do you think specifically spoke to you as a young person and how did they do it?

If you have to provide one piece of advice to candidate on how best to reach out to you, what would you suggest?

Probing and Poking based on flow of conversation.

12. Closing Statement and Thanks

Appendix B **Principal Investigator Individual Interview Guide**

What is your name and title?

What is the name of your organization?

What is its purpose/mission?

What is its funding source?

What techniques did you use to turn out youth voters?

Specific Examples reviewed.

What techniques do you believe were most effective?

What type of expenditure did you use for this project?

How do you determine if it was “worth the money?”

Anecdotally, from your work, what do you think are the most effective ways to reach out to individuals?

Can you give me a specific example?

What do you think are the least effective ways to reach out to individuals?

Can you give me a specific example?

For Campaign Specific:

How much staff did you devote towards this effort?

What type of budget or resources did you use?

How much candidate time did you put towards youth outreach?

If yes, did it “pay off?”

What lesson learned would you want to share?

Appendix C

ISU Pre/Post Caucus 2008 Poll

**Iowa Caucus Poll
January 2008
Selected Questions Only**

2. As you know, the Democratic and Republican Caucuses were held in Iowa on January 3rd of this year to assist in selecting candidates for the Presidential election in November.

Did you attend an Iowa Caucus on January 3rd?

1= Yes

2= No → [IF NO, GO TO Q11.]

3. Did you attend the Democratic Caucus or the Republican Caucus?

1 = Democratic Caucus

2 = Republican Caucus

4. Did you attend the caucus in Ames, Iowa City, or someplace else?

1 = Ames

2 = Iowa City

3 = Other (Specify: _____)

8. Did you change your support to a different candidate . . .

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
a. because your original choice did not have enough support from other caucus attendees?	1	2
b. <i>because other caucus attendees or presenters persuaded you to change your support to another candidate?</i>	1	2
c. <i>because you learned information about your original choice that influenced you to support another candidate?</i>	1	2
d. <i>because you realized that more of your friends or neighbors were supporting another candidate?</i>	1	2
e. <i>because of another reason?</i>	1	2
f. IF YES TO Q8e: (Why did you change your support to another candidate?)		

OPEN TEXT

9. Which **one** of the following issues was the **most** important in your decision to support your candidate at the Caucus? Was it your candidate's position on . . .

PROBE FOR ONE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE

- 1 = the Iraq war,
- 2 = terrorism,
- 3 = health care,
- 4 = social issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage,
- 5 = education,
- 6 = immigration,
- 7 = the environment,
- 8 = or economic issues?
- 9 = NONE OF THESE, ANOTHER ISSUE NOT LISTED
- 10 = NO ONE ISSUE, COMBINATION

10. Which one of the following **characteristics** was the **most** important in your decision to support your candidate at the Caucus? Was it your candidate's . . .

PROBE FOR ONE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTIC

- 1 = personal integrity,
- 2 = experience,
- 3 = ability to win the election,
- 4 = or position on the issues?
- 5 = NONE OF THESE, ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC NOT LISTED
- 6 = NO ONE CHARACTERISTIC, COMBINATION

13. Which **one** of the following issues is the **most** important in your decision to support your candidate? Is it your candidate's position on . . .

PROBE FOR ONE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE

- 1 = the Iraq war,
- 2 = terrorism,
- 3 = health care,
- 4 = social issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage,
- 5 = education,
- 6 = immigration,
- 7 = the environment,
- 8 = or economic issues?
- 9 = NONE OF THESE, OTHER ISSUES
- 10 = NO ONE ISSUE, COMBINATION

14. Which one of the following **characteristics** is the **most** important in your decision to support your candidate? Is it your candidate's . . .

PROBE FOR ONE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE

- 1 = personal integrity,
- 2 = experience,
- 3 = ability to win the election,
- 4 = or position on the issues?
- 5 = NONE OF THESE, ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC NOT LISTED
- 6 = NO ONE CHARACTERISTIC, COMBINATION

31. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?

1 = Democrat

2 = Republican

3 = Independent

4 = Something else: (Specify: _____)

IF Q31 = INDEPENDENT OR SOMETHING ELSE, GO TO Q33.

32a. IF Q31 = DEMOCRAT, ASK: Do you think of yourself as a strong Democrat, a moderate Democrat, or leaning toward Independent?

1 = Strong

2 = Moderate

3 = Leaning toward Independent

33. How would you describe your views on most political matters? Would you say you are Very Liberal, Somewhat Liberal, Moderate, Somewhat Conservative, or Very Conservative?

1 = Very Liberal

2 = Somewhat Liberal

3 = Moderate

4 = Somewhat Conservative

5 = Very Conservative

- e. Email: From a “Celebrity”.
If yes, who was the “celebrity?”
- f. Text Message
- g. Cell Phone Call: From a Friend or Peer (someone your age)
- h. Cell Phone Call: From a Volunteer
- i. Campus Phone Call: From a Friend or Peer (someone your age)
- j. Campus Phone Call: From a Volunteer
- k. Automated Message “Robo Call” On Message Machine
- l. Automated Message “Robo Call” on Message Machine – From Candidate or Candidate Representative
- m. Automated Message “Robo Call” on Message Machine – From a “Celebrity”
If yes, who was the “celebrity?” _____
- n. Flyer/Leaflet on your door
- o. Someone came to your door to speak with you
- p. Vote Poking
- q. Facebook Message
- r. MySpace Message
- s. Invitation to see the Candidate/Candidate Representative: by someone you know – by email
- t. Invitation to see the Candidate/Candidate Representative: by someone you know – by phone
- u. Invitation to see the Candidate/Candidate Representative: by someone you know – in person
- v. Invitation to see the Candidate/Candidate Representative: by email
- w. Invitation to see the Candidate/Candidate Representative: by phone
- x. Invitation to see the Candidate/Candidate Representative: in person

11. Rank the three most effective techniques in reaching out to you. (1 being the most effective)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

12. Rank the least effective techniques in reaching out to you. (6 being the least effective)

- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

13. Did you contribute to a candidate? Yes No

14. If yes, which candidate did you contribute to?

Biden Clinton Dodd Edwards Obama Richardson

15. How much was your contribution? _____

16. Did you visit a candidate website? Yes No

17. Did you read any blogs? Yes No

18. Did you personally blog? Yes No

19. Was there anything specific (web feature, technique, organization) that you still remember about a candidate website?

20. What policy do you associate most with the candidate you support? (Circle One)

Health Care Environment War Economy Reform/Change of System

Education

21. Did any candidate specifically address why YOU as a young person should caucus?

Yes No

22. Did any candidate/campaign TRY to explain how the caucuses work?

Yes No

23. If yes, how did they do it?

Brochure Video Email In Person Training Phone Call Exp.

24. Did you have any conversations with your friends or peers about the process?

Yes No

25. Did you try to persuade anyone to support your candidate?

Yes No

26. Did you invite anyone to attend the caucus with you?

Yes No

27. Did you know people at your caucus?

Yes No

28. Did you attend your caucus at your college precinct or home precinct?

College Home

29. Did you do something social (dinner) before or after the caucuses?

Yes No

30. Which candidate do you believe most effectively reached out to young people?

Biden Clinton Dodd Edwards Obama Richardson

31. Why?

32. Would you like to provide any additional comments on specific reasons why you as a young person supported the candidate that you did?