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Early voting in the 2004 presidential election

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EARLY VOTING IN THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The addition of early voting laws has led to the many changes in the US political system. In this dissertation I examine early voting early voting in a number of different contexts. First, how early voting fits in with the larger issue of voter turnout in the U.S. Second, why some states have early voting policies and other states choose to not have those policies. Third, how state-level political parties view the option to cast an early vote. Fourth, the differences between early voters, election day voters, and non-voters. Fifth, what are the determents of casting an early ballot. Sixth, do early voting laws lead to more electoral participation. My findings suggest that early voting does not significantly change the way in which state-level political parties get people to the polls, early voters are different from election day voters, and that early voting policies significantly increase overall participation by 2% points. Early voting changes the way citizens participate in elections and this dissertation provides an early view of how this new mode of participation changes the political behavior in different electoral area.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the beginning is how a people is made to vote.

Giovanni Sartori

"I think it is a reflection of people's busy lives and the complications of child care, weather and traffic as well as the complexity of our ballots," said Debra Bowen, California's secretary of state, and a supporter of voting by mail. "Very often, there will be 10 or 15 initiatives that are so complicated, so people will sit at the kitchen table and if they get stuck on something, they can step away or they can call somebody."

New York Times January 14, 2008

Voter turnout in the U.S.

The dominant political system in the world today is democracy. There are different types of democracies with different implication for each unique style of democratic political system. The primary component of any democratic system is the election of representatives by the people. The electoral connection between people that vote and the representatives that make up the government serves as a check that insures that representatives enact the will of the people (Meyhew, 2004). In a democracy, an individual citizen can choose to vote for a new representative if the individual does not support current representative in office or the individual citizen can give a vote of confidence to keep the representative in office. Other types of political systems do not include input from individual citizens. For example, a dictatorship is a political system where one individual is the entire government and makes all political decisions. In contrast, a democratic system allows various representative institutions (e.g., a congress) the authority to make political decisions by and for the people through electoral institutions (e.g., voting laws and procedures). In this dissertation I examine the role of a new type of electoral institution, early voting. Specifically, I examine the role of early voting in (1) shaping the way political parties mobilize voters, (2) who chooses to vote, (3) who chooses to early vote, and (4) affecting an increase in electoral participation.

One of the possible measures of how well a democracy follows the will of the people (i.e., functions) is to measure how many people participate in elections. If a

democratic country had 100% participation in elections, the government would represent the whole population, but as we will see, the U.S. has a participation rate between 55% and 60% for presidential elections, leading to questions about the representativeness of the U.S. political system. For example, does low political participation in the form of low voter turnout lead to non-democratic decisions or policies? The connection between participation and representation leads to the discussion of the importance of voter turnout presented in this document following a discussion of the major political theories of participation. While the purpose of this dissertation is not to fully address specific issues of representation, I will examine what factors that lead individuals to choose to vote.

A longstanding debate in the political science literature involves whether the rate of participation among citizens and governmental responsiveness to citizens' opinions are linked. There are two different views on the link between political participation and the ability of a democracy to function and govern. These views, the classic and the elitist view, focus on the number of individuals who participate in politics and the ability of governments to receive proper instructions on the will of the people from elections. The classical view of participation is that citizens are knowledgeable about the political system and that the more voters there are, the better the democracy (Walker, 1966). The classical view of political participation places great importance on the individual citizen who is assumed to be knowledgeable about public policy as well as the form and function of the political system. Specifically, the classic view sees active citizens in various forms of political participation as molding the U.S. political system. The classical view that high participation rates provide for a stable and functioning democracy includes the assumption that high participation rates mean that a high percentage of the electorate see its opinions translated into representation. Taking this classic view, the U.S. democracy with turnout rates around 55% to 60% would be considered as not functioning as well as European democracies, which tend to have higher rates of turnout. It is the stance of the classical view that if a large number of potential voters do not participate in elections, it is not possible for the government to represent accurately the whole country because the assumption is that non-voters would not necessarily support the same policies as the voting public.

On the other hand, the elitist view on political participation focuses on the belief that it is not necessary in a democracy for all citizens to be active in politics (Dahl, 1966). Many of the arguments presented in the elitist view stem from the idea that the general public is not well informed on political issues and hence does not know how to vote in accordance with its own best interest. Therefore, political decisions are best left to an elite group of voters or a "consensus of elites" (Truman, 1959). The elitist view supports the idea that if uninformed voters participate in elections, the electoral outcomes would be poor in that representatives, following the will of such voters, would enact legislation that does not accurately represent the real needs of the people. The elitist view also includes the assumption that voters stay home on election day due to contentment with the political system. This means that potential voters do not have a strong preference for one party or the other and would be just as content with either political party winning an election. Key (1961) defines the political elite as "the influentials, the opinion-leaders, the political activists." Overall, the elitist view of the low U.S. voter turnout rate is that the specific number of voters per election is not necessarily important, due to uninformed voters, and that the need to increase voter turnout is overstated, due to the contentment of non-voters. Critics of the elitist view see low participation may be due to the alienation of non-voters (Aberbach, 1969). As mentioned in the discussion on the classical view of participation, low voter turnout is a cause for concern where in the elitist view, non-participation ensures a more representative political system.

Classical and elitist theories of political participation are typically concerned with the policy outputs of the government that best fit the wants and needs of the country as a whole. In order to achieve the best policy outputs, classical theorists believe that a greater volume of participation is needed and elitist theorists believe that less and more elite participation is needed. I use these theories as a lens to view the effectiveness of early voting policies in getting individuals to the polls (the classical theory) and making it easier for individuals to cast any type of ballot (the elitist theory).

In this dissertation I examine whether early voting policies fit into the classical or elitist views of political participation. Early voting policies are meant to increase the ease of voting by increasing the flexibility of how or when a ballot is cast. In broad terms, if early voting policies affect significantly higher voter turnout levels, then individuals have

3

been pulled into the political system and the classical view of participation is supported. In this case the classical view of full political participation is closer to being reached with higher levels of participation leading to better democratic electoral outcomes. If early voting policies do not increase voter turnout, then the elitist theory is supported. In this case the elitist view of political participation is closer to being reached with voters taking advantage of early voting.

Based on the theoretical debate between the classical and elitist political views on participation, voter turnout rates are common topics of study across the subfields of political science. In this section of my dissertation, I examine voter turnout rates in the American political system and in other countries. I first discuss a definition of voter turnout rates and then discuss studies that account for variation in voter turnout at the national-level across countries. The basic measure of national-level voter turnout for a country is found by dividing the number of individuals who cast a ballot for a given election by the total number of individuals who are eligible to vote in a given country. As discussed above, classical democratic theory suggests that countries with higher percentages of voter turnout are more democratic and provide the citizens with a government that more accurately represents the views and opinions of its citizens (Sartori, 1997). The U.S. turnout rate for presidential elections is significantly lower than the turnout in other counties for presidential or parliamentary elections (Jackman, 1987; Jackman & Miller, 1995; Norris, 1996; Powell, 1986). When voter turnout rates are compared across different democracies, the U.S. is found to have one of the lowest turnout rates when compared to other Western Democracies like Germany, France, Sweden, and England (Franklin, 1996). Table 1.1 shows the variation in aggregate voter turnout between U.S. and Western European with the U.S. at only 54% voter turnout in presidential elections starting shortly after World War II. Two major differences between the U.S. and Western European countries that affect voter turnout are (1) the fact that many of the Western European governments are parliamentary and (2) the fact that, unlike in the U.S., many European counties have national voting days in which most businesses and government offices are closed to allow for ease of participation in elections.

Table 1.1: Average Turnout in Untied States and Western Europe, 1960-1995

Country	Average Turnout Rate (%)
Austria	95
Italy	90
Iceland	89
Denmark	87
Germany	86
Grease	86
Sweden	86
Israel	80
Finland	78
Ireland	74
United States	**54**

Note: Table from Norris (1996) with select countries displayed

The first major difference between the U.S. and Western European countries that affects voter turnout involves the structure of government. The presidential system in the U.S. leads to low levels of participation compared to the European parliamentary system which lead to high level of participation. An explanation of the differences in participation comes from the amount of influence the individual voter has at the ballot box. The Electoral College system in the U.S. makes one vote have less of a potential effect on the election outcome than a ballot cast in a system where all votes are counted by proportional representation (Norris, 2004). This leads potential voters in the U.S. to believe that any one vote will not greatly effect the outcome of an election. The view that every vote does not count is very pronounced in a presidential election and is referred to as the "wasted vote". A voter who lives in a state that is considered to be a "safe state" due to its predicable support of one party over the other knows well in advance of the election that his or her vote will not make a difference in the election outcome.

The second major difference between the U.S. and Western European countries that affects voter turnout involves the structure of election day. The typical election day in the U.S. is similar to any other weekday. Businesses remain open for normal hours with voters needing to find time to vote either before or after work. There are some exceptions with certain sectors closing for the day. For example, some states close state offices including schools and other government facilities. In contrast to the business as usual nature of election day in the U.S., many European counties have implemented a national election day holiday that leaves little for citizens to do besides cast a ballot. This provides opportunity for voters to cast their ballots anytime during the day.

There are two closely related ideas that are used when attributing high voter turnout to an election day holiday. The first idea is that when the opportunity to participate is increased, more individuals will want to take the opportunity to vote. This idea assumes that when opportunity to participate increases there will be an overall increase in a nation's rate of participation. Later in this dissertation this theory is fleshed out by the rational choice theory of participation (Downs, 1957). The second idea is that the government has the ability to run elections in a way that can give potential voters an incentive to vote on an election day holiday. For example, the compulsory voting laws of many South American countries produce some of the highest levels of voter turnout. Fornos, Power, and Garand (2004) find that compulsory voting and other institutional factors such as unicameralism and concurrent legislative and executive elections are contributing factors to higher levels of voter turnout. The U.S. case is viewed as a country that has a collection of laws that does not lead to high levels of voter turnout.

Table 1.2: Election institutions across countries

High Voter Turnout	Low Voter Turnout
State Registration	Individual Registration
Election Day Holiday	Election Day on Business Day
Proportional Representation	Winner-take-all Elections

There are three major national-level policy differences between countries with high voter turnout (i.e., Western European industrial countries) and the U.S. with low voter turnout. These are represented along an ease of participation spectrum in Table 1.2. Components of the three policies associated with high turnout are election day holiday, national registration, and proportional representation. Components of the three policies associated with low voter turnout are an election day occurring on a business day, citizen registration, and winner-take-all elections. While there also are important cultural differences between countries that affect turnout, all three institutional policies associated with low voter turnout are in place in the U.S. The three institutional policies discussed here are assumed to stay the same in the U.S. for the near future and do not represent possible or probable change in the political system. The next section discusses the institutional policies that are currently changing in the U.S. system, specifically early voting policies, voter ID laws, and registration closing date.

The two ideas that electoral institutions and political opportunity have an effect on voter turnout intersect when discussing early voting policy. Early voting will be further discussed as a possible instrument to increase participation in the U.S. It is important to note that even if counties have the electoral policies and institutions available to increase turnout, citizens must take advantage of the opportunities that electoral policies allow. This dissertation will examine the issues of electoral policies and voters utilizing opportunities to vote in the context of early voting. Question will be addressed pertaining to whether or not early voting will increase participation due to a new opportunity to vote and who is taking advantage of the ease of participation if participation rates remain the same with early voting policies in place.

The next section addresses some of the possible institutional changes that could increase participation in U.S. elections. These changes will involve electoral institutional changes such as early voting.

Electoral institutional changes that can increase participation

In the previous section I showed the U.S. to have a comparatively low level of voter turnout. In this section I examine possible changes to increase the level of voter turnout. The electoral system of the U.S. is not static. There have been changes to who

votes as well as to how, when, and where voters vote. For example, there have been changes in women's and minority voting rights, changes in voting age, standardization of voting places and times, and policies to assist with registration. I will discuss two categories when looking for policies to increase voter turnout in the U.S. The first is to examine policies that are used in other countries. The second is to examine the variation across the states that are within the U.S. electoral system. These possible solutions will show that there are available options for the U.S. to increase participation.

Looking at the different electoral institutions across the world, there are two major policies associated with high voter turnout. First, election day as a national holiday significantly changes the context of election day. When an entire country takes a day off in order to vote in an election, an important message is sent to the electorate. An election day holiday lets a nation's voters know how important elections are to the country. In the U.S. where there is no election day holiday, individuals are expected to fit voting in during a regular business day, making it possible for many potential voters to be too busy to vote. In the U.S., the most common answer to give to the question "why didn't you vote?" is that the person was too busy. Arguably, it is important that voters know that voting is available if they choose to do so and an election day holiday is a possible response to the common excuse of being too busy on election day to vote.

The second major policy associated with higher voter turnout is registration policy. The process of registration in the U.S. can be categorized as a system that places the responsibility of registration on the individual and not on the state. The practical importance of this is that potential voters must first complete a registration step before they are allowed to cast a ballot on a separate occasion (Rosentone and Wolfinger, 1982). This turns participation in elections into a two-stage process for many potential voters. While some of these issues have been addressed by the Motor Voter Act (Highton and Wolfinger, 1998) the responsibility remains on the individual to register to vote when his or her address changes. In other countries the government is responsible for making sure that individuals are registered to vote. The voter registration process in other countries is similar to the census process in the U.S. in that government agents send out forms to register voters and send agents to check up on homes that do not respond to the mailed registration forms. With the government being responsible for registration, the potential

voter is left responsible for only one step in the voting process, the vote. By the government taking responsibility for registration, the voting public is likely given the idea that the government believes voting to be important. In the U.S., there seems to be a mindset that voting is more of a personal responsibility and so individuals who would like to vote should not mind a few extra steps in the process. The two major policies associated with high voter turnout in electoral institutions also play a part the next section in which different electoral institutions are compared across the states.

One of the unique aspects of the U.S. federal system of government is that states are allowed to pursue different electoral policies within certain constraints placed on the states by the federal government (e.g., the Motor Voter Act of 1993 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965). Some of the these electoral policies diffuse to other states, like early voting, and some polices, like the all mail-in voting in Oregon, have yet to diffuse. Now I will address some of the specific policies that some states have implemented to make voting easier and more convenient.

Looking at the different electoral institutions across the U.S., there are a wide range of state-level electoral policies that can make voting easier or more difficult. The major differences across state electoral policies involve (1) election day registration or no registration, (2) the date of registration before the election, (3) voter identification laws, and (4) early voting policies.

The use of election day registration or no registration is the first difference in electoral institutions found across states that can effect the ease of voting (Franklin and Grier, 1997; Knack and White, 2000). There are 10 states that do not require voters to register at all before election day or to simply register as they vote. This effectively changes the two-stage voting procedure into a one-stage procedure. As discussed previously, whenever the voting process can be made simpler, the chances of more voting increases. The ease of voting is increased when the citizen does not need to gather information about where they must register and where they must vote. This information gathering time can be spent acquiring more information about the candidates.

Date of registration is a second difference found across state electoral policies that can affect ease of voting. States are not allowed to have a registration closing date prior to 30 days before the election due to the 1993 Motor Voter Act; however, the difference

between requiring a voter to register 30 days before an election and not at all is quite significant. A great deal of the election activities occur during the last 30 days of the election period. For example, the debates between the candidates in the last few weeks of a campaign can lead to increases in mobilization efforts. In states with closing dates of 30 days before the election, unregistered voters cannot be affected by candidates' mobilization efforts because the registration day had passed. In contrast, a state without a registration closing date allows a voter to be swept up in the ending stages of the campaign and cast a ballot. Franklin and Grier (1997) find that the Motor Voter Act does increase participation.

Voter identification laws are a third difference found across state electoral policies that can effect ease of voting. Some states require voters to show some type of personal identification before voting. Voter ID laws are put in place to increase ballot security by ensuring that the correct person voted. Voter ID laws are controversial because many citizens without proper ID fall into the low-income category. The concern with the balance between ballot security and ease of casting a ballot will only rise with the increased use of mail-in and absentee ballots where the only security measure is the address printed on the ballot. The two major political parties are generally on opposite sides of the issue with Republicans favoring stronger ID laws and Democrats favoring no ID requirements. Alvarez, Bailey, and Katz (2008) find that voter ID laws do not have any affect on aggregate voter turnout when implemented and Larocca and Klemanski (2011) find that voter ID laws also do not have an effect on overall voter turnout.

Early voting policies are a fourth difference found across state electoral policies that can affect ease of voting. Some states have early voting policies that include in-person early voting and no-excuse absentee voting. These policies make the process of casting a ballot easier by effectively expanding the voting period from election day to up to 30 days before election day. Although all types of early voting allow busy potential voters to have a larger window of opportunity to vote, there are a few different types of early voting policies to consider. In-person early voting follows the same voting procedure as that of election day voting with the voting period just extended. Liberalization of absentee and mail-in voting procedures allow for people to easily request a ballot and have more time to consider their choices before mailing back their

ballots. Taken together these two categorizes provide more opportunity for voters cast ballots through a change in the institutions of elections. Scholarship on the changes in early voting laws provide evidence that early voting laws lead to a small, about 2% to 4%, but significant increase in voter turnout (Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, Miller, and Toffey, 2008). The next section explains how early voting policies can lead to an increase in voter turnout.

Table 1.3: State-level election institutions

High Voter Turnout	Low Voter Turnout
Election Day Registration	Registration Closes 30 Days Before
No Voter ID Law	Voter ID Law
Early Voting	No Early Voting Option

Similar to Table 1.2 that shows the different national-level policies associated with high and low levels of voter turnout, Table 1.3 shows the different state-level policies associated with high and low voter turnout. The four differences across state-level electoral policies that are discussed above all are associated with affecting voter turnout. This means that some states could have policies that both increase ease of participation (e.g., no registration) and decrease ease of participation (e.g., voter ID laws). This mixture of state-level laws both increasing and decreasing participation ease provides the opportunity to isolate and examine early voting policy and determine the effect of a policy on different aspects of the electoral process. In this dissertation I examine the role of early voting policies in explaining the voter turnout picture across the U.S. In the next section, I discuss the ways in which allowing individuals to vote early can lead to more electoral participation.

How early voting can increase voter turnout

Electoral institutions and opportunity to vote explain part of the reason for low levels of voter turnout in the U.S. Early voting is an electoral policy that has the potential to increase voter turnout by expanding the methods for voting. Early voting also changes

the opportunity structure for voters by increasing the time period in which votes can be cast. The next section explains how early voting policies fit into the political science electoral studies literature.

WHY EARLY VOTING IS IMPORTANT

Early voting is viewed in different contexts within the U.S. political landscape. The institutional literature examines the early voting mechanism as a change in the way individuals cast a ballot. The institutional literature examines the link between specific electoral rules, voter turnout rates, and who chooses to vote in locations with different types of electoral policies. The institutional literature also examines the link between national electoral policies and voter turnout in a comparative context by examining national-level of education, national wealth, and method of representative selection (Jackman, 1987; Jackman & Miller, 1995; Powell, 1986). Studies of voter turnout in the U.S. examine the role of electoral institutions and laws such as the Voting Rights Act, the Motor Voter Act, and early voting laws. Studies of the U.S. use the 50 states as different contexts to compare and contrast differences in population demographics and institutional differences. The institutional differences that the state-level literature examines are polling place location, polling place hours, registration closing date, voter ID requirements, partisan registration process, election day registration, and early voting policies (Highton and Wolfinger, 1998; Stein, 1998; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980).

The literature on linkage institutions, such as political parties and interest groups, views early voting policies in two ways. First, parties and groups view early voting policies as an opportunity for new voters to cast an early ballot. One of the functions of parties and groups is to use many different mobilization techniques in order to get voters to the polls on or before election day. Parties and groups also provide information about what views candidates hold (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Studies of parties and groups show evidence that these linkage institutions will use a variety of techniques to get their candidates elected (Hogan, 2005). I predict that early voting laws allow parties and groups more opportunities to guide voters to the polls in different ways. I also predict that an expanded voting period opens up opportunity for messages and

12

information to be sent to potential voters that include information about how to cast an early ballot.

Second, parties and groups view early voting as a way get core supporters to the polls early in the election season so the parties and groups can concentrate on the swing voters as election day approaches. This strategy allows parties and groups to use their resources more efficiently. By sending messages and information about early voting early in the voting season, parties then can focus on sending targeted messages to undecided voters. The use of targeted messages provides the opportunity for parties to bank core supporters then shift resources to undecided voters late in the season. I predict that the banking method of mobilization will be most noticeable in groups with high levels of partisan support.

The rational choice literature views early voting as a reduction of the costs associated with participation. The Downs rational choice model (1957) predicts that as cost of participation decreases, the probability that an individual will cast a vote increases. Early voting policies can be classified as a reduction in the cost of participation due to the increase in the number of available hours to cast ballots. There is a small information cost associated with early voting due voters needing to gain information on when and where to early vote. There is also an additional minimax regret cost of voting early in that early voters do not have the option to change their vote later in the campaign season (Ferejohn & Fiorina, 1974). Early voting requires the voter to bet that no new information will be introduced into the campaign that will cause the vote to change his or her mind, this is similar to the idea that, in a close election, nonvoters would have wanted the chance to cast a ballot and regret the decision in not voting. I predict that the overall effect of early voting policies is a reduction in costs that will lead to an increase in participation in elections.

The democratic political theory literature has considered issues relating to the legitimacy of the U.S. democracy when some of the electorate casts a ballot before election day. The concept of an informed electorate is central to the theory that democracy will accurately represent the interests and opinions of the citizenry (Mill, 1859). The issue that some democratic theorists have with early voting is that new information will come to light in the last few weeks of the election and change in minds

of the people who have already cast a ballot (Thompson, 2004). Again, this can be viewed as a cost due to the locking in of the vote without the ability to change a ballot once it is cast. This is not a problem in states without early voting policies because individuals are not allowed to vote until the campaign season is over on election day. Traditionally, candidates have limited their election day campaign activities to voting in their home district and then giving an acceptance or conciliatory address on election day night. In the future we may see candidates choosing to early vote and then participate in a full day of campaign activities on election day.

In this dissertation I examine two major questions that focus on the effects of early voting laws on the composition and size of the U.S. electorate. The first question addresses the composition of the voting electorate when electoral laws are changed. The composition of the electorate refers to the percentage of each demographic or political group that votes. The composition of the electorate is measured through the use of exit polling and surveys that find out the percentage of a certain demographic that voted. Each percentage of a certain demographic that voted is then compared to its percentage level in the population. Findings from the voter turnout literature provide evidence that voters are significantly more likely to be of high income and education levels (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993).

Changes in electoral institutions have lead to changes in the electorate. Prior to the 19th Amendment, the eligible electorate only included males. The electorate was effectively doubled with the inclusion of women voters. The effect of the 19th Amendment has changed the landscape of American politics by including a previously nonvoting block of voters. The change in the electorate that occurs from the change in early voting policy is expected to be less drastic than the change that happened after the Women's Suffrage Movement, but I do expect to observe some changes. For example, early voting will allow for "busy" individuals (i.e., individuals who either say they are busy when they do not vote on election day or because they have many things to do) more chances to find time to cast a ballot. For these reasons I predict that early voting has the potential to change who votes in the U.S.

The second question addresses the size of the electorate. The size of the U.S. voting public is measured in two different ways. The first way to measure the size of the

14

electorate is to simply count the number of ballots cast in each election. This basic number count is heavily influenced by total population of the U.S. and generally rises for each comparable election cycle. The second and most accurate measure of U.S. voter turnout is the to calculate the number of voters and compare it to the number of possible voters (McDonald and Popkin, 2001). The McDonald and Popkin (2001) measure of voter turnout provides a better measure of how well a democracy functions, and is one of the central measures of the connection between the electorate and the government. I expect that the percentage of voters will increase with the passage of early voting laws across the U.S.

Overall, early voting is important because it has the potential to affect the size and composition of the U.S. electorate. The literature in later chapters of this dissertation addresses the availability of electoral laws leading to changes in the size and composition of the electorate. The effect that early voting has on the U.S. political system will be further examined by viewing early voting in the context of policy diffusion, parties and groups using of early voting in mobilization efforts, individuals choosing to early vote, and policies that lead to an increase in voter turnout. This dissertation addresses these effects as well as the empirical and normative implications of early voting policies.

WHAT IS EARLY VOTING?

There are many different laws that affect the way individuals are allowed to participate in campaigns in the U.S. political system. Such laws include campaign finance laws that limit the amount of money individuals and groups can donate to campaigns, citizenship and age requirements for individuals who seek elected office, limits to how many votes an individual may cast in an election, and laws that govern the process by which a citizen votes. Early voting laws fall into the category of laws that govern the process by which citizens vote. Other laws that also fall into this category involve eligibility and identification requirements, registration laws, poll hours, voting machines use, and type of election (i.e., primary or general). These laws all stipulate the mechanic of how individuals may participate in elections.

Early voting refers to the process of casting a ballot before election day. There are many different avenues through which to cast an early vote. Variation across the U.S.

in early voting policies is present because voting laws are produced and implemented at the state-level. There have been some electoral laws passed at the federal level, such as the Motor Voter Act of 1993, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as well as constitutional provisions such as the 15th, 19th and 26th Amendments. However, most voting laws originate at the state-level, and early voting laws typically originate in the states. Due to this variation, early voting policies are not standard across states. In this dissertation early voting laws are considered to be state-level factors that have the potential to alter the composition and size of the electorate.

Types of Early Voting

Three basic types of early voting, absentee voting, in-person early voting, and mail-in voting, are in practice in a number of states. In this section I discuss these types of early voting as three broad categories that do not form strict boundaries between the three types of early voting laws. For example, states may have an early voting policy that allows the voter to request a ballot by mail and then mail the ballot back to the election board. One state may call this policy absentee balloting and another state may call this mail-in voting, making the distinctions difficult to untangle. In this dissertation I code early voting laws by the name the state gave it. In this section, I discuss the three unique types of early voting.

First, absentee voting is the early voting process where voters request a ballot through the mail and return the ballot through the mail before or on election day. The absentee voting process has been in place the longest of the three types of early voting and has traditionally only been available to specific groups of people. For example, college students away from home and elderly individuals who would have a difficult time getting to the polls are allowed to request absentee ballots. Absentee early voting allows individuals who are in specific situations the opportunity to cast a ballot. Typically, states have absentee voting set up for individuals who reside in a location other than their district. Recently, absentee voting polices have become more liberalized with some states requiring no excuse for absentee voting.

Second, in-person early voting is the early voting process in which voters visit a polling place a few days to a few weeks before election day. This process effectively

stretches the voting period by opening polling places before election day. The manner in which the polling places are distributed is up to the states themselves and they do not have to be in the same locations as the polling places for election day. For example, Texas allows for early voting centers to be placed in shopping centers making early voting easier by providing the opportunity to vote in high traffic areas. These early voting centers may be in public libraries, city halls, or the above-mentioned shopping centers. Recently, in-person early voting has become much more common across the states with only a few states allowing the practice in the early 1990s and increasing to 27 states in 2010 (Gronke and Toffrey, 2008). The number of early voting and election day voting places do not represent a one-to-one relationship with the same number of election day voting places as early voting places. Usually, there are fewer early voting locations than election day polling places. For example, communities open up libraries or city hall for early voting and than open more neighborhood locations on election day.

Third, mail-in voting is the early voting process in which voters may choose to receive ballots through the mail and send the completed ballot back in the mail. This process is similar to absentee voting. The difference between absentee voting and mail-in voting is that mail-in voting does not require an excuse, such as attending college, as to why the voter needs to vote before election day. The distinction between the two types of voting is purely semantic when a state does not require an excuse for absentee voting. One state, Oregon, has used a system of all mail-in voting since 1998. An all mail-in voting procedure requires the official election results to be delayed for a few days past election day as all the ballots are returned. When elections are close many states have to wait until the last absentee and mail-in ballots are received before declaring a winner.

Early voting has been implemented in states for a number of reasons, both practical and theoretical. In the next section I discuss the positive and negative aspects of early voting as an electoral policy and the normative implications of early voting policy that have been addressed by scholars, interest groups, politicians, the media, and other political observers.

EARLY VOTING AS AN ELECTORAL POLICY

There have been different types of electoral policies that have had a great effect on the U.S. political landscape. One of the earliest changes in electoral politics was the 17th Amendment, which mandated direct election of U.S. senators. This constitutional change took the election of U.S. senators away from the statehouses and allowed direct election of senators by the state population. For U.S. senators, this change in the Constitution effectively changed their constituencies from state legislators to the voters of the state. This change did not affect how citizens vote but instead changed the offices for which citizens vote. A second example of historic electoral change is the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which allowed the Federal government much more control over the states with regard to voter registration and ballot access. At the time there were ballot access issues with the disenfranchisement of blacks and the poor in the South. The Voting Rights Act caused turnout for blacks and the poor to increase greatly over time in the South and has had a significant impact on the composition of the electorate (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Finally, the Motor Voter Act of 1993 set standards for (1) the maximum number of days before an election a potential voter may be required to register in order to be eligible to vote, (2) the avenues through which citizens could register to vote (i.e., at the DMV or other public offices) and (3) dropping voters from the registration rolls due to non-voting. Knack (1995) finds that the number of registered voters has significantly increased following the Motor Voter Act. The general trend of these electoral policies is in the direction of more transparency and increased ease of participation. With the exception of voter identification laws most of the policies in the U.S. electoral policy area are an attempt to make voting more convenient. This provides evidence that the trend in U.S. electoral policy is to move toward expanding the size of the U.S. electorate.

Due to low rates of electoral participation in the U.S., recently implemented electoral laws have addressed the problem and attempted to encourage greater participation by easing the registration procedure (e.g., Motor Voter Act) and easing the voting procedure (e.g., early voting legislation). In the next section, I discuss the reasons that early voting policies have been presented as an electoral policy that promotes participation.

One justification for all types of early voting policies is that allowing citizens to vote over an extended period of time will increase the ease of to voting and thus increase the convenience of participating. A favorite excuse given in the U.S. for not voting is that the potential voter is too busy on election day. The increase in convenience should allow for more individuals to be able to participate and participate more easily. As voting research moves forward it will be interesting to see if the frequency of the "too busy" response to why the individual did not vote changes if the voting process is made easier. In other words, early voting policies should test the idea that many Americans are too busy to vote.

Early voting policies are somewhat controversial when viewed as making voting easier if only people who already vote use early voting. If early voting policies end up not pulling more voters to the polls, the new policies end up simply making the voting process easier for people who would vote anyway. This dissertation will addresses this issue in later chapters, but it is important to note that some citizens (i.e., the citizens who would have voted anyway) may benefit from early voting policies even if new voters are not brought to the polls.

Various groups and politicians have commented on the new opportunities that early voting allows. President George W. Bush commented that early voting makes the election a whole new ballgame. Early voting allows for mobilization by groups and parties to take place over an extended period of time. The extended voting period can make mobilization more costly for parties because a greater amount of time for voting means that more avenues for mobilization can be pursued. Parties are able to update their contact information as voters cast ballots and are able to change strategies on the fly to mobilize more potential voters. This change in strategies can be costly, but the ability to change strategies on the fly gives parties a new opportunity for effective mobilization.

With few exceptions, there have been relatively few complaints concerning the implementation of early voting. The concerns about early voting center on the potential for campaign or world events close to election day to cause individuals to wish to change their minds and not be able to change there vote. So far, the inability to change your vote once it has been cast early does not appear to be a problem in that early research shows that a very small percentage of voters would have changed their votes if they could

(Kinski, 2005). It is also worth mentioning that a large campaign or world event (e.g., a terrorist attack) has not yet occurred days before an election.

The Normative Implications of Early Voting

There are many different normative issues associated with the new early voting policies that allow for votes to be cast before election day. First, expanding the time period for voting can be viewed as a positive implication in the classical view of U.S. democracy because it makes it is easer for citizens to cast a ballot. There is a value judgment that democratic countries must make about what barriers should be in place before citizens are allowed to cast a ballot. The question of making the voting process easier is important to view as question about how easy participation should be in a political system. In terms of elitist theory, there is a percentage of the potential voting public who are not informed or not informed enough to make a correct voting decision. Based on research, 25% of the U.S. population is uninformed, meaning that 25% of the voting public still needs more information to correctly pick the candidate that best represents them (Lau and Redlawsk, 1997). It is also interesting to note that early voting allows voters to self-select by voting before the campaign season is over, so early voters are betting that there is not a new piece of information that would change their vote and they are confidant in their choices before the election cycle is completed.

Second, by allowing individuals to vote before election day, political systems suggest that citizens are able to make political decisions before a hard election day deadline and still approve of their selections after the election is over. Early voting is significantly different than other proposed methods of making the voting process more convenient. Voting on the Internet is one proposed method for making the voting process more convenient. The current problems with Internet voting lie with security issues when transmitting votes on-line. On-line voting provides the opportunity for a voter to possibly cast a ballot and then re-cast a ballot if he or she changes his or her mind before election day. The ability to change your vote before election day allows for all information to be considered when voting while still providing the ease of casting an early ballot. In effect, an early on-line voter could vote for his or her preferred candidate early, but than still be able to change his or her on-line vote any time before or on election day. Currently, the

20

greatest concern with on-line voting is the security of an on-line connection between the voters and the government.

Physical ballot security is also a concern with early voting. Mail-in early voting ballots have to be mailed to and from election offices and it is difficult to know who actually filled out the mail-in ballots. In election day voting, ballots go directly from the voters hand to the ballot box to be counted.

There are political theorists who view early voting laws as having negative implications for U.S. democracy. Thompson (2004) makes arguments for only allowing mail-in voting for the elderly. Thompson argues that the simultaneity of voting on election day is necessary for the democratic value of fairness. He argues that the casting of early votes could provide more information for citizens who vote at a later date. There are two different views of the role of information gathering in politics. The first view is that individuals are responsible for collecting information on their own and will collect the amount of information that they require to make an informed decision. This view assumes that voters know when they have enough information to vote. The second view is that all voters should be given all information before they vote. This view assumes that while the campaign is still running, information is being produced that all voters should use. Since early voting allows individuals to stop collecting information, early voting can be seen as a process that changes voting from a collective acting to a singular action. Thompson's argument against early voting comes down to the view that elections are a collective action undertaken by a group of citizens that should take place at the same time.

Thompson (2004) argues that voting is a national collective action, meaning that voting should take place at the same time or at least on the same day. The view that democratic elections are a collective action could be altered if early voting changes elections to more of an individual action instead of a group action. Putnam (2000) talks about the civic action of voting in that voters assemble in libraries, schools, churches, city halls, and other public institutions to cast a ballot as a group. Early voting allows individuals to vote at home or over an extended period of time without having an interaction with many other voters. This takes away from the collective act of going to the polls on election day and getting an "I Voted" sticker. Early voting takes away some

of that excitement that goes along with the model of participation in which voters gather together on election day to vote. The change in early voting policy reflects other changes in society that alter the way that information is disseminated. For example, political information has shifted to the Internet and away from daily newspapers. Time shifting has become commonplace with the advent of DVR's, TiVo, Netflix, Hulu and other streaming content providers. Early voting fits in with the belief that individuals should be able to watch TV or vote whenever the individual desires.

Ease of voting remains an important debate in U.S. politics. How easy should it be to vote? What policies are effective in increasing or maintaining voter turnout? Is early voting changing the size and composition of the electorate? This dissertation covers these and other questions regarding the effect of early voting on the changing landscape of U.S. electoral politics. The summary of this chapter includes a discussion of why early voting is an important topic in different areas of the political science literature.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide an examination of the effects of early voting policies on the U.S. electoral system. The way in which citizens are allowed to cast ballots is central to the discussion of democracy. As the most recent change to electoral politics, early voting presents a new opportunity to examine the U.S. electoral system and the U.S. democracy.

The public policy literature examines the effects of new policies across many different policy areas. Due to differences in early voting laws across states, an examination of what determines the passage of early voting policies can uncover origins of early voting at the state-level.   A policy analysis of how early voting policies become laws will allow us to predictions to be made on whether other states will pass early voting laws in the future. In this dissertation I address the determinants of early voting policies across the states. In Chapter 2 I include an examination of the origins, frequency, and use of early voting policies across the U.S.

The parties and interest group literature examines how parties and other political organizations react to changes in electoral policies. In this dissertation I address how parties and interest groups utilize early voting opportunities. Chapter 3 includes a

summary of the views of party organizers on what early voting means for their party organization and electoral activities. Chapter 3 shows how and why parties are changing their mobilization strategies to fit new electoral landscapes.

The electoral politics literature examines the role that the composition of the electorate has on the work done by elected representatives in the government. In this dissertation I address the possible effects of early voting on the composition of the electorate. Chapter 5 includes an examination of individuals who either decide to cast an early vote or who decide to vote on election day. This chapter shows what changes in the electorate are observed and what the determinates are for early voting.

The voter turnout literature focuses on the demographic factors of individuals who vote, and aspects of the political environment that predict voting. In this dissertation I address effects of early voting on the size and composition of the U.S. electorate who turnout to vote. Chapter 6 includes an examination of how early voting policies change the size of the electorate who turnout to vote. As discussed in Chapter 6, voter turnout is an important determination for how well a democracy functions.

In Chapter 7 I sum up the finding of the other chapters and discuss the possibilities for early voting research in the future. Early voting policies are here to stay in the U.S. political context, and as more individuals choose to vote before election day, early voters will become even more important to the candidates and political campaigns.

CHAPTER 2: EARLY VOTING POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES

Electoral laws are generally introduced, discussed, approved, and implemented at the state-level (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). In recent years, the federal government as become active in passing voting laws through the Voting Rights Act, which removed many of the barriers to participation for minorities, and the Motor Voter Act, which standardized the way that individuals register to vote. In general, when the federal government steps in and creates voting laws the states are required to fall within the new parameters. The Motor Voter Act required voting registration to be open until at least 30 days before election day. States are permitted to close the registration closer to election day if they choose. Some states choose to have the maximum 30 days before closing registration, and some states have no registration or allow for election day registration. Thus far, the U.S. federal government has yet to define the terms of early voting. Based on the current trend, I would expect the federal government to become involved in some way to standardize the way individuals can cast early ballots.

Federalism delegates much of the responsibility for electoral policy to the states, including registration rules, hours of operation for polling places, ballot design, and more recently, the time frame allowed for casting ballots. For example, states decide what their registration procedures are, what information is necessary for voters to apply for a voter registration card, and what they need to bring to the polls to cast a ballot. Due to registration being a state-level process, some states have strict policies (e.g., registration must be originated at least 30 days before an election) and some states have less restrictive policies (e.g., registration is allowed on election day or is not required). Early voting laws display the same type of range across states. Some states have few restrictions for early voting while other states allow for only limited types of early voting.

As the U.S. population becomes more mobile, election laws take on greater importance (Squire, Wolfinger, and Glass, 1987). For example, when voters move to different areas they may be unfamiliar with the electoral policies and may not fully participate in elections as soon as they move into the new area. With the great variety of electoral laws in effect, certain states can be predicted to implement different types of

early voting policies (Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Milller, 2008). This chapter addresses the origins, history, and state-level determinants of early voting policies.

Origins of Early Voting

Early voting, also called advanced voting, has been available for many years in the U.S., but only for specific subpopulations of the electorate. Primarily the populations who were allowed to cast traditional absentee early ballots were the elderly, students, military personnel, and people who would be away from home on business (Fortier, 2006). Mailed absentee paper ballots were sent to individuals who qualified under these conditions and voters returned the ballots before election day through the mail or in-person at city hall or another designated government building. The general belief was that individuals who, with good reason, could not make it to the polls on election day should still be allowed the opportunity to participate in elections. These conditions were gradually loosened in certain states and now many states allow for unrestricted early voting through mail-in and in-person voting. The remainder of this section will review the major periods of electoral reform in the U.S. since the Civil War period up through the current expansion of early voting across many states.

The first period in U.S. history where early voting was debated and then implemented was during the Civil War (Fortier, 2006). There were specific conditions about the Civil War period that led to the debate and implementation of absentee voting. The first condition was that the war required a large percentage of the population in both the North and South to be involved in combat. This meant that a large portion of the voting population, males at the time, would not be able to physically cast a vote in their home precincts. The second condition was that a large majority of the soldiers fighting in the war were Republican supporters. Battles arose between the Democrats and Republicans in Union State Legislatures over if and how absentee ballots from soldiers would be counted in the 1864 presidential election. Krehbiel (1998) has done extensive research in the congressional context on how rules of the political system are endogenous products of the political system, meaning that electoral laws are passed for political gains. This may be the case in the current voter rights debate in which Republicans advocate for (and Democrats oppose) strict photo ID laws.

The next major electoral reform that states adopted was the Australian ballot in 1884 (i.e., secret ballot) (Fortier, 2006). The Australian ballot changed the way voters cast ballots in four significant ways. First, ballots were standardized and printed at public expense to eliminate the practice of parties or individuals producing their own ballots. Second, the names of all of the legal candidates appeared on the ballots. Third, only election officers at the polling place distributed ballots. Fourth, arrangements were made for curtains or private booths to provide secrecy in casting a vote. Examining the change from a partisan ballot to the Australian ballot is important to the study of early voting in that the Australian ballot fundamentally changed the way Americans viewed their right to vote, as early voting may have the potential to do. Before the Australian ballot, voters voted in public by carrying their party's ballot to the polling place in view of partisan observers. The use of party ballots allowed parties to see who supported them and then reward the voter for his support. With the Australian ballot, individuals are able to keep their preferences to themselves thus weakening the control parties have over voters. Voters were left to vote without any direct social pressure that could sway their ballot decision. The introduction of the Australian ballot was one of the components that led to the demise of the patronage system (Reichley, 1992).

Before the Australian ballot was introduced, voting was a very public and open procedure. Parties would hand out ballots printed on paper that made it easy for party members to identify supporters on their way to the polls. With the initiation of the Australian ballot, individuals were free to support one party publicly and vote for a different party in the ballot booth. This allowed for voting to become less partisan and more personal due to the secrecy of the ballot (Fortier, 2006).

The move to Australian ballots paved the way for future early voting laws to be passed. First, when ballots became the responsibility of the state, political parties were shut out of producing and distributing ballots. This greatly decreased the influence of parties on elections by removing the check they had in place to make sure that party supporters actually voted for the party. The change to the secret ballot strengthened the link between government and voter during the election process and limited the influence of political parties. Second, the Australian ballot made the vote something over which the individual voter was in control. This also paved the way for early voting by shifting

focus to the individual voter and away from political parties. The change from a party ballot to a secret ballot changed the view of voting from a collective and public act to an individual and private act.

In the period after the implementation of the Australian ballot there were very few changes in terms of how voters cast ballots, with the exception of the expansion of absentee voting for military personnel, people who lived overseas, college students, and the elderly. The major changes in electoral politics came instead with the expansion of the electorate to include women (1919) and 18-20 year-olds (1971). The inclusion of most college age citizens and soldiers into the electorate contributed to the demand for absentee voting. The participation of college students in elections is also part of a debate about where college students should be registered. For example, should college students use their dorm room address or should they use their home address when registering to vote? If students are required to vote in their home district it would be difficult to vote without some type of absentee ballot. On the other hand, if college students were required to vote on campus, the effective populations around the college campus would be dominated by a population that may not live in the area year round. As it stands now, many students can either register in their home district or at college, and absentee voting is open to college students.

The electoral reforms considered in this dissertation deal with the voting policies that give all voters the ability to vote before election day. There are two major groups of states that were early adopters of early voting policies. In 1980 the first group of early adopting states allowed for the use of no-excuse absentee voting (i.e., mail-in balloting) (Tolbert, Donovan, King, and Bowler, 2008). No-excuse absentee voting did not require an individual to state a reason as to why her or she could not make it to the polls on election day. Eighteen years later, Oregon would adopt a system that required mail-in ballots for all elections effectively making Oregon the only all-early voting state.

The second group of early adopting states allowed for either in-person early voting or in-person absentee early voting. This practice originated in Texas in the late 1980s and was expanded in the 1990s to include Oklahoma in 1991 and Tennessee, New Mexico, and Nevada in 1994 (Tolbert, Donovan, King, and Bowler, 2008). These laws allowed voters to cast ballots at polling locations before election day (Fortier, 2006).

Early voting would received a boost in support when the outcome of the 2000 presidential election came down to what procedures would or would not be used to count votes in Florida. Some of the specific concerns were the length of the ballot and the efforts used to ensure that ballots were clearly marked. Those issues gave rise to the Help America Vote Act and the addition of early voting policies to many states' electoral laws. By allowing voters more time to interact with the ballot, voters have more of an opportunity to read and understand their policy choices and to make sure that their ballots are marked correctly.

The 2000 Election and the Rise of Early Voting

The 2000 presidential election had an impact on how the voting population and Congress viewed elections. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002 included provisions that addressed many issues relating to how voters state their preferences. One of the by-products of the general movement toward making the voting process easier was that states started loosening their restrictions on who could cast early votes.

States such as Tennessee and Texas had already been experimenting with early voting before HAVA and one state, Oregon, had moved to all mail-in voting. After the 2000 election, early voting presented itself as a solution for many potential election day voting problems. First, early voting increases the time individuals have to cast a ballot. This decreases the chances that voters will have to wait in long lines on election day to vote (Highton, 2006). Second, early voting allows for mail-in voters to spend time considering everything on the ballot before making a decision. Lastly, by making the voting process easier, early voting policies may lead to in increase in voter turnout (Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Miller, 2008). The literature on the effect of early voting on voter turnout is mixed. While some studies of early voting find that turnout rates are increased by as much as 19%, (Eagleby, 1987; Southwell and Burchett, 2000), other studies do not find a strong connection (Gomez, 2007; Stein and Donahue, 2008). Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, Miller, and Toffey (2008) discuss the studies of early voting and voter turnout and conclude that early voting has a significant positive effect, of between 2% and 5%, on voter turnout (Gronke and Toffey, 2007). These examples of early voting policies being associated with an increase in voter turnout has led to the implementation of a variety of early voting policies across the U.S.

<h1 style="text-align:center">HOW CAN VOTERS VOTE EARLY?</h1>

This section provides an overview of the types of early voting laws different states have by examining seven types of early voting that have been used in the U.S. In this section I describe and detail the advantages and disadvantages of the seven types of early voting.

Vote by Mail

The first type of early voting, *vote-by-mail* (also known as mail-in or postal voting) provides individuals with ballots in the mail from one to four weeks before an election. The completed ballots are returned to a post office or the county clerks' office before the end of the election cycle.

The advantages of vote-by-mail include the amount of time the voter has available to spend with his or her ballot. Individuals who require more time to read ballots and individuals who need time to consider initiatives and referenda on the ballots may require more time to consider how they will vote. Voting-by-mail allows voters the time they need to conduct research on any aspect of the ballot before making a final decision. This type of early voting could also have a positive impact on people who may have difficulty getting to the polls and would prefer to be able to vote at home.

One disadvantage of vote-by-mail voting involves the potential for voter fraud in that individuals could cast more than one ballot. Because mailed ballots come through the post office, it is hard to determine whether or not the correct person filled out the ballot. In addition to ballot security, there are other concerns with using vote-by-mail voting. The first concern is that the ballot could be lost in the mail. Second, individuals could misplace their mail-in ballot and not end up sending a ballot back to be counted. Third, individuals could incorrectly fill out their ballot and not be able to ask a question because they are on their own.

Vote-by-mail is also troublesome in that all votes cannot be counted by the end of election day. This occurs because some states allow ballots to be postmarked as late as election day. This leads to questions about what would happen in a tight election with an unknown amount of mail-in votes possibly on the way. The 2000 presidential election

<div style="text-align:center">29</div>

provides an example of what occurs when election day does not end with a clear winner. In 2000, the President-elect had a shorter time to prepare for office.

In-Person Early Voting

The second type of early voting, *in-person early voting* (also known as in-person absentee balloting) provides voters with the option of casting an early vote at a voting location before election day. In most cases the early voting locations are the same as election day voting locations.

The advantages of in-person early voting include the convenience of voting before election day at the same location as a voter would vote on election day or an alternative designated voting location (e.g., a shopping mall, library, or city hall). In-person early voting expands the length of the voting period by allowing voters to plan ahead as to when they would like to vote. This allows busy individuals many days in which to cast a ballot instead of having just a single shot on election day.

A disadvantage of in-person early voting is that voting places may be just as busy during early voting as they would be on election day. When early voting places are just as busy as they are on election day the incentive to cast a ballot before election day may greatly diminish. In-person early voting also comes with the costs of staffing the polling places and taking up space in the polling place locations.

In-Person Early Voting with Voting Centers

The third type of early voting, *in-person early voting with voting centers* is very similar to in-person early voting with the one exception that voting centers are not tied to a single district. This allows individuals to cast ballots at any voting center in the state, not just centers in their home district.

The advantage of in-person early voting with voting centers is that these voting centers are often in a well-traveled area of town in close proximity to where potential voters are during the day. Voting centers have been placed in such locations as shopping centers and city halls, making a trip to vote something that can be easily combined with regular errands. Voting centers may be of great benefit for voters who live in the country where an extra trip into town can be costly and inconvenient.

The disadvantage of in-person with voting centers is that they are in a convenient place only if voters use the places that the centers are located. Traditional polling places

are in places associated with either the government (e.g., city hall or public schools) or with social groups (e.g., the Knights of Columbus or the Elks) that are long standing institutions of the community. These places provide stability and consistency as to where individuals can vote and many voters may not wish to change their voting place. Hence, voting centers may not be a viable early voting option for many potential voters.

No-Excuse Absentee Voting

The fourth type of early voting, *no-excuse absentee voting* (also known as vote by mail or absentee voting by mail), provides voters the opportunity to request absentee ballots as early as 45 days before an election and mail the ballot back on or before election day. This is similar to the vote-by-mail procedure, with the major difference being that through no-excuse voting the voter must request a ballot for each election, while vote-by-mail voters are automatically sent their ballots.

The advantage of no-excuse absentee voting is that individuals who are potential voters can plan ahead and request a ballot for any reason. This mode of early voting can be helpful for people who work away from their home districts or for college students who are away from home for long periods of time. No-excuse absentee voting has an advantage over traditional absentee voting in that anyone for any reason can request an absentee ballot. No-excuse absentee voting effectively makes the state an elective mail-in voting state, with individuals opting into the mail program.

A disadvantage of no-excuse absentee voting is that some planning must take place before the potential voter receives a ballot. For example, if a voter was called away on business unexpectedly, that voter would not have the time to request and receive an absentee ballot. No-excuse absentee voting also has many of the same problems as mail-in voting in that the integrity of the ballot may be compromised when it is mailed.

Ballot integrity is a large issue with mail-in voting due to (1) possible intervention of third parties and (2) a loss of secrecy that is associated with the traditional Australian ballot (Harris, 1999). Fraud by third parties refers to people receiving and filling out ballots meant for other people. This becomes an issue when ballot access is not constrained to a monitored polling place. The CalTech/MIT Voting Technology Project (2001) recommends that absentee voting should be replaced with in-person early voting

whenever possible. This allows individuals to vote early but in a much more secure manner.

Traditional Absentee Voting

The fifth type of early voting, *traditional absentee voting*, allows voters with a limited number of reasons to apply for absentee ballots. Those reasons include being physically unable to get to the polls, being in the military, living abroad, or being away at college. When individuals are away from their home districts for extended periods of time, traditional absentee voting allows for a mail-in absentee vote to be cast. Absentee voting also may be done before election day in person if an individual knows that he or she will be away from his or her district on election day. For example, if someone has a business trip coming up over election day, that individual can cast a ballot before election day at a polling place.

The advantages of traditional absentee voting are the same as for no-excuse absentee voting but are relevant only for a limited population. Traditional absentee voting is the oldest form of early voting with roots that trace back to ballots being provided to soldiers during the Civil War. The advantage of traditional absentee voting is that populations of potential voters that are away from their home districts on election day are allowed to vote.

The disadvantage of traditional absentee voting is again the same as for no-excuse absentee voting. An added problem with traditional absentee voting occurs when a state must decide how strict or loose the regulations should be for establishing if a potential voter is eligible for an absentee ballot. The difference between strict and loose absentee voting laws can be seen with some states allowing for any excuse, where other states require the voter to affirm that they were out of their district for a specific and limited reason, such as for work or school.

Internet Voting (E-Voting)

The sixth type of early voting, *internet voting* (also called e-voting), allows voters to cast ballots over the world wide web using a secure website. Internet voting has been used in the U.S. only in certain primary elections.

The advantage of internet voting is the extreme ease of voting it provides to individuals who have computers and who are connected to the internet. Voting on-line

could be as easy as checking e-mail so there is tremendous potential for this mode of early voting.

There are also concerns about internet voting. First, many people do not trust the security of casting a ballot on-line. Second, with the advancement of computers and the internet, a "digital divide" has been created with some people being much more comfortable than others when using computers.

Voting by Phone or Fax

The seventh type of early voting, *voting by phone or fax,* allows disabled voters to choose candidates over the phone. Phone voting provides opportunity and convenience for individuals who would not normally have the chance to go to the polls and vote.

The advantage of early voting by phone or fax is that individuals who are not able physically to make it to the polls still have an opportunity to cast a ballot. This allows individuals the opportunity to vote without putting their health at risk.

The disadvantage of early voting by phone or fax is that very few individuals get to use this mechanism for voting due to the specific health requirements voters must show before they are able to vote by phone or fax. There are also security concerns with phone and fax voting that are similar to the security concerns of mail-in voting. When a ballot is cast over the phone, questions can arise about the identity of the voter.

Moving forward in this dissertation, I focus on two types of early voting policy, in-person and mail-in early voting. I concentrate on these two types of early voting for a number of reasons. First, these are the two most common types of early voting policies found across the states. The next section presents a discussion of the number of states that have each type of early voting and shows that over half of the states allow for no-excuse mail-in voting and 14 states allow for in-person early voting. Second, early voting in-person and mail-in voting are two unique and observable political behaviors in that they require two different types of knowledge about where, when, and how to cast a ballot. Third, other early voting policies (e.g., vote-by-mail, in-person early voting, in-person early voting with voting centers, no-excuse absentee voting, and traditional absentee voting) can be grouped into either in-person or mail-in early voting. The early voting policies such as absentee voting or voting by phone that don't fit into the categories of in-person early voting or mail-in early voting are only open to specific

populations within states. For the purposes of this dissertation, early voting options must be open to all residents of a state in order to tests theories about who chooses to vote early or on election day.

Overall, the different types of early voting show that states are taking on the role of laboratories for policy by allowing and implementing different early voting laws since 1980. In the next sections I (1) introduce the variation of early voting policies across the states by year of adoption and (2) present a model that predicts when states implemented the two major types of early voting policies.

EARLY VOTING ACROSS THE STATES

In this section I present descriptive data on the types of early voting allowed by different states since 1980. The variation will be examined further in the next section of this chapter. The four types of early voting and general ease of participation policies considered here are, in-person early voting, no-excuse absentee voting, in-person early voting, and election day registration.
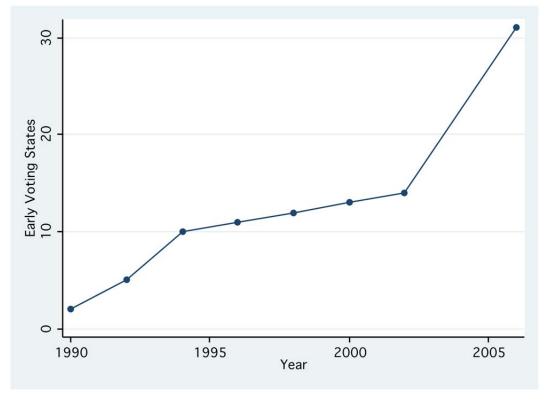

Figure 2.1 Trend in number of early voting states 1990-2006

Note: Early voting states include states with policies that allow for some type of early voting

Figure 2.1, shows the trend over time in state adoption of early voitng since 1990. There has been a slow rise in the number of states with early voting since 1990. The large increase during the last ten years started after the 2000 election, in which there was controversy in the Florida election. Currently, over 30 states now allow for in-person early voting with some states having a majority of votes cast before election day. In terms of a policy change analysis, this graph shows the typical event driven change in policy. After 2000 many states saw early voting policies as a way to decrease the possiblity of their state having the same election day problems as Florida had. After a few more years, the number of early voting policies should become stable with all the states who are likely to pass laws doing so. This is similar to the punchuated equliburm model in that few states had ealry voting laws before the event in 2000, the first equilburm, and then many states passed ealry voting laws that led to a new equilburm (Baumgartener and Jones, 1993). Another policy process that may be happening with ealry voting is policy diffusion. Policy diffusion occurs when a public policy is implemented in one state, is viewed by other states as a policy success, and is then implemented by the new states (Berry and Berry, 1990, Walker, 1969). The typical policy diffusion starts with a few states adobpting the policy followed by more until all of the states have a similar policy. Policy diffusion will be further discussed later in this section.
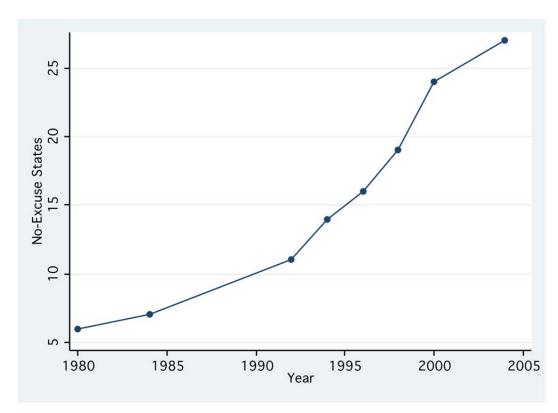
Figure 2.2 Trend in no-excuse states 1980-2006

Note: No-excuse states include policies that do not require a reason to request an absentee ballot

Figure 2.2 shows the trend in "no-excuse" states, which are defined as those states that do not require an excuse for requesting an absentee ballot. Unlike the dramatic rise of early voting, no-excuse policy has expanded slowly and consistently since 1980. Currently, a little more than half of the states have no-excuse early voting polices. This graph shows that the liberalization of early voting laws has shown a positive trend in state policies for the last thirty years. The fact that many states were already making no-excuse voting easier, the events of 2000, and the increasing use of early voting in other states may explain why so may states passed early voting laws after 2000. The overall shape of the graph is similar to the S-shaped curve found in the policy diffusion literature (Berry and Berry, 1990, Walker, 1969).

Figure 2.3 Trend in in-person early voting states 1980-2006

Note: In-person early voting states allow individuals to cast in-person early voting

Figure 2.3 shows data on the number of states with in-person early voting for each year from 1980 to 2002. There was a strong push for in-person early voting between 1980 and 1994 with only 4 states adding since. There are 14 states with in-person early voting, which are listed below with year of passage. If early voting becomes more popular, I expect other states to copy the early voting systems of the 14 states that allow for this type of voting. Again the overall shape of the graph is similar to the S-shaped curve found in the policy diffusion literature (Berry and Berry, 1990, Walker, 1969).
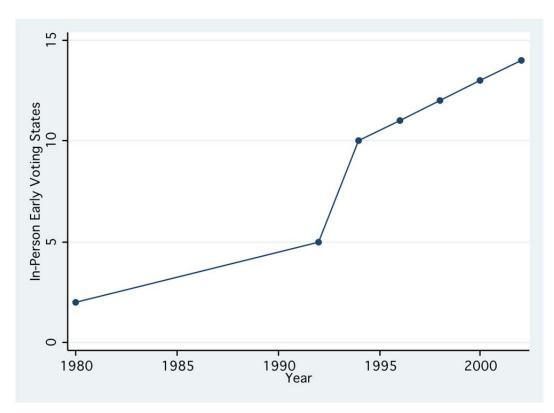
Table 2.1 Date of early voting policy adoption from 1980-2006

	Vote By Mail	No-Excuse Absentee Voting	Early Voting
Alabama		1996	
Alaska			
Arizona		1992	1994
Arkansas		1980	1996
California	1980	1980	1998
Colorado	2000	1992	1992
Connecticut			
Delaware			
Florida		1998	
Georgia		1998	
Hawaii		1980	1980
Idaho		1980	1980
Illinois			
Indiana		2004	
Iowa		1992	1992
Kansas		1996	2002
Kentucky			
Louisiana			
Maine		2000	
Maryland			
Massachusetts			
Michigan			
Minnesota			
Mississippi			
Missouri		1998	
Montana			
Nebraska		1994	

Table 2.1 (continued)

	Vote By Mail	No-Excuse Absentee Voting	Early Voting
Nevada		1980	1994
New Hampshire			
New Jersey			
New Mexico		1994	1994
New York			
North Carolina		2000	2000
North Dakota		2000	
Ohio		2008	
Oklahoma		1992	
Oregon	1998	1984	
Pennsylvania			
Rhode Island			
South Carolina			
South Dakota		2004	
Tennessee			1994
Texas			1992
Utah		2004	
Vermont		1994	1994
Virginia			
Washington	1994	2000	
West Virginia			
Wisconsin		2000	
Wyoming		2000	

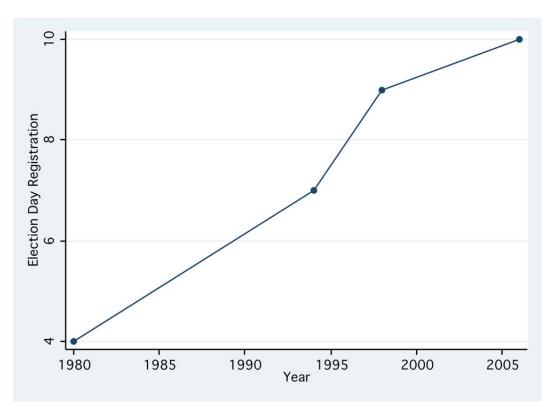Note: Compiled by author from Cain, Donovan, and Tolbert (2008)

Figure 2.4 Trend in election day registration from 1980-2006

Note: Election day registration includes states that allow individuals to register and vote on the same date

Election day registration is one of the electoral policies that makes the preparation for voting much easier. Few states have added election day registration since 1994. This policy area is a potential growth area for states that want to make the voting process one step easier. Election day registration fits into the early voting policy discussion in that if registration dates cause early voting to be more time consuming, increases in participation due to early voting may be limited. For example, if a state allows for early voting but requires registration before early voting, potential voters who what to vote early but forget or have registration problems will be shut out of the process.

As can be seen on both the in-person early voting and no-excuse early voting graphs, about 30 states have passed laws relating to each of these early voting types. There are three possibilities for the future of early voting policy. First, it may be the case that there are only about 30 states that are going to pursue liberalized early voting laws in general and that the remaining 20 states will not adopt no-excuse voting or other types of

early voting laws. This assumes that early voting policies may not diffuse across the states. Second, it may be the case that citizens will put pressure on their state governments to adopted more early voting policies and state governments will in turn continue to make the voting process easier. Third, some states that have early voting policies will pull back on the types of early voting policies they have in place. In other words, the graphs in this section may show the high point of the liberalization of voting procedures with more restrictive laws to be passed in the future. In the next section of this chapter, I discuss the determinants of early voting including state-level factors, political factors, and the diffusion process.

THE DETERMINANTS OF EARLY VOTING POLICY

Electoral policy, much like many other state-level policies, can be examined as a case of policy innovation and diffusion. Due to the large number of states that now allow for early voting, the determinants of early voting policies can be examined in a systematic manner using survival analysis. Survival analysis allows for the causal factors that lead to the diffusion of certain policies across different states to be found. Survival analysis is a form of statistical analysis that originally was used to predict survival rates in populations of humans or other animals across time. In terms of humans, survival analysis predicts the change in probability of death due to given factors (Berry and Berry, 1990). Examples of this are studies of the effects of fatty foods, smoking, and alcohol on the human body. The results of these studies show a number of years that the average person who uses tobacco, for example, could expect to have subtracted from his or her life. Survival analysis predicts the death rate of an individual given specific conditions over time. Another component of this analysis is that once an individual dies, he or she is dropped from the data set. Dropping an individual case from the data set after policy is passed is done because once the policy is adopted, the model can no longer predict its passage.

The textbook example of survival analysis in a public policy area is Berry and Berry (1990), who examine the expansion of state lotteries during the 1980s. The typical policy diffusion follows an S-shaped curve, which over time, represents (1) a few early adopter states that introduce the policy, followed by (2) more states implementing their

41

own laws regarding the policy, and finally (3) a critical mass of states adopting the policy which encourages the remainder of the states to adopt the policy. The last stage occurs due to a consensus being achieved for the policy across all states. In the case of state lotteries, states did not want to loose lottery money across state borders so most states allow for some type of lottery. In state politics, this means that some states attempt a new policy and become early adopters or policy leaders and serve as examples for other states to observe and evaluate. California, New York, and Wisconsin have long been policy leaders for the other states in terms of education and health care. Once a policy leader state implements a policy, other states may decide to adopt the policy as well. I expect that there will be an observed policy diffusion in the early voting policy area starting the in early 1980s. In order to predict early voting policies across the U.S., I examine both internal and external reasons that a state would pass early voting legislation.

I examine five groups of variables to predict passage of state-level early voting policies staring with external causes and moving on to internal causes. Diffusion variables make up the first group of variables discussed. Early voting passage can be affected by external state-level factors such as neighbor effects. Neighbor effects are the peer pressure of policy adoption in that states are assumed to put pressure on neighbors to pass similar legislation if the policy is successful. Economic policies such as the lottery and sales taxes are policy areas that have been affected by neighbor effects. In terms of state sales tax rate, it is easy to see that people who live close to the boarder of a state with a lower tax rate would have an incentive to cross the boarder to buy goods. This would put pressure on their home state to lower the tax rate to become competitive. Although voters cannot go into a neighboring state to vote as they can to shop, it is possible that voters could see how easy and convenient early voting is and then communicate a desire for early voting to their representatives.

Events make up the second group of variables discussed. I examine the role of the 2000 presidential election as an example of event that calls into attention the problem of ballots being mismarked and not counted. One of the advantages of mail-in voting is that voters have an extended period of time to make sure that their ballots accurately reflects their preferences. In other words, people have the time to check their work before handing in their ballot. In-person early voting can act as a voter bank where

voters can vote early in an attempt to make sure their ballot is counted. Overall, I expect that as an event the 2000 presidential election caused states to reexamine their voting laws that lead to passage of early voting policies after the year 2000.

State-level political factors make up the third group of variables discussed. Early voting passage can influence internal political pressures such as political control of the state, state income, or ethnic diversity of the state. Parties may wish to pass early voting legislation for a number of reasons. First, parties that have a statewide registration advantage should receive electoral gains if participation is made easier. Second, parties may think that barriers to participation are too high for their members and early voting would help with mobilization efforts. Third, parties may have specific constituencies that would benefit from early voting policies. For example, people in rural areas may be away from any polling place on election day and early voting would allow for easier participation. Other internal factors will be examined in the next section. State-level political factors include party control of government institutions, citizen ideology, and voter turnout. I expect the state-level political factors, when measured in the Democratic or liberal direction (i.e., party control of government institutions and citizen ideology), to have a positive effect on early voting passage.

State-level demographic factors make up the fourth group of variables discussed. State-level demographic factors act as estimations of demand for early voting. These factors include state-level income inequality and population density. For example, state with high levels of income inequality may be more likely to pass early voting legislation due to class participation bias and states with a high population density may be more likely to pass early voting legislation due to high congestion at polling places on election day. In this case, early voting would serve as a release valve by bringing in some voters before election day and making the election day voting less crowded.

The previous adoption of liberal electoral laws, besides early voting, is the fifth group of variables discussed. I expect that states that pass legislation making the registration process easier also will adopt some type of early voting policy. Passing electoral laws that make parts of the voting process easier provides evidence that a state that passes such laws is interested in liberalized voting laws and more likely to pass early voting laws.

In the next section of this chapter I discuss the specific measurements of the determinants of early voting policy. These determinants come from the five groups of variables discussed above (i.e., diffusion, events, state-level political factors, state-level demographic factors, and the adopting of liberal electoral laws). Each variable will include the measurement of the variable and a predicted effect on passage of early voting policy.

Neighbor state effects. One of the common findings among the policy diffusion studies is the effect neighbor states have on the spread of public policy (Berry and Berry, 1990, Walker, 1969). For example, when one state lowers its sales tax rate, residents from neighboring states may cross over to the lower tax state to purchase goods at lower total cost. The home state that loses sales tax revenue may feel pressure in various ways to lower its sales tax rate. Pressure may come from the complaints of citizens (especially citizens who do not live close to the neighboring state) and consumer and business groups that may lobby the state for lower taxes. I expect that states that share a border with an early voting state will be more likely to pass an early voting law than states that do not.

Neighboring state effects are measured by calculating the percentage of border-states surrounding a state that have an early voting policy on the books. For example, Michigan has three border-states, Ohio, Indiana, and Wisconsin. One of those border state, Ohio, has an early voting policy. That means the neighbor state effect would be measured as .33 (1 out of 3 possible states) for Michigan. The variable ranges from 0 (no border state has an early voting policy) to 1 (all border-states have early voting policies).

In the case of early voting policies, the neighboring state effect may be present. It is possible that voters of a neighboring early voting state could hear about how easy and convenient early voting is and then communicate a desire for early voting to their representatives.

H$_1$: The passage of early voting laws by neighboring states should have a positive
    effect on the probability that border-states will also pass early voting laws.

Event effects. Events may also play an important role in the diffusion of policy across states (Berry and Berry, 1991). Events have the effect of attracting the attention of

44

lawmakers. In the electoral policy arena, a major event that focused attention on the voting issue, as discussed previously, was the 2000 presidential election. This event should have caused state legislatures to reexamine the election laws they had on the books.

The theoretical underpinnings for the 2000 election to have an effect on state election policies is based on a theoretical explanation of how policies are passed due to events. Issue attention cycle theory predicts that once an event is raised to the public as a crisis in need of a solution, activity in the public policy area will be forthcoming (Downs, 1972). For example, the event of large hurricane destroying property could bring about some type of insurance reform legislation, or the event of a gun violence case could make policy makers look more closely at gun access laws. In terms of electoral policy, the states had an opportunity to try to solve the problems associated with the counting and recounting of the ballots in the Florida 2000 election. One possible way to fix the problem of the hanging chad would be to allow voters to complete their ballots at home. This would allow voters to check and recheck that their preferences are displayed on their ballots. No-excuse absentee voting would allow people to spend extra time with the ballots.

Events as a variable is measured by a dummy variable for all states for years after 2000. This captures the possible event effect of the 2000 presidential election. I expect that after the 2000 election, states were more likely to pass early voting legislation to make sure that the state-level voting process allowed time for voters to carefully consider their ballots. I expect the event effect of the 2000 election to be greater for no-excuse absentee passage compared to in-person early voting because no-excuse early voting allows voters to spend more time with their ballots to make sure that their preferences are clearly marked.

H$_2$: After the year 2000, states should be more likely to pass early voting laws.

Statehouse party control. Electoral policy primarily originates in the states. Many state-level policy studies show a significant relationship between statehouse control and policy outcomes (Berry, Fording, and Hanson, 2003). Both branches of state

45

government (i.e., governor's office and state legislature) should influence if and what type of early voting policy will be passed. Based on party stances on other types of electoral policies (e.g., registration dates and voter identification), I expect that Democratic governors and state legislatures will be more likely to pass less restrictive policies such as in-person early voting, no-excuse absentee, and mail-in voting. I expect Republicans, on the other hand, to be less likely to pass any type of early voting policy. Simply, Democrats tend to perceive that they benefit from expansions of the electorate, and they will perceive that policies such as early voting will expand the electorate and promote their electoral chances. Party control is measured with a four-point scale in the Democratic parties direction, ranging from 0 (Republicans holding the statehouse, state senate, or the governor's office) to 3 (Democrats holding the state house, state senate, and the governor's office). States with more governing institutions held by Democrats are expected to be associated with a higher probability to pass early voting laws. I expect that states with more Democratic representation to be more likely to pass early voting legislation.

> H_3: States with greater Democratic control of state policy-making institutions
> should be more likely to pass early voting laws.

State citizen ideology. State ideology also is expected to predict electoral policy output. State ideology, as measured by public opinion polls, has been shown to have a near perfect positive relationship with overall state policy output (Erikson, Wright, and McIver, 1993). I predict that public opinion will continue to have a strong positive relationship with electoral policy. I predict that states with liberal leaning policy preferences will be more likely to pass early voting legislation. The measurement of state ideology I use is a combination of the citizen ideology measures created by Berry, Ringquest, Fording, and Hanson (1998) and Berry, Fording, Ringquest, Hanson, and Klarner (2010). The citizen policy measure describes "the average location of the active electorate in each state on a liberal-conservative continuum" (2010) with higher values representing more liberal state populations and lower values representing more

46

conservative state populations. I expect states with more liberal populations to be more likely to pass early voting laws.

H$_4$: States with liberal populations should be more likely to pass early voting laws.

State-level of voter turnout. The percentage of eligible voters who turn out to vote in a state should be related to the passage of early voting laws in the state. The state-level voter turnout measure comes from the Michael McDonald United States Election Project webpage that expands the data set first presented by McDonald and Popkin (2001). The measurement issue that McDonald and Popkin (2001) address is the difference found between the amount of turnout when it is calculated by Voting Age Population (VAP) instead of being calculated by the more accurate Voting Eligible Population (VEP). The problem with using VAP is that the figure includes all people who are of voting age regardless of their eligibility to vote. That means VAP includes ineligible populations such as non-voting felons, non-residents, and illegal immigrants. VEP removes these ineligible populations and produces a more accurate measure of state voter turnout.

I expect previous levels of turnout to influence state policy in three different ways. First, I expect that states with high levels of turnout will be more likely to pass early voting laws. Since a large share of the state electorate does vote, individuals will promote a policy that makes their voting easier and more convenient. Simply, people who would normally vote will support the added convenience of early voting. Second, I expect that states with low levels of turnout will attempt to make voting easier for the potential voting population. One-way of doing this is to adopt reforms such as early voting. Third, I expect that states with average levels of voter turnout to be less likely to implement any type of early voting policy. This represents the "if it's not broken don't fix it" approach.

I expect there to be a U-shaped relationship between state-level of voter turnout and probability that an early voting law will be passed. A nonlinear relationship implies that there is not a one-to-one relationship between VEP and the probability that a state

will pass an early voting law. This means that I expect that states with high and low levels of voter turnout will be more likely to pass early voting legislation. The nonlinear variable will be captured by the VEP variable as well as the VEP variable squared.

$H_{5(a)}$: States with high levels of voter turnout should be positively related to state
passage of early voting laws.

$H_{5(b)}$: States with low levels of voter turnout should be positively related to state
passage of early voting laws.

$H_{5(c)}$: There is a nonlinear relationship between state voter turnout and state
passage of early voting laws.

Income inequality. States with high concentrations of income may see early voting as a way to increase the number of people who go to the polls on election day. States with high levels of income inequality may want to make the participation process easier in order to provide a more democratic political system, where the economic system remains tilted to more wealthy individuals. I predict that states with high levels of income inequality should be more likely to pass early voting laws to make the voting process easier.

There should also be an interactive effect between income inequality and partisan control of the state government. Specifically, states with high levels of income inequality and more Democratic party control should be more likely to pass early voting laws. The Democratic party will typically try to fix issues with government intervention and early voting laws are a way to bring in more potential voters so the state government would represent the entire state population, not just the voting population (Bartles, 2010). I predict that states with high levels of income inequality and Democratic party control should be more likely to pass early voting laws.

H_6: States with high levels of income inequality should be more likely to pass
early voting laws.

H_7: States with high levels of income inequality and Democratic party control
should have an interactive effect and be more likely to pass early voting laws.

48

Population Density. States that have high population concentrations of populations may see early voting as a way to decrease the number of people who go to the polls on election day. High population density can translate into long lines at the polls on election day. Long lines may be due to not having enough polling places or not having enough voting machines at each polling place. Early voting can spread out voting over different days and help to decrease the amount of demand for voting on election day. On the other hand, states with low population density do not have as large demand for voting on election day. I predict that states with high levels of population density should be more likely to pass early voting laws to make the voting process easier.

> H_8: States with high levels of population density should be more likely to pass early voting laws.

Early policy adoption. States already have a number of electoral laws that determine how strict their voting laws are. Strictness of voting laws can serve as a predictor for how likely a state is to pass early voting laws. States with restrictive voting laws (e.g., must register 30 days before an election) should be less likely to pass early voting laws. On the other hand, states with liberal voting laws (e.g., election day registration or no registration required) should be more likely to pass early voting laws. I predict that states pass legislation that is consistent with other laws in that policy area. For example, states that have the most strict registration laws (e.g., must register 30 days before the election) should have the strictest ID requirements and the fewest early voting laws. On the other hand, states that have no registration requirement are predicted to have the most liberal early voting laws.

Electoral laws are measured by how many days before the election voter registration closes. States with closer dates of 30 days prior to the election are predicted to be more restrictive in their voting and not have any early voting policies.

> H_9: States with liberal voting laws should be more likely to pass early voting laws.

The next section of this chapter presents a model of early voting policy adoption across the states.

MODELING EARLY VOTING POLICY

In this section I develop a model of state adoption of early voting policies. I use statistical analysis to predict passage of in-person, no-excuse early voting, and passage of any type of early voting law. For each policy I estimate the predicted effects of several groups of independent variables on the passage of a given early voting policy and any early voting policy using time series probit analysis. Time series probit analysis is a statistical technique appropriate for dichotomous dependent variables and is used to predict variables that are binary (i.e., either a 1 where the event or behavior occurs or 0 where the event or behavior does not occur). In this chapter I use a time series probit model to predict the passage of early voting laws at the state-level, specifically the xtprobit Stata command to account for autocorrelated errors and heteroskdasticity commonly found in estimated models of time series data sets. The data set includes observations from the 50 states every election year starting from 1980 to the year 2006. The actual number of cases varies from model to model based on when the specific states adopted an early voting policy. To estimate the passage of specific polices, I drop states from the analysis after they pass one of the early voting policies. After the state is dropped from the time series, the effects of the passed policy are accounted for in the neighbor variable for the remainder of the time series. States that do not pass an early voting law remain in the data set as potential future adopters of the policies examined here.

The data set includes observations from every presidential and off-year election year from 1980 to 2006. I use a two-year measurement cycle so that the measurements of changing voting laws and voter turnout are accurate and unique data points. If yearly measurements were taken for all variables (e.g., policy and voter turnout), some variables would remain the same for two time periods in a row. The effects of diffusion include that one state sees that another state passed an early voting law but also that the

implementation of the early voting law can be assessed and observed. Two-year observations follow the congressional election schedule, which means that cases can be dropped as the early voting policies are first implemented. Taking observations every two-year election cycle means that each case is an observation of all variables every two years.

The dependent variable is coded 1 for states that have either adopted early voting in the election year or adopted in the year before the specific election year. That is, a state is coded as 1 if it passes on early voting policy during the two-year election cycle. The dependent variable is coded 0 for states that have not adopted early voting. A state is dropped in the event history analysis after an early voting law is passed. I code all states, starting in 1980, as 0 until an early voting policy is passed.

The variables from in data set are compiled in Table 2.2, which shows the variable name, measurement of the variable, the data source for each variable, and the variable range. The number of cases (i.e., state years) for each early voting policy changes based on the number of cases dropping out as the policies diffuses though the states. There are a total of 281 possible cases for the no-excuse early voting model and the in-person early voting model.

FINDINGS

No-excuse early voting results

Table 2.3 shows my estimated xtprobit model that predicts passage of no-excuse early voting policies. I did not find any significant coefficients that predicted no-excuse early voting policy passage. I also present the model estimated in Table 2.3 in Table 2.6 with out the inclusion of the two interaction variables (voter turnout squared and party X Gini coefficient) and do not find any significant predictors of no-excuse early voting policy passage.

Looking at the non-significant findings in Table 2.3 and 2.6, there are some interesting variables to examine. First, the non-significant finding of the neighbor policy coefficient. This represents an important finding because it provides evidence that the diffusion policy theory is limited to policies such as lotteries, taxes, social welfare spending, and living wills laws. This makes intuitive sense in that it is expected that policies that have high levels of public awareness and interest could bring attention to

51

neighbor states. This analysis provides evidence that low salience policies (i.e., early voting) may not diffuse in the same way as high salience policies (i.e., living wills and lotteries).

The second non-significant finding involves the event year 2000 variable. This means that the issues related to the Florida recount did not lead states to be more likely to pass early voting laws after 2000. It may be because the focus of the Florida recount did not center on access to the ballot box but rather the issues with counting up the ballots after the ballots were turned in. With the help of HAVA, states were given the opportunity to change to non-paper ballots to help improve the counting process post election. Voting before election day does not necessarily help the voter make sure that his or her preferences were accurately shown, with the exception of mail-in voting where voters can spend as much time with their ballots as they wish.

The third non-significant finding is for the voter turnout measures of state-level voter turnout and state-level voter turnout squared. This is interesting because of the belief that early voting policies are a solution to the low voter turnout problem. States appear not to take levels of voter turnout into account when deciding to pass early voting legislation. This provides some empirical evidence to support the view that states view early voting opportunities as a policy to make the voting process easier for current voters and not as a way to get more people to the polls.

The fourth non-significant finding involves the registration closing date. This suggests that one type of liberalized voting policy is not necessary related to other types of voting policies. This suggests that in the view of state legislatures and potential voters, the voting process is made up of two distinct parts, registration and voting. The two-stage nature of voting in the U.S. has been on the reasons for low overall participation in the electoral process (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993).

The fifth non-significant finding involves the political variables party aggregate strength and citizen ideology. Neither of the political variables is significant witch provides evidence that early voting passage is a non-partisan policy position. In Chapter 3 of this dissertation I address the political motivations behind early voting policies and I will directly examine the possible partisan link between state-level party workers and early voting policies.

Overall, the no-excuse early voting model allows many factors to be ruled out in explaining what leads to early voting policy passage. In the next section I examine a model that predicts in-person early voting policy passage with the same set of factors presented in Table 2.3 and Table 2.6.

In-person early voting results

The results for my second policy model are displayed in Table 2.4 and without interaction terms in Table 2.7. The estimated model shown in Table 2.4 produced five significant coefficients. The five coefficients include aggregate statehouse party control (-), citizen ideology (+), passage of motor voter act passage before 1993 (+), registration closing date (-), and the gini times the statehouse party control interaction term (+).

State-level citizen ideology is found to be positively related to in-person early voting. This means that states with more liberal population are more likely to pass in-person early voting policies. This finding falls in line with the thinking that liberals view the government as a solution to the low voter turnout problem and early voting policies provide a way to get more individuals to the polls. There is also an argument that states with conservative ideologies would want to keep a more traditional election day policy. States with a relatively conservative liberal state-level citizen ideology may want to keep the voting process as traditional as possible and feel that early voting would remove some of the pageantry from election day. In-person early voting often takes place in non-traditional voting places like malls, and other non-standard polling places. Also, conservative citizens may view election day in a similar manner to Thompson (2004) and believe that election day should be a national collective action where all votes should be cast on the same day. A big concern about early voting is that early voters do not have the access to the same information as election day voters do. This leaves open the possibility that new information may become available that would cause many early voters to want to change their vote.

State party control is found to be a negative and significant predictor of in-person early voting policy passage. This means that states with more Republican statehouses are more likely to pass in-person early voting legislation. This finding is of particular interest because this model also estimated that states with more liberal populations are more likely to pass early voting legislation. There appears to be a balance between

53

Republican statehouses and liberal state populations that both lead to passage of in-person early voting policies. Republican parties, like all parties, may pass early voting policies because they believe that the policy will increase the change of winning the next election.

State-level income inequality measured by the interactive term gini coefficient times the statehouse party control coefficient and is found to have a positive and significant effect on passage of in-person early voting. It appears that state legislatures with higher levels of income inequality and more Democratic party statehouse control are more likely to pass in-person early voting laws. States appear to use these early voting laws as a way to encourage voting by all groups of individuals, not just the poor or the wealthy and this effect is only felt when interacted with more Democratic statehouse control. Making voting relatively simpler could be a way to ensure that even in a state with high-income inequality, all citizens have an equal contribution in the electoral process. This interaction variable is removed from the model in Table 2.7 and did not cause the single statehouse control or Gini variable to become significant. This means that these two variables are significant when they interact in and the statehouse party control measure in Table 2.4.

Passage of early Motor Voter policy is found to have a positive effect on passage of in-person early voting policies. As discussed in the section covering no-excuse absentee voting, I expect early adoption of one type of electoral policy to translate into passage of other early voting policies. In this model I find a positive and significant coefficient for Motor Voter policy on in-person early voting policies. This finding supports the idea that states try to make the voting process easier as new electoral policies become known. The idea that states have a consistent view and policy stance on electoral policy is a topic that warrants further empirical examination. Some state-level electoral policies may fit together, like no registration requirement, no voter ID requirement, and an early voting policy. These policies could be used to produce an ease of voting index across states to determine in which states it is easier or more difficult to cast a ballot. A closer examination may find that states have a combination of electoral policies that appear to be inconsistent or incompatible. For example, some states may allow for in-person early voting but close registration 30 days before election day.

I also find that the coefficient on the registration closing date variable is negative and significant. This means that state with a registration closing date close to election day are more likely to pass in-person early voting laws. I think that it makes sense for states with more liberal registration polices that allow for registration close to election day would be in favor of having a liberal in-person voting to make the voting process easier. This also fits into the idea that states have a liberal or conservative set of electoral policies. A liberal set of voting polices would not include voter ID laws, no registration deadline, and one or more early voting policies. A conservative set of electoral politics include voter ID laws, a registration closing date of 30 days before the election, and no early voting policies.

The last set of models shown in Table 2.5 and Table 2.8 predict the passage of any type of early voting law. The only significant coefficient in Table 2.5 is the no-excuse absentee early voting neighbor. This means that states with more neighbor states with no-excuse absentee voting policy are more likely to pass any type of early voting policy. This follows the traditional diffusion process where policies move from state to border state until all states have a similar type of policy. Table 2.8 shows the model from Table 2.4 without the two interactive terms and includes the two positive and significant coefficients for no-excuse absentee neighbor and the gini coefficient. The neighbor coefficient was discussed above in this paragraph and the gini coefficient measures the level of income inequality in each state. This means that states with higher levels of income inequality will be more likely to pass any type of early voting policy than states with low levels of income inequality. High-income inequality may lead to early voting policies because of the potential for income inequality to translate into political inequality. Early voting policies are a way to make the voting process easier and in some states are viewed as a way to bring new voters to the polls (more on this topic in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 in this dissertation).

Overall, these models have found a few of the significant predictors of early voting policy, but do leave room for examining the effects of other variables. There are a number of possibilities as to what accounts for the remainder of the unexplained variation. First, there may be other unique state-level factors that I have not accounted for in my model. These effects could account for the non-partisan and non-ideological

55

findings of my two early voting models. I do not think that early voting is a policy that easily maps onto the liberal and conservative policy preferences scale. For example, liberals may favor early voting as a way to make voting an easier process in order to get more electoral participation, while at the same time, liberals may want to retain the collective action of voting together as a country on the same day. Conservatives may want to make voting an individual choice by expanding the opportunity to cast a ballot over many days, but conservatives may also what to preserve the tradition of election day voting. This possible effect would leave early voting off of the traditional liberal-conservative scale of government stepping-in to government stepping-aside.

Another state-level factor that may have an effect on early voting passage is media coverage about the benefits of early voting. Media coverage could lead to public awareness of the policy, which could then cause citizens to lobby the statehouse. The media coverage of elections may include segments and articles about how early voting could help busy citizens vote or show how early voting is being implemented in other states.

One of the issues in the policy diffusion literature deals with what mechanism actually transfers policy knowledge from one state to another. Some studies have examined policy entrepreneurs that travel from state to state and advocate for a specific policy (Mintrom, 1997). In the next chapter of this dissertation I discuss early voting policies with representatives of political parties. In my discussions, I did not hear about any type of policy entrepreneur active in the early voting policy area. It may be the case that early voting policies are relatively simple policies to implement, make policy entrepreneur activities unnecessary. Election policies are mostly internal government operations that do not require business groups to implement a portion of the policy. This is in contrast to economic policies that need to fit into a current policy space. Early voting, on the other hand, is a new policy in a new policy area with no entrenched group trying to stop passage of early voting laws.

One of the strongest arguments for the passage of early voting is that U.S. is that voter turnout is relatively low compared to other industrial democracies. The finding that the coefficients for voter turnout and voter turnout squared are not statistically significant adds another wrinkle to the early voting policy passage debate on whether or not early

56

voting has the potential to increase voter turnout. I view the non-significant coefficients as an indication that low, medium, or high levels of voter turnout are not related to passage of early voting policies. This may mean that states are looking to make the voting process easier for the citizens who are voting already. Making the voting process easier opens up a debate about if government should just make the voting process easier for current voters or making the voting process easier in order to get more citizens to the polls. If states are only make voting easier for current voters, the government is only spending money to keep current voters voting. In the next section of this chapter I make suggestions about how to further examine the factors that lead to early voting policy passage in the U.S.

CONCLUSION

The growth in early voting policies has been drastic since 2000. As these early voting policies become utilized by more people and more states, I expect the early voting will continue to expand until every state has some type of early voting option available to voters. It may be that diffusion of early voting policies happens across states that have similar state-level factors, such as ideology, and not states that simply border each other. Diffusion may take the form of either in-person early voting or a no-excuse absentee voting. The only impediment that I see to the remaining states passing an early voting option is the fear that new information may come to light late in an election that would cause early voters to want to change their votes after casting a ballot.

Another possible avenue for more early voting options is the addition of on-line early voting. Looking past the scope of this research, I predict that early voting will slowly spread around the rest of the country without the inclusion of any type of on-line voting until security is no longer a salient issue.

The models in this dissertation show significant factors that affect the passage of early voting policies. Those factors include state-level demographic factors (gini coefficient), political variables (citizen ideology and statehouse party control), and past policy outputs (early passage of Motor Voter Act and registration closing date). Including addition factors representing all three categories of variables may lead to a clearer explanation of what encourages early voting passage. In future research scholars

may include variables in their models that represent demographic variables (state unemployment rate), political variables (early voting issue salience), and past policy outputs (state policy liberalism).

There are other ways to examine early voting policy passage beyond just adding variables to the models shown in this dissertation. A media study that examines news coverage in states that passed early voting laws could improve our understanding of passage of early voting policies. For example, the framing and tone of media coverage may be constant across states that passed early voting laws. A state-level analysis that examines individual votes for and against early voting passage across all states could include unique statehouse member factors, such as district level factors and individual demographic factors of the member's constituency, that lead to passage of early voting policies. An examination of states that voted on early voting policies but did not pass them also could be done in order to examine early voting passage.

In this dissertation I find that early voting policy passage is a combination of different factors. Some of these factors are examined further in Chapter 3 (How Political Parties and Groups Utilize Early Voting) and Chapter 7 (Conclusion). In the next chapter of this dissertation I examine how state-level political parties view and use the new mobilization opportunities that arise with early voting.

CHAPTER 3: HOW POLITICAL PARTIES AND GROUPS UTILIZE EARLY VOTING

Due to changes in the way elections are run, specifically with regard to early voting policies, I expect political actors to change strategies for mobilization during the new expanded election period. Not all political actors are predicted to use the same strategies to increase the effectiveness of their past mobilization attempts when addresses early voting's opportunities. For example, some state-level political parties may start their phone calls to registered members on the first day of early voting and others may wait until election day to start phone calls due to cost considerations. The primary function of the political party is to win elections and early voting laws provide a new context in which parties can operate.

Interest groups also use mobilization to increase support for selected candidates during election periods. Groups are predicted to utilize the early voting period to increase support. By expanding the period of voting, groups have new opportunities to get voters to the polls. Under early voting, groups have the opportunity to inform voters that they can go right to the polls or vote on any day up to the end of election day. There are also opportunities for more targeted mobilization techniques. Recently, there has been a movement toward targeted mobilization due to better collection and analysis of data about voters and potential voters. For example, parties and interest groups collect data on personal consumption patterns to determine which party and candidate an individual may prefer. Potential early voters can be given direct campaign information about candidates, and they can be given information on how and when to cast an early vote.

Another option for parties and groups is to ignore the new early voting laws and not change any mobilization strategy that they use. Political parties may see early voting as an opportunity to mobilize early but may choose to hold on to their resources until late in the election calendar. This may be a function of how much money is available to the state-level party. States with low levels of resources may spend money closer to election day and states with high levels of resources may spend money throughout the early voting period. The specific mobilization techniques that parties choose to use are

presented in this chapter and are more closely examined in the interview section of this chapter.

In this chapter I examine the many new possibilities that early voting presents to political actors and how political parties and interest groups use early voting as a way to mobilize supporters. I use a qualitative research design to examine questions related to early voting and political parties that are not addressed in later chapters of this dissertation through quantitative research methods. Specifically, I contact state-level political party representatives and interview them about issues relating to new early voting laws. These interviews provide an inside look into how political parties are taking advantage of, or simply ignoring, the new early voting period and if the parties are in favor of expanded early voting policies in the future.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON PARTIES, GROUPS, AND ELECTIONS

This literature review is broken into two different sections. The first section concentrates on general political science research based at the state-level. This section provides an overview of the justifications for conducting state-level research. The second section concentrates on research that focuses on state-level party effects on campaigns and elections. This second section provides an opportunity to examine the mobilization techniques and other campaign behaviors of parties. The literature provides a background for understanding how parties approach early voting mobilization by examining the mobilization techniques parties used before the recent addition of early voting laws.

Parties and Interest Groups in the States

The federal structure of the U.S. political system allows the 50 states to produce and implement policies that fit each individual state's needs while allowing the federal government to pass laws that effect the entire country. The relationship between the states and the federal government has gone through many changes throughout the history of the U.S. Upon passage and implementation of the Constitution, power was clearly divided between the state and federal level, but the relationship has changed to a form of federalism where both states and the federal government are active in many of the same types of policy areas. This change has been called a shift from layer cake federalism,

where policy areas are clearly defined, to marble cake federalism, where policy areas mix together (Greenberg and Page, 2007). This allows for an examination of the 50 states as different contexts, as well as pieces of the whole country. State-level examination is beneficial for many different reasons. First, the states have been viewed as laboratories of democracy in that the states often test new policies that may be too large or expensive to attempt first at the national-level. Second, the states are able to pursue and enact policy that is formulated exclusively by and for the individual states. Third, states provide fifty different contexts in which to examine U.S. political behavior. While the states are an important component to the electoral policy discussion, the federal government has in recent years taken a large roll in crafting electoral laws. For example, the Voting Rights Act (1965) that required southern states to open the voting process up to all citizens pushed the federal government to the forefront of the electoral policy debate. The Motor Voter Act (1993) placed more requirements on the state by requiring voter registration material to be available at many different types of governmental offices and by requiring that registration closing dates could not be set more than 30 days before election day. The mix of federal and state policy activity is important to the study of electoral policy, but in this chapter I will focus on the roll of individual state early voting laws and the effects of those laws in the state-level political context.

State-level election research is important because it provides a rationale for conducting small N studies that include interviews and case studies in order to generate theories to be tested in larger N studies. Later in this chapter I present the results of phone interviews with members of state-level political parties in which the members discuss how the party's mobilization efforts have been affected by the early voting laws. These findings can be used to generate theories about how parties utilize scarce resources.

Parties and Interest Groups in State Elections

The literature on the role of state-level parties and interest groups in elections examines a range of topics including election outcomes, party institutions, electoral laws, and voter turnout. In this chapter I examine the state-level literature to show the many different contexts in which parties and groups try to win elections. The literature includes how parties and groups mobilize possible voters.

The literature on state-level parties and interest groups specifically addresses questions concerning the electoral and political contexts that lead to campaign contributions from a variety of different interests groups (e.g., labor and business). Political spending and fund raising can have an impact as to if and how much parties are involved in early voting mobilization. It is important to note that while early voting provides an opportunity for targeted mobilization, early voting also can be a costly campaign activity (for reasons discussed later in this chapter). The mobilization efforts of parties and groups are constrained by how much money is available to spend during the election cycle. The other major constraint that affects political parties is state and federal election laws. These laws lead parties and groups to spend resources in different ways, which leads to the saying that money is like water in political campaigns in that it will always find a way into the political process. In the context of early voting, changes in electoral laws may affect the way parties and groups view campaign-spending decisions during electoral campaigns. Some of the electoral research (Hogan, 2005) suggests that political actors will adapt to new laws and regulations to maximize their effectiveness. Hogan (2005) presents interest group activity and spending as a balloon model of activity. Basically, an interest group will behave like a balloon that can change its shape to fit around any constraints or laws that states have. The size of the balloon depends on the amount of money the interest group has to spend during the election. More money will translate into more possibilities for interest group activity. This study of party and interest group behavior documents that political groups use many different types of mobilization techniques to get voters informed and to the polls. The next section fleshes out the possible ways that parties may change their mobilization behavior due to changes in early voting policies.

EARLY VOTING THEORIES OF PARTY CONTACT

In this section I discuss theories of party contact that can be applied to elections that allow for early voting. These theories of party contact draw on rational choice theories and the views of early voting by the political parties. These theories are further examined in the interview section of this chapter.

The Rational Political Party

Parties should display a behavior change after early voting laws are implemented across the U.S. due to the change in electoral environment. The theories presented in this section represent possible actions that state and local parties could utilize during campaigns and are later examined through interviews with representatives from state political parties and interest groups. Due to a lack of previous research on the relationship between early voting opportunities and party mobilization strategies, these theoretical strategies are only expected theories of party mobilization. Qualitative data are collected in the form of interviews and are used to investigate the perceived impact of strategies parties are utilizing concerning early voting. The use of interviews allows for theory building due to the lack of research in this area.

Parties play a crucial part in U.S. democracy as linkage institutions, in that political parties seek to win elected office by presenting candidates for elected office to the electorate. Parties and their candidates are rational, goal-seeking actors who will utilize early voting to increase their chances of winning elections (Aldrich, 1995). In general, political parties should react to early voting policies by changing how they mobilize their supporters. The change in mobilization strategy is due to the expanded time frame that voters are allowed to cast a ballot. This provides parties with both an opportunity and a challenge. Parties in early voting states have the opportunity to secure or "bank" the votes of supporters early in the voting period. The challenge for parties comes with how to use campaign funds to mobilize their supporters over an extended election period. Specifically, should a party spread resources out over the entire open election period, only mobilize early voters, wait until election day to mobilize supporters, or some mix of these three strategies?

Below, I discuss potential ways in which parties can use early voting in their mobilization efforts. In the next sections I discuss differences between the Democratic and Republican Parties in both their views on early voting policy and their techniques for utilizing early voting.

Contact all members as soon as early voting is available. Parties may utilize a strategy that puts an emphasis on making sure their members know that they are able and are encouraged to vote before election day. This strategy implies that parties are not

63

making distinctions among members of their party, all party members are considered open and available for early voting messages and information. For example, parties do not break down their party lists into groups who have already voted or not voted. They simply send repeated messages out to members about early voting.

The "contact-all-members-first" strategy may be beneficial due to the repeated nature of contacts. In this strategy members are contacted multiple times and reminded of early voting opportunities. I would expect that this method would be an expensive mobilization option because the parties attempt to mobilize voters over a longer time period. On the positive side, this strategy should be effective in gaining the most possible support during the election period.

Contact active and involved members first. A second strategy for mobilizing party members could be to contact members who are active in the party. There are different benefits to the contact active members strategy compared to the contact all members strategy. First, if strong party members vote early, they can tell other people about voting early. This would cause mobilization to diffuse throughout the party from the active members. Second, this group of potential voters is highly partisan and their votes can be seen as locked up for the party. This would, in effect, lock up guaranteed party votes before election day without risking loosing some of those votes on election day due to unforeseen events such as illness, car problems, or long lines. Active members are also the least likely potential voters to vote for the opposition as they are commented to the party. This strategy may be viewed as a more cost effective than the contact all members strategy because it could be assumed that active members will actually vote for the party candidate.

Combine early voting messages with "usual" campaign messages. A third strategy for parties would be to simply add early voting information to strategies already in use. This may be the least expensive method of mobilization in that parties already produce ads and leaflets and early voting information could easily be added to those existing forms of mobilization. Early voting information can be added to flyers and other ads with little cost.

In the next section I discuss the potential views of Democrats and Republicans on early voting. These views will be examined further in the interview section of this

chapter, which includes a discussion about a potential preference for election day voters over early voting.

The Parties Prefer Election Day Voting

This chapter is presented as a study of how political parties change their mobilization behavior and how parties view the role of early voting in their state. It is important to note that political parties may not wish to engage in early voting centered campaign activities. When early voting laws go into effect, they effectively change how parties view the electoral time frame, and some parties may not want to change their thinking or mobilization strategies for a number of reasons. First, political parties, like many other organizations, have conducted the business of mobilization geared toward election day for over 200 years. As new early voting laws are passed, there may be some reluctance to change the way parties try to mobilize voters. With early voting, the parties have to make new decisions about when to conduct their mobilization activities (e.g., television ads, door-to-door contacts, and direct-mail).

Second, political parties in states with early voting have to decide how to spend their resources in an electoral environment that has more mobilization options compared to an electoral environment that has mostly election day voting. The first reason given in the previous paragraph addresses early voting taking up time in the decision-making process, where the second reason addresses the actual financial resource drain that early voting mobilization can have on an election campaign. As the interview section will later show, there are many new ways to spend mobilization money in a state that allows for early voting. For example, the voter drive rolls need to be updated frequently during the early voting period so a certain voter is not contacted after he or she casts a ballot.

Third, political parties may prefer standard election day voting because they hold a traditional view of election day voting. Traditional election day voting includes the entire voting public gathered at local schools, churches, city halls, and other public places to cast ballots. Traditional election day voting also insures that all voters have access to the same information before they cast a ballot. In traditional election day voting, political parties can plan to introduce new information about their candidate or attack the other candidate right up to election day. If early voting laws are in place, parties have a rolling target for mobilization based on how many days before election day that early voting

starts. Overall, early voting presents challenges to political parties that, for the reasons stated above, could lead parties to have a preference for election day voting.

The Democrat and Republican View Toward Early Voting

Different parties should have different attitudes and goals with regards to early voting policies and the electoral consequences of such laws. Specifically, it would be reasonable to assume that Democrats and Republicans would react differently to the passage of early voting legislation in their home state. As with most policies, the parties may view the outcomes of early voting policies in different lights. For example, Democrats may view a stimulus bill as a way to raise employment and Republicans may view the same bill as a way to strengthen the overall economy.

Democrats. Democrats should view early voting policies in a positive light and should attempt to use early voting to increase their chances of winning elections. The expanded election period should allow for more mobilization activities for Democrats to bring more individuals into the electoral process. I predict that Democrats will utilize early voting to bring in more potential voters that would not have normally voted. In other words, Democrats should view the expanded time period as an opportunity to expand their support at the polls through the mobilization of new voters. Democrats are motivated to have a positive view of early voting policy because (1) Democrats think that early voting will increase the size of the electorate and (2) Democrats think that the expanded electorate will result in a net gain in votes for the Democratic Party. There is some debate about whether an increase in the electorate will translate into increased Democratic support. Knack (1995) examined the size of the electorate after the Motor Voter Act was passed and found that the Motor Voter Act had a positive effect on voter turnout but did not increase Democratic support. Stein (1998) examined partisan use of early voting and found that more Republicans came out to early vote than did Democrats.

Republicans. Republicans also are predicted to view early voting policies as positive and attempt to use early voting to increase their chances of winning elections. The expanded election period should allow Republicans to bank voters early who would have voted on election day. Republicans are also found to have an advantage in absentee voting and may try to support the specific early voting policy they believe to have an advantage in (Karp and Banducci, 2001). I predict that Republicans will utilize early

voting to change when individuals choose to cast their ballots, but not attempt to pull in new voters.

Overall, both of the parties view early voting differently, but still in a positive light. The views of each party fall in line with one of the major theories on political participation. The Democrats view early voting in the classical sense as encouraging more voters to go to the polls, and Republicans view early voting more in the elitist sense with the same voters casting ballots at their convenience. These views are examined further in the interview section of this chapter.

What if Parties Ignore Early Voting

Besides a possible preference for or against early voting, parties may decide not to engage in early voting activities even if voters in their state can vote early. The strategy of ignoring early voting options may be useful in a number of different cases. First, if the party in the state does not have the money to spend on early voting mobilization, the party will just concentrate on election day and traditional mobilization techniques. Second, if the party in the state does not think the race is competitive, then the party will spend less money on all aspects of the race and may cut the early voting mobilization budget to zero. Third, if the party in the state does not think that the other party will try to use early voting mobilization, the other party may be less inclined to spend resources on early voting. This is the opposite effect of a spending "nuclear arms race" between parties where each spends every dollar of funds to try and one-up the other party. I expect this to happen only in states in which early voting is new. Fourth, other studies of increased ease of voting due to the Motor Voter act did not find a partisan advantage after the law was in place (Franklin and Grier, 1997). Parities may see that early voting will not help or hurt their electoral chances and choose not to support the legislation while in office. Last, parties may ignore early voting mobilization opportunities due to personal views of the individuals running the campaigns. Some individual candidates may view early voting as taking away from the collective act of voting on election day. For all of these reasons, parties may choose to ignore the possibility of early voting and focus only on election day voting. In the next section I examine the question of if and how political parties are using early voting mobilization techniques.

MOBILIZING THE EARLY VOTE

In this section I present a research design and the results of a qualitative analysis about the mobilization techniques that parties and groups use during early voting periods around the states. The expansion of the voting period leads to an opportunity for mobilization to start much earlier than it does in standard election day voting. Basically, early voting provides incentive for parties and groups to begin well before election day to start "banking" votes.

Research design

When new laws and rules are introduced into a political system, the options for systematic study of the effects of those laws and rules are limited. Typically, a statistical model is preferred in political science research where large amounts of data are collected. In studies of early voting, these data would include how many voters use early voting, how much money parties spend on early voting mobilization, what the effects are of each mobilization technique. Because early voting use has been increasing in recent years, the data concerning mobilization techniques are not yet known across the 50 states. This section describes a qualitative research design that examines early voting mobilization by state political parties..

In this chapter I use a qualitative research design based on interviews as the method of data collection. The target population for my interviews is state party officials who have knowledge about the early voting mobilization techniques used by their state political parties. The interview process started with the identification of state party election officials from their state party webpage. Once a party official was found, I sent a letter that (1) described my research, (2) included a few of the questions I would ask the respondent during the interview, (3) how the respondents would be identified in my study, (4) my contact information, and (5) my Louisiana State University Internal Review Board information. The letter was printed on Louisiana State University Department of Political Science letterhead. My sample population for the interviews was made up of Republican and Democratic state-level party staff in 25 different states. Of the 50 possible interview subjects in my sample population, I completed 12 interviews for a response rate of 24%. Follow up question from the participants were not attempted.

For my research purposes it was not necessary for the initial contact person to be my interview subject. In some cases the party worker with information about early voting mobilization would not be the contact person listed on the party webpage. In cases where my introduction letter was addressed to the incorrect individual, I provided a new letter to the correct individual either through the mail or sent him or her an electronic mail copy of the letter. This insured that every person contacted for this study had the opportunity to read and review the way in which the information generated by the interviews would be used. The title of the individual contacted varies across states and parties since many state parties are organized in a different way to meet the needs of the specific state population. The titles of the contacted representatives include campaign director, director of voting, and director of voter drives. My contact strategy was to contact the representative highest up on the state party webpage that was directly associated with voting or mobilization. Sometimes I would interview that specific individual and frequently I would speak to an individual who worked directly for the original contact. Due to the time frame of the interviews (April to June 2009), most of the individuals contacted were with the state party organization during the 2008 presidential election.

Due to the variation in state election laws, a classification of states into three groups provides a base level of differentiation between the states. This classification provides a way to determine how parties behave in different early voting contexts.

The classifications of states are (1) states that have adopted early voting policies before the 2000 presidential election, (2) states that have adopted early voting policies after the 2000 presidential election, and (3) states that do not have early voting policies. This classification is used due to the large number of states that passed early voting policies after the 2000 election (see Chapter 2 for a full discussion). This allows for a direct comparison between parties that have had many years to develop a early voting mobilization strategy and parties that are relatively new to early voting but still have had two presidential elections to implement early voting mobilization (2004 and 2008). The third category, states with no early voting policies, allows for an examination of party views toward early voting. States were selected for analysis based on these three categories.

A secondary classification used to organize my findings in this section is party of the state political representative I interviewed. This distinction is made to get at the differences between parties and their mobilization techniques. Parties are made up of different constituency and parties may use specialized mobilization techniques for each group. For example, Democrats may have ways to contact college students that are different from the ways used by Republicans. When a state was selected for analysis, every attempt was made to contact both parties to provide a full picture of the state.

Interview instrument

In this section I present an interview script for my interviews with state party representatives. Interviews were conducted over the telephone with state party representatives. Interviews were scheduled after the introduction letter was sent and a week passed in order for the representative to have time to receive and review the introduction letter. Unless the representatives responded to my letter, first contact was then made by phone to see of the possible respondent would like to schedule a time for the interview and to make sure that the respondent received a letter of introduction. Phone interviews were not recorded but notes were taken for each interview. The interviews were conducted from April to June 2009. The questions focused on the 2008 presidential campaign and how the state political parties use and view the new early voting laws.

The response rate for this study is 48% with 12 of 25 contacts leading to a completed interview. The sample size and number of contacts per early voting group is displayed in Table 3.1. The interview script with five starting questions is shown in Appendix 3.1.The interviews progressed through the five questions based on the responses given. I allowed the five questions to be open-ended questions that provided interview subjects the ability to provide information that was directly asked by the interview instrument and to provide information that the interview subject thought was relevant to the question. This is important to the theory-building component of this chapter because it allows for responses that I did not predict.

FINDINGS

The interview process provided information from both early voting and non-early voting states. The qualitative and quantitative findings I present in this chapter are compiled from all of the interviews conducted and do not include the names or states of interview subjects. All interviews were conducted between April and July 2009.

Before the discussion of the individual responses, it is necessary to make an adjustment to the classification of the state early voting laws. After the first three interviews, it became clear that political parties had not started to mobilize the early vote until the last few election cycles. In other words, parties did not utilize early voting mobilization until recently, even though early voting laws were on the books for many years. This makes the distinction between states with old early voting laws and new early voting laws less important. I present the new classification in Table 3.2 that explains the breakdown of early voting and non-early voting states. The change of classification shows that early voting mobilization is new, even if the law was in place for many previous election years. The new classification will be used when discussing the findings from the five interview questions in this chapter.

The findings of the five interview questions are presented in 4 tables and summarize the responses of the 12 political party representatives that were contacted. I separate the results into parties in order to examine a party's motivations for using different types of mobilization. This section also includes examples and a summary of the narrative responses from the different party representatives.

Question 1. This question centers on mobilization strategies and how political parties have possibility changed due to early voting laws. Based on my discussions, parties mainly stick to their traditional mobilization techniques. One representative mentioned, "we have some early voting information on our print." When early voting was available, our canvassers would tell the contact they could go vote right now." Another said, "early voting was a part of our TV ads." Those inclusions are additions to standard mobilization techniques, and I do not expect that they will have much of an effect on getting party members to the polls early to bank votes. The exception would be the direct contact made from a door-to-door canvass that mentions early voting as a current option. The party worker can add a small reminder to the end of his or her

message and see if the individual is interested in voting during the early voting period. If the response is positive, the party worker can hand the potential early voter another flyer with specific early voting information such as directions to the nearest polling place and voting hours. This is an example of how early voting can be easily added to traditional mobilization techniques. The next technique discussed by a few of the representatives involves combing a political event and voting early where potential voters gather at a political event and are encouraged to vote after hearing political speeches.

A new mobilization technique addressed in my interviews was the combination of political speech with early voting on-sight. This technique involves a political rally where the candidate or other party speaker addresses the crowd close to an early voting location. These campaign rallies could also include musical performances or other types of entertainment to make the rally more of a show, as well as a political event. After the speech in done the audience is asked to go cast their ballots right away. This technique brings the decision to support a candidate closer in-line with the old style party politics model, where parties watched their voters go into the polls with their party ballots. The rally-to-vote technique was one of the more controversial topics the party representatives discussed. One Democrat said, "…it was a way to get a big crowd of voters to see some entertainment… and vote." In general, the Democratic Party was more in favor of using the rally-to-vote technique and the Republican Party was less in favor or it. One Republican representative commented, "…our guy didn't like the idea of herding the people listening to the speech directly into the booth." I believe that this feeling of hesitation is due to the view that your personal vote should be carefully considered and not simply something you decide on after hearing one speech. Next, I turn to an overview of the general responses from Democrats and Republicans about the different mobilization techniques used with early voting.

I display the summary of responses about the early voting mobilization techniques in Table 3.3. Each cell contains the number of mentions for each specific mobilization technique and the percentage of representatives from each party who mentioned the specific technique. While I did not code for a overall feel of whether or not party representatives liked or disliked early voting, a large majority of the party representatives

72

agreed that early voting laws extended the voting window to provide more opportunities for parties to get individuals to the polls.

Some of the specific changes in mobilization mentioned by the party representatives was a new type of political rally that includes early voting. This practice was described as a regular political rally that takes place in front of or close to an early voting polling place. In this type of rally, the candidate talks directly to the potential voters who can then go vote right after the rally. Each party mentioned the political rally technique for mobilizing early voters, with 3 of 5 Democratic party representatives and 2 of 7 Republican party representatives mentioned this specific technique.

Parties and groups use door-to-door techniques during regular elections, but in early voting states, they start door-to-door activities sooner. In Table 3.3 I show that the door-to-door early voting technique was used by a majority of Democratic and Republican state parties. Specifically, I find that 6 of the 7 Republican state parties and 4 of 5 Democratic state parties mentioned that they used door-to-door mobilization.

In early voting states, parties also move up all voter contact drives, such as the use of flyers and phone calls. I find that both of the parties use flyers with mentions of early voting opportunities (Table 3.3). One of the respondents stated that Labor Day is the starting point for mailing flyers in states with early voting. Historically, Labor Day used to mean that the serious Presidential political campaign season could start. Starting mobilization on Labor Day allows parties and groups to get the word out earlier to account for the expanded early voting season.

Phone calls with early voting messages are used by a majority of both parties with 7 of 7 Republican state parties and 3 of 5 Democratic state parties mentioning that they used phone call mobilization techniques with early voting messages. Again, this is an example of how parties are attempting to bank as many voters before election day as possible.

The last mobilization technique that was covered in the interviews was the use of targeted early voting mobilization. This could take the form of going door-to-door, phone calls, or flyers, but the technique had to have a specific population of potential voters that the party was trying to contact. These populations were from the prominent voter lists from the midterm elections and primary elections. Targeted mobilization was

mentioned as being used by 5 of the 7 Republican state parties and 2 of 5 Democratic state parties.

Given that many of the changes in mobilization techniques mentioned by the interview subjects involve a great deal of time and effort, the interviews provide evidence that money is becoming increasingly important for conducting effective campaigns. One of the ways that campaigns that involve early voting are becoming more expensive has to do with the cost of election staff. Because of the dynamic early voting environment, there are opportunities for parties to center their mobilization efforts on specific individuals. This targeted early mobilization is possible because some states update their early voting records as soon as a ballot is submitted, which is very costly. This means that a political party can check to see which potential voters have cast an early vote and which have not. This allows for well-financed campaigns to update their voter drive lists to eliminate those who have cast a ballot, leaving more opportunities to contact potential voters. This requires a campaign that has the recourses to first obtain a voter file and constantly update the file as the campaign goes along. Both parties commented on the potential costs of maintaining records. One Democratic representative said, "we could employ more than one person to keep the voter file current." Another mentioned "staffing becomes critical as early voting opens up." Such comments show that early voting is contributing to ever increasing need for more money in running campaigns.

Question 2. Question two focuses on the differences in mobilization techniques between parties. In Table 3.4, I present the percentage difference between uses of each technique shown in Table 3.3. The major difference between the two parties and their mobilization techniques is the use of the political rally to bank early voters, with Democratic state parties 31% more likely to use political rallies than Republican state parties. Besides pulling voters to the early polling places, the rallies also are covered by media sources whose coverage of the rallies serve to inform potential voters about the candidate and their opportunity to early vote. One of the Republican state party representatives commented that the Republican candidates "were hesitant to use this technique because their candidate preferred to separate the campaigning and voting parts of the election." The other major difference between the parties was that the Republican parties used phone calls for early voting mobilization 40% more often than the

Democratic parties did. These differences may be due to the level of resources available for each party.

Question 3. Question three centers on any benefits to individual candidates that early voting provides. In Table 3.5 I show the count and percentages for party representatives thinking that early voting helped their candidate. For the most part, party representatives did not think that early voting policies helped their candidate, with only 14% of Republicans and 40% of Democrats thinking that early voting helped their candidate. Based on the data, representatives thought that adding early voting only added more opportunities for all parties and did not help one party over the other. One of the Republican representatives commented that one benefit of early voting was that the top of the ticket got an advantage in votes and that there is a roll off for other party candidates down the ticket. I expected to find that strong partisans would be filling out the ballot top to bottom as soon as the ballot became available. This leads to an evening out of the overall effectiveness of early voting mobilization techniques. With both parties not seeing a unique advantage to early voting, it is not surprising that in Chapter 2 I do not find that one party control of the statehouse leads to passage of early voting policies.

Question 4. Question four addresses the use of targeted mobilization during early voting campaigns. Targeting early voters is done through phone calls to remind potential voters that early voting is now available. Table 3.6 shows that 71% of Republicans and 40% of Democrats used targeted techniques. One of the Democratic party representatives talked about the fact that "primary voters are becoming early voters." This shows support that parties are effective in banking voters well before election day.

Question 5. Question five covers many different topics but most responses were about early voting leading to difficulty in the party representative's job. The difficulty comes from the monitoring process used when voters cast early votes. 10 of the 12 representatives mentioned that early voting basically brings more headaches in that the addition of early voting adds the pressure of election day to the entire early voting period.

An interesting implication of the findings in this chapter is that money in campaigns will become more important in elections as more states adopt early voting laws. This effect puts more pressure on candidates to raise enough funds to run a viable campaign and raises the cost of doing business for all potential candidates. While

making voting easier for the individual, early voters may be making campaigns more dependent on contributions from donors.

Responses not associated with a specific interview question. Some of the other interesting things that were mentioned in the interviews were the concerns about voter fraud and the need for stricter voter identification laws. Republicans brought up the concerns about voter fraud more often than Democrats, with one Republican representative saying "the use of absentee ballots are always a potential problem." Also a concern was raised about multiple voting centers being open in the same community. The concern was that it might be possible for someone to cast both an early vote and a vote on election day.

I now close out this chapter with a summary of the findings from the interviews and general reflections about the qualitative research process. The conclusion section will also provide me with the opportunity to make further research suggestions for this new line of research that is now possible due to the increasing number of election cycles that have included parties and groups operating in states that allow for early voting.

CONCLUSION

The interview process undertaken for this chapter has provided some insights on mobilization strategies and early voting. The role of money appears to be important in early voting mobilization. Staffing of campaigns continues to be a concern for candidates, and early voting opportunities place even more pressure on campaigns to increase staff than does the standard single election day.

To further the research presented in this chapter, more interviews with campaign staff could be conducted. In addition, an in-depth, first-hand examination of the dynamics of the campaign, similar to Carsey (2000) in his examination of state governors races, is appropriate. This would take considerable time and strong cooperation from one or two campaigns. It is important to develop an account of how campaigns react to changes in the voter list and implement new mobilization strategies during the campaign. This would allow for a better understanding of how early voting is being used to bank voters before election day. Direct observation of the campaign during the early voting period would provide a better view of how much time and energy is spent on early voting

activities. This type of study could answer some questions about how often concerns about early voting are addressed by the campaign. For example, is it one person's job to monitor early voting or should the campaign manager and candidate spend time conferencing to discuss early voting strategy?

Another way to further the research done in this chapter would be to examine the amount of money spent by parties, candidates, and groups in states with and without early voting. This would allow for an examination of a possible link between early voting states and cost of running campaigns. It would make sense that states with early voting would have more costly campaigns than non early voting states, but it would be interesting to know by how much and in what areas (e.g., staff and advertizing). Beyond the relative importance and day-to-day emphasis of early voting by the campaign, an examination of the financial recourses used on early voting could provide more insight into early voting mobilization. While some campaigns may spend little time on early voting talk they may be spending large amounts or a significant percentage of mobilization dollars on early voting campaigns.

This chapter shows that parties are changing and adapting their mobilization strategies as a result of early voting. As more election cycles occur we will be able to examine the questions addressed in these interviews by collecting more party and state-level data.

CHAPTER 4: WHO ARE EARLY VOTERS? A DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

In this chapter I examine the differences among early voters, election day voters, and non-voters by presenting descriptive statistics for these three groups. In order to explain the selection of variables considered in this chapter, I present a discussion of the general motivations of individuals that lead to casting a ballot. This allows me to introduce the established motivations for voter turnout, as well as the new concepts and variables that will be further considered throughout the remainder of this dissertation. This chapter allows for base comparisons of the different voting groups that will show that election day voters and early voters are different in specific and predictable ways. Moreover, the results of this chapter will guide the selection of variables to be examined later in this dissertation.

In the first section of this chapter I discuss the different motivations that lead individuals to vote. The purpose of this introductory discussion of voter behavior is to provide a baseline that may be referenced in later sections of my dissertation. Finally, before I discuss who early voters are I need to present a discussion of the general motivations that lead individuals to vote.

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO VOTE?

What motivates individuals to vote? The relative effects of these motivations are modeled later in this dissertation (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6). There are a number of different motivations that lead individuals to cast a ballot during elections. The motivations I examine here are examples of the established, or most common, motivations that have been studied in the political behavior literature. I also present a discussion about the common elements found across the different motivations.

Psychological motivations

The research presented in *The American Voter* by Campbell et al. (1960) provides a new way to view the motivations of individual voters. The psychological motivation is articulated by Campbell et al. (1960), who finds that individuals do not pursue and collect a great deal of political information assumed by rational-choice theories (see below). This perceived lack of information does not keep individuals from voting in elections;

rather Campbell et al. uncovered a psychological motivation for voters to participate in U.S. politics. Many individuals view politics in a manner similar to a sporting event and are fans for one party or the other. This leads individuals to vote for a party or candidate with whom they have a psychological connection.

Psychological motivations also include party identification, candidate evaluations, and issue positions. Party identification has been addressed as one of the major factors of voter turnout (V. O. Key, 1959). The more an individual feels connected to a specific party the more likely he or she is to turnout to vote. Party identification also has been identified as being associated with leaning toward a certain party even with out knowledge of the candidates. For example, a Republican identifier may go into an election cycle thinking that he or she will vote for the Republican candidate regardless of any other factor.

Candidates also have an effect on the psychological motivations of voters. The Obama 2008 campaign is a good example of how individual candidates can have a large impact on getting voters to the polls. For example, many minorities held a strong connection with candidate Obama due to perceived similarities in personal backgrounds. Candidates can have an effect on voters based on their personal life stories, background, and communication skills. Issue positions also can have an impact on voter turnout. When candidates place more emphases on certain issues, voters may be able to make a strong psychological connection with the candidate.

Economic motivations

Studies of voters' economic motivations for political participation stem from the seminal work of Downs (1957) in *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Downs applied the economic concepts of costs and benefits to politics and democracy. The economic motivations for voting come from the perceived benefits that will be received when a voter's preferred candidate wins the election. If candidate A pledged to cut taxes by 10% and candidate B pledged to cut taxes by 5%, the voter would vote for candidate A (10% is greater economic benefit than 5%). If both of the candidates were pledging the same tax cut, the voter could stay home on election day and receive the same benefits. Similar policy positions of the presidential candidates are one issue that is given to explain low voter turnout in the U.S. (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Downs (1957) also places

79

electoral decisions in economic terms in his voter turnout formula $U=PB-C$ where U is the utility or expected benefit from participation, P is the probability that your vote will win the election for your candidate, B is the expected party or candidate differential, and C is the cost of participation (e.g., going to the polls and information gathering). Using Downs' formula when both candidates have the same policy positions, they have the same expected benefits and the potential voter decides to abstain from voting because no personal benefit comes from the act of participation.

Electoral institutions come into the voter turnout discussion because the laws and rules of these institutions can make the voting process more or less costly. Rational choice theory suggests that potential voters take into account the perceived benefit of voting compared to not voting. This means that if a voter perceives the economic benefit of one candidate winning to be less than the cost of participation, the potential voter will stay home and not spend time to vote. The use of a poll tax is a classic example of making the voting process more costly. The poll tax translated into payment for political participation and turnout rates were low for poor populations. An example of making the voting process less costly is the Motor Voter Act (1993), which made registration easier by requiring state run offices to have voter registration cards available. This reduced the cost of participation because when someone moved into a new area they could change their driver's license as well as their voter registration at the same time. New issues with cost of participation focus on voter identification requirements that require voters to have some type of state ID or a birth certificate to participate. As with the poll tax, this is typically a problem for poor populations.

Mobilization motivations

Individuals are motivated to participate in politics by political parties and other political actors such as interest groups. These organizations have an incentive to mobilize individual voters in order to win elections (i.e., the primary focus of political parties is to win elections). Mobilization by political parties takes many forms including making personal contacts, print advertisements, television advertisements, and rallies. These campaign activities raise awareness that an election is coming up and inform the public about policy positions of the candidates. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) find that reduction in campaign spending on mobilization is one of the predictors of the drop in

80

voter turnout in the last half of the 20th century. Mobilization by political parties acts to cover the costs of gathering information about the candidates. For example, when potential voters view advertisements, they are being given information that can be used in the decision making process (Popkin, 1991).

Social motivations

Social motivations for participation in politics stem from "overcoming the paradoxes of participation and rational ignorance" (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Individuals with social connections are able to cover the information costs associated with political participation. Studies examine the role of social groups and environments in affecting the amount of information gained and the participation rate of individuals (Huckfeldt, 1979; Kenney, 1992). There are two causal paths for social motivation to translate into political participation. First, social connections may motivate individuals to participate in politics in a peer pressure manner some friends, relatives, or coworkers talking about going out to the polls, leads an individual to vote. This is a similar argument to the circle of virtue discussed by Putnum (1993) where once a certain number of individuals vote, it becomes a social tradition. Second, social connections may motivate individuals to participate in politics by helping to overcome the cost of participation. The cost of gaining information is covered when friends and family provide campaign information to individuals through everyday conversation.

State-level motivations

Environmental factors with which an individual comes in contact during electoral cycles has an effect on the individual's choice of vote. These factors originate from a wide rage of state election laws, state population differences, and electoral schedules. State election laws vary drastically in two significant ways. First, early voting laws across states range from liberal (states with early voting for more than 30 days before election day) to more strict (states that do not allow for early voting without an excuse). Second, registration laws across states range from liberal (no registration requirement) to more strict (state requiring registration 30 days before the election). Liberal registration laws make participation easier by lowing the cost of participation (Downs, 1957). Further, states with no registration or election day registration have higher levels of voter turnout (Timpone, 1998). States also have different electoral schedules that change the

political environment of the state by having more or less political offices up for election in a given year. For example, in a presidential election year a state that also has a U.S. senate race and a gubernatorial election will have a very different political environment compared to a state with out a senate or gubernatorial race. The number of campaigns in a state can change the amount of political spending in the state making it more or less likely that an individual will be aware of and participate in the election. There is a participation spill over effect from state-level races into presidential elections and a trickle down effect from participation in the presidential election to state-level races.

Early voting motivations

Convenience. Election laws address the issue of when individuals vote, what they need to bring to the polling place, when the polls are open, and the amount of time a potential voter has to vote. Early voting is a way to increase the amount of time individuals have to vote. I expect that both individuals who are very busy (i.e., individuals who have various other responsibilities or obligations) and individuals who are not busy (i.e., individuals who have very few responsibilities or obligations) would take advantage of the opportunity to cast an early ballot. Busy individuals may see early voting as a way to help squeeze voting into a busy schedule. Individuals who are not busy and who could vote at almost anytime may see early voting as a way to still choose the most convenient time to cast a ballot.

Low Information Needs. A low need for information during a campaign may be another motivator for early voting. Individuals who do not require additional time or information during the campaign season to make their vote choice may choose to vote early because they have no need for more time to gather information. Highly partisan individuals who do not require the entire election period to make their electoral choice decision may be motivated to early vote. This means that there is possibly a large group of individuals (i.e., individuals who are highly partisan) who could cast their ballot a year before election day and not think about changing their minds. These individuals are more likely to identify themselves as strong partisans who hold strong views concerning the differences between Republicans and Democrats. The converse of this argument should also hold, in that, individuals who identify themselves as independents should need the

most possible time in order to collect information concerning their electoral decision (Flanigan and Zigale, 1994).

Mobilization. Members of social and interest groups may be encouraged to vote early by leaders and fellow members of groups with which they are affiliated. The traditional voter turnout literature finds that mobilization is a strong predictor of voting (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). In terms of early voting, groups may encourage potential voters to cast an early ballot in order to bank votes before election day. Banking early voters can maximize the group's effectiveness by reducing the chance that voters find themselves too busy on election day to vote. Groups are also trying to reduce uncertainty but getting supporters to the polls early and not counting on individuals to get to the polls on election day where something expected comes up and the potential voter is too busy. Members of groups also may find out about early voting from other members in their group. Information on early voting should be disseminated through groups in a similar manner as other political information.

Common elements of voter motivation. Some motivations for political participation overlap. For example, registration laws have a cost effect that is included in rational choice theory and registration laws are a state-level factor. This means that the motivation to early vote is make up of state-level motivations (early voting laws are passed at the state-level) and rational choice motivations (early voting laws decrease costs). There also are overlaps between social and economic motivations in voter turnout. Social and economic motivations are related through the cost saving nature of information that being part of a social group provides. Information gained through social acquaintances is information that does not need to be obtained through personal effort. The intersection of mobilization and economic motivations includes the actions of political parties (i.e., campaign ads and direct mail) by reducing the cost of participation (i.e., economic cost of collecting information). All three categories of early voting motivations (convenience, low-information needs, and mobilization) reduce the costs of participation. Overall, the motivations for voting and early voting are related and overlap in many ways.

83

These motivations provide baseline explanations as to why individuals choose to participate in elections or choose to stay at home. In the remainder of this dissertation I examine these motivations in much more detail. These motivations will also serve as a rationale for the rest of this chapter in determining any differences in psychological, economic, political, demographic, and state-level factors that will provide evidence about differences between early voters, election day voters, and non-voters.

ARE EARLY VOTERS DIFFERENT?

There are numerous studies that examine the many different factors that influence individual-level voter turnout. In this I section examine the possible differences across groups of voters, specifically differences across early voters, election day voters, and non-voters. Differences in the groups of voters are presented by comparing means and other descriptive statistics of the independent and dependent variables that are further examined later in this dissertation. The independent and dependent variables are grouped into the motivation categories of convenience, low-information needs, and mobilization.

The statistics used in this chapter are the means of the variables from the three different categories of motivations. Once the means are calculated, I present a T-ratio, or a T-test, and an ANOVA test. The T-test statistic indicates if there is a significant difference between the two groups (early voters and election day voters) and the ANOVA statistic indicates if there is a signification difference between the three groups (early voters, election day voters, and non-voters). The T-test and the ANOVA are used as a first overview for the effects of each individual variable on early voting and election day voting. I use multivariate statistics to predict differences in voting behavior in later chapters of this dissertation (see Chapter 5 and 6).

The data summary table Appendix 4.1 shows the variables used to predict political behaviors. The three categories of variables use to predict political behaviors are demographic factors (e.g., measures of income and education), state-level factors (e.g., early voting laws, and the registration process), and political attitude variables (e.g., party identification and view of the voting process).

The data summary table also includes the measurement of each variable and its source. In Table 4.1, I report the means for early voters, election day voters, and non-

voters and an ANOVA test (F-ratio) of significance for the difference in means among early voters, election day voters, and non-voter groups. This table includes cases from a nationally representative data set that includes individuals who were asked on or after election day if they cast a vote in the 2004 presidential election. Individuals who were surveyed fall either into the early voter, election day voter, or non-voter category. Table 4.1 shows the differences in the mean values of individuals who early voted, election day voted, and who did not vote. The findings from the ANOVA analysis provide evidence that the three groups (i.e., early voters, election day voters, and non-voters are significantly different across demographic, political, and state-level variables. This analysis does not test any causality between the independent variables and voting classification (early voting, election day voting, and non-voting). The causal models are the focus of Chapters 5 and 6. The focus of this chapter is to establish that there are significant differences among groups of voters.

Table 4.2 reports a means test (T-test) between the early voters and election day voters groups. This table shows cases that only include individuals who voted in the 2004 presidential election. Voters are coded as early voters if they cast a vote any time before election day and coded as an election day vote if they cast a vote on election day. This table addresses similarities and differences between early and election day voters. The findings shown in Table 4.2 are the most salient in this chapter because they show a comparison of individuals from the similar categories of early voter and election day voter. This table addresses questions about how early voters are different from election day voters.

In this chapter ANOVA analyses and T-tests are used to determine any significant differences between early voters, election day voters, and non-voters across one variable at a time. Multivariate analysis using all variables from the three categories of variables to determine significant differences between early voters and election day voters is conducted in other sections of this dissertation (see Chapters 5 and 6). The ANOVA analyses and T-tests used in this chapter provide a baseline analysis of potential differences between early voters, election day voters, and non-voters.

DATA

The data set that I use in this chapter, and for the rest of this dissertation, is compiled from many different sources. First, the individual level data come from a nationally representative sample population, the 2004 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES) data set. The NAES data set is different from the American National Election Study (ANES) in that the NAES polls the U.S. electorate during the entire presidential election cycle. For example, the 2004 NAES includes responses from the primaries in early and late primary states, as well as questions that address the conventions and the presidential debates. Over this same time period the ANES conducts many fewer polls with fewer overall responses. Included in the NAES data set is a 2004 presidential election poll that is similar to the ANES poll but that contains more overall cases as well as more examples of early voting. The large number of early voting cases is of particular interest for this dissertation. The more cases of early voting that can be included in models, the more accurate, generalizable, and more predictive my estimations become. This is the primary reason for using the NAES 2004 data set over the ANES 2004 data set.

Second, the data that measure state-level factors are obtained from various sources and are compiled by the author (see Appendix 4.1 for a detailed breakdown of the measures and sources). The state-level measures were collected for the 2004 presidential election year. The state-level measures come from the *Politics of American States*, *Book of the States*, and the *National Council of State Legislatures* (ncsl.org) (Kinsky 2005). The state-level measures include measures of state party competition, statewide races, dollars spent on political spending per capita, registration closing date, and early voting policies. These data are integrated into the data from the NAES by assigning each measure to an individual case found in the NAES data set. I merge the state-level measures with the individual level data. This was done by coding each individual by state and then assigning individuals the appropriate state-level variables. This means that the individual cases contain data at the individual level (e.g., demographics and behaviors of the individual) and at the aggregate level (e.g., state political spending and early voting policies). For example, all the individuals who reside in Florida are assigned the same

figure for dollars spent on political spending per capita. In the next section of this chapter I present the findings of the summary statistics.

FINDINGS

I present the findings from this chapter in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2. These two tables show the differences between early voters, election day voters, and non-voters. The variables are organized into the three categories of variables, which are demographic, political, and state-level variables. These variables are further examined in Chapter 5 and 6 of this dissertation.

In Table 4.1 I show the mean values and the F-statistics of the variables across early voting, election day voting, and non-voting. The F-statistic compares means across different groups and determines if the groups are significantly different. Those comparisons are used to determine if early voters, election day voters, and non-voters form significantly different groups. The ANOVA test is used to determine if the means of each group are the same this test does not provide evidence as to which group mean is higher or lower than other groups (e.g., ANOVA tests the null hypothesis that the mean of early voters equals the mean of election day voters equals the mean of non-voters). The F-statistics in Table 4.1 show that a majority of the variables across all the categories are significant. The significant demographic variables are age, income, education, married, black, Hispanic, union, network news viewership, cable news viewership, number of kids, and part time employment. The significance of the demographic variables shows that early voters, election day voter, and non-voters are distinct groups.

Looking at the means in Table 4.1, early voters are on average 4 years older than election day voters and 12 years older than non-voters. Age appears to be correlated with both types of political participation with older individuals associated with election day voting and early voting. Income, education, and married all show a similar grouping of means with early voters and election day voters having means close to one another and non-voters having lower average values. This provides some evidence that while some means are different across all three groups, other measures form a participation group (election day voter and early voter) and a non-participation group (non-voter).

The mean values for black provide a unique view of early voters. The means for early voting and non-voting are the same and the mean for election day voting is less. This means that more African Americans use early voting than election day voting. This is unexpected since I believed that the mean values would rise or fall across the three categories, with non-voter being a relatively low mean value to election day voter having a slightly higher mean value to early voter having the highest mean value. The mean values of black suggest that early voting opportunities may be pulling African American voters to the polls.

The three community type variables show a different type of relationship between the means. The variables urban and suburban have almost the same means across all the three categories. This implies that type of community does not affect the decision to vote or vote early.

The means for the number of kids shows that early voters have on average the fewest children (about 2/3 of a child), election day voters have almost one child, and non-voters have over one child. Due to the convenience of early voting, I would expect that families with more children to be more likely to use early voting, however, the findings in Table 4.1 show evidence that families with more children are less likely to vote early or on election day. That finding makes sense when considering that common reason non-voters give for not voting is being too busy. Overall there appear to be examples of the three groups being the same (i.e., the means for early voters, election day voters, and non-voters are the same), and a few cases where only early voters and non-voters are similar. When the means of early voters and non-voters are the same it suggests that early voting policies are bringing in individuals who are not typical or traditional voters.

The significant variables in the political variables category are belief that it is American to vote, I feel guilty if I don't vote, elections make a difference, and party strength. The non-significant coefficients from the political variables category are how soon mind was made up, Bush vote, my vote will be counted accurately, and ideology folded. Three of the four non-significant findings (i.e., how soon mind was made up, Bush vote, and my vote will be counted accurately) did not include observations from non-voters and were dropped because individuals who did not vote were not asked these three questions. The non-significant finding for the Bush variable suggests that there was

not a political advantage for early voting in the 2004 presidential election. Also, early voting does not appear to be only for individuals who made up their minds early in the campaign season with little difference in means for the how soon mind was made up variable. Lastly, the ideology and party strength variables do not have different means between the early and election day voters. Again this suggests that early voters and election day voters have similar political views and opinions.

I find that all the state-level variables, with one exception, are significant and form three different groups. The state-level variables that are significant include registration-closing date, number of ballot measures, Governors race, Republican per capita spending, Democratic per capita spending, state population, and number of statewide elections. The only non-significant state-level variable is the Senate race dummy variable, although the aggregate number of state-level elections is significant. These variables also are used in the next two chapters of this dissertation.

The overall impression gained from the F-statistics when examining early voters, election day voters, and non-voters is that there are significant differences between these three groups. The F-statistics provide evidence that the groups are different from one another but it can not inform us about any causal influences of the individual variable in predicting which group the individual will belong to. The casual relationships are examined in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 of this dissertation. Two of the three different groups are compared in the next section using a T-test to see if there are significant differences between the two groups of voters.

The two groups I compare in Table 4.2 are all individuals who cast an early vote and all individuals who cast an election day vote. This excludes all non-voters considered in Table 4.1. This examination of only voters allows for comparison across type of voter. This is important to the examination of early voting because there are questions about who is taking advantage of early voting opportunities. Specifically, are the early voters different from election day voters, and if there are differences between the two groups, what are the demographic, political, and state-level differences? The three groups of variables from the last section carry over to this section as well (i.e., demographic, political, and state-level variables).

I present the T-test findings in Table 4.2 and find that there are fewer differences between the two groups (early voters and election day voter) then there are among all three groups (early voters, election day voters, non-voters). First, demographic variables that predicted differences between groups are age, urban, suburban, and evangelical church membership. The variable age falls in line with the belief that older voters have more free time and would use that time to get voting out of the way before the election. I find that urban voters are more likely to early vote and suburban voters are less likely to early vote. I would expect that urban voters would be likely to early vote if potential voters were able to walk past potential polling places for a week or so. The suburban negative value means that on average suburban voters are more likely to vote on election day. Due to this finding, I would expect that suburban voters are busy and try to take advantage of the opportunity to cast an early ballot. Evangelical church group membership also is positive meaning that evangelicals are more likely to cast an early ballot. This is expected in that any group will try to mobilize its members and get them to the polls early.

None of the political variables were found to separate the early voters and the election day voters. This is an unexpected result with some of the variables including party strength and time when mind was made up on vote choice. These are the voters that I expected to utilize early voting since they are the individuals who know who they will vote for before the party conventions have passed.

Differences between early and election day voters are found in the state-level variables. Those variables are registration closing date, state social capital, number of ballot initiatives, Senate race taking place, Republican spending, and number of state wide elections. The significance of registration closing date shows that when registration closes closer to election day, voters choose to early vote. The number of ballots leading to less early voting where individuals may need the entire election period to decided on all of the ballot propositions. Also, the number of statewide elections may lead voters to take the entire election cycle to gain information and make a voting decision.

The typical early voter. Before moving on to a further examination of the individual effects of each variable in a multivariate context, I present a composite of the typical early voter based on the T-tests in Table 4.2. While there are only a few variables

90

that were significant at the .05 level or above, there are still enough to make a general profile of an early voter. There were few demographic differences found between early voters and election day voters with early voters being older and urban. This provides a picture of early voters being older Americans who would have a shorter distance to travel to the polls due to living in an urban environment. Older voters also include senior citizens who are more likely to vote, early or otherwise, than younger citizens. I view the identification of older voters and voters who live in an urban environment as collecting low hanging fruit on the early voting tree because it is expected that both variables would lead to early voting due to the high participation rates of older voters and the ease at which it is to get around in a city. Individuals living in the rural and suburban environments have more physical distance to cover between their job or residents and the polling place and previous research has found that commuting distance to the polling place was related to participation rates (Haspel, Moshe, Knotts, and Gibbs, 2005).

The significant state-level variables, registration closing date, statewide elections, and number of ballot initiatives, suggests what a typical early voter is exposed to during a campaign. The state-level variables show that the typical early voter resides in a state that has an early registration closing date. This means that early voters have to plan ahead when casting their ballots due to the closing off of registration earlier in the election cycle. I view this finding as evidence that early voters are individuals who gather information on where early voting places are and then plan a time to early vote. In other words, early voters are individuals who plan ahead. Table 4.2 shows that the number of ballot initiatives, republican political spending, and number of statewide races all have a negative effect on early voting, meaning that people residing in states with high numbers of ballot initiatives, republican political spending, and number of statewide races are more likely to vote on election day. I read these results as evidence that individuals who have more electoral choices to make during the election (e.g., more ballot initiatives and statewide races) and information (e.g., political spending) will need to spend more time thinking over their electoral choices. Basically, the more political choices that individuals need to make, the longer the time frame they need to consider the options. I think this is largely the case in states with a high number of ballot measures up for consideration. While early voting provides opportunity for people who are ready to

91

vote, some individuals may need to take more time and have to vote on election day. These issues are addressed the next chapter of this dissertation and examine the effects of different variables in a multivariate context.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I present data that show at the individual variable level, there are differences between early voters and election day voters. These differences will be examined throughout the remainder of this dissertation. This examination of the differences between early voters and election day voters will help guide the development of theories and hypotheses about what type of individual chooses to cast an early ballot. Based on the F-statistic and T-test results, the differences between early voters and election day voters include individual demographic factors, political factors, and state-level contextual factors. This provides evidence that the impact of early voting laws are not restricted to one group of voters.

The significant state-level variables support the idea that context can have an impact on voters getting to the polls. The addition of contextual factors to the voter turnout models has added to the traditional list of demographic, political factors, and state-level factors. Some studies have added contextual information to voter turnout models by integrating state or congressional district into turnout models. The addition of context allows for more variation to be explained through the addition of local factors that now appear to have an effect on turnout (i.e., number of ballot measures and early voting policies). The F-statistics provide the foundation that there are three groups of voting behaviors and that the three groups have factors that predict across the three groups (i.e., education, income, and age). The limits of this chapter come from the neutrally of the statistics in terms of making any causal hypotheses that test the relationships between the groups of variables and casting an early vote or an election day vote.

The potential causal relationships are specifically addressed in Chapter 5 (demographic, political, and state-level variables) and Chapter 6 (demographic, and state-level variables). Moving on from this chapter, I will begin to examine the possible determents that separate the early voters from election day voters.

92

CHAPTER 5: WHO VOTES EARLY?

As new election procedures, such as early voting laws, are implemented, it is expected that some individuals will choose to change the way that they cast a ballot and some will continue to vote as they have previously (i.e., on election day). With the advent of the various forms of early voting, potential voters are faced with two choices. The first is the choice between voting and not voting. This choice is one of the most studied in the political behavior literature. I address the effects of early voting on voter turnout in the next chapter of the dissertation. In this chapter I address issues related to *when* a person casts a vote rather than *if* a person casts a vote.

The literature on when individuals choose to vote is relatively new. Before early voting was common, individuals were faced with the single decision of whether or not to vote on election day. Now, with expanded voting windows and alternative voting methods, individuals have the opportunity to vote weeks before election day. Voters also have options to cast a ballot in different ways. Although the literature on when individual voters choose to go to the polls is new, there is research that addresses the question of how individuals decide on the method that they will use to vote. In this chapter I do not examine early voting in terms of when individuals decide to vote, but rather I examine the question of when individuals cast their ballots, either before or on election day.

In this chapter I examine the timing decision based on the opportunity for early voting. Due to the changes in early voting laws, I expect that certain types of individuals will be more likely to choose to vote before election day. In this chapter I model the differences between early voters, election day voters, and non-voters.

THE LITERATURE ON EARLY VOTING

Several studies of early, or pre-election day, voting have been conducted prior to the recent liberalization of state election laws (Stein, 1998). Many of the studies on early voting concentrate on one form of early voting, such as voting by mail (Berinsky, Burns, and Traugott, 2001) or in-person early voting (Neely and Richardson, 2001; Stein, 1998; Stein, Garcia, and Monet, 1997). While these studies provide an examination of the effects of one type of early voting on voter turnout and composition of the electorate,

they do not allow for a comparison to be made across modes of early voting. In this chapter I examine early voting as in-person early voting and mail-in absentee voting. Differences between these two modes of early voting may provide insight into who chooses to vote early and what mode of voting they use when given different voting options.

Local Studies of Early Voting

Studies on early voting have focused on a single county or state. For example, Neely and Richardson (2001) use Knox County in Tennessee and Stein (1998) uses Texas as the populations of study. Findings from these studies provide evidence that highly partisan voters and voters that live in areas with high levels of partisan mobilization are more likely to cast an early ballot. Because of the specific contexts, such studies do not allow scholars to effectively generalize their findings to the U.S. population as a whole. A larger sample size that includes individuals from a diverse set of states would better represent the total U.S. population and would permit researchers to make stronger generalizations and test results from previous studies.

In this chapter I use a national sample size that provides a more complete picture of how Americans use early voting while accounting for state-level differences. With more states now allowing for early voting, it is possible to observe the effects of early voting in a national context. The studies discussed here help with the understanding of what type of voter uses early voting and only appear outdated now because the early voting phenomenon has spread to many other states. The expansion of early voting discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation means that early voting has also grown from a state and local political behavior to a national one. In this chapter I examine early voting using a national sample while controlling for state-level effects.

Levels of Early Voting

Studies on early voting have been conducted at two distinct levels of analysis, the aggregate and individual level. Typically, questions concerning the implementation of early voting policies to increase voter turnout have used an aggregate unit of analysis, using data at the precinct level (Karp and Banducci, 2000) or county level (Stein and Garcia-Monet, 1997) to provide evidence for an overall effect of new electoral laws in specific contexts. Karp and Banducci (2000) find that the adoption of all mail-in voting

increased voter turnout in Oregon's low stimulus elections. Stein and Garcia-Monet, (1997) find that (1) the county percentage of Hispanics, change in population, number of non-traditional early voting sites, and median home value are positively related to the percentage of county early voting turnout and that (2) the percentage of early voter turnout increases overall county turnout. These studies provide evidence that early voting policies do have an effect on aggregate voting behavior. Since early voting policies have been found to affect early voting behavior at the aggregate level, it seems reasonable that early voting policies could affect behavior at the individual level.

Stein (1998) uses an individual-level analysis to address questions concerning the characteristics of individuals who use early voting (e.g., demographic factors such as income and education). Neely and Richardson (2001) use an individual-level analysis to examine the degree to which early voters are similar to election day voters in terms of demographic and political factors. Those studies find that early voters are more partisan, more ideological, older, wealthy, and are individuals who take a great interest in politics (Stein, 1998), and the major difference between early voters and election day voters is that early voters feel that the election is more important (Neely and Richardson, 2001). While these studies examine early voting at the state and local level I examine early voting at the national-level. These studies provide the foundations for individual-level early voting studies by accounting for the attributes of early and election day voters that can be used in an national-level analysis. The overall findings suggest that early voting is allowing traditional voters to take advantage of the new process of early voting rather than bringing new voters into the political process.

Studies of both individual-level and aggregate-level voting address different types of questions about U.S. democracy, and the early voting studies also address these questions. Aggregate studies of voter turnout find that the U.S. has low levels of voter turnout (Franklin, 1996). Low aggregate turnout may cause representatives to represent only those who choose to vote rather than the population they represent. Due to high participation rates among the wealthy legislators tend to focus on the wealthy while crafting legislation (Bartels, 2010; Gilens, 2000; Griffin and Newman, 2008). Individual studies of voter turnout can predict what individual qualities, views, or demographic factors predict individual voting. When certain types of demographic factors keep arising

as predictors of voting (e.g., education and income), they suggest that the composition of the electorate may be significantly different from the general population. This is important because low levels of voter turnout may lead to undemocratic outcomes in policy. Both the individual and aggregate level of analysis provides the opportunity to examine different questions about the form of U.S. democracy. In this chapter I will focus on the individual-level effects on who and what type of early voting method voters use.

Mobilization in Early Voting

Little work has been done to address the effects of mobilization on early voting. Because scholars use the state or local unit of analysis, it is difficult to show statistical evidence of a mobilization effect when the individuals in the sample are assumed to receive the same campaign information. Aggregate measures of mobilization, such as campaign spending, can be accounted for at the state-level, but it is important to note that not every individual will see the same level of advertising. Neely and Richardson (2001) do not address this issue because many contextual variables at local and state-levels (e.g., political advertising, other elections on the ballot, and campaign spending) are held constant due to overlapping media markets and close geographic proximity of individuals in the sample. Neely and Richardson use a county level analysis to strengthen the amount of statistical control while at the same time making it more difficult to generalize the findings to other contexts. The use of the local level allows for statistical control concerning mobilization, but it does not allow for the examination of the effects of mobilization on early voting. This is similar to the problems associated with case studies that focus on a few observations in that they allow for in-depth analysis for a few cases but do not allow for generalization to other sample populations.

The importance of mobilization influences is most associated with Rosenstone and Hansen's (1993) mobilization theory, which suggests that the decrease they find in political participation is largely due to the decrease in mobilization by political parties that in turn increase the cost of participation to the individual citizen. Rosentstone and Hansen (1993) examine the effects of mobilization through survey questions pertaining to party contact. The survey questions divide the sample population into two groups, one group that has been contacted by a party and one group that has not. In the present

96

chapter I account for mobilization by examining individuals who receive large amounts of mobilization (e.g., strong partisans, individuals who receive political messages, and group members) and individuals who receive low amounts of mobilization (e.g., Independents, individuals who did not receive political messages, and individuals who do not obtain news).

Rosenstone and Hansen's (1993) mobilization theory of political participation is of particular importance in the context of early voting due to the changing nature of elections with the expanded use of early voting. Before early voting, parties and groups had one target and all of their mobilization efforts were, by default, centered on election day. When the election period expands to more days than election day, the costs and benefits of mobilization change based on the number of ways voters can cast a ballot and the number of days before an election a vote can be cast. If voters have a full month before election day to vote early, parties and groups will have to rethink how they contact potential voters. This chapter examines the effectiveness of mobilization where Chapter 3 of this dissertation concentrates on the techniques used by parties to mobilize early voters.

Timing of Voter Decision Making

One of the issues related to early voting is the ability of voters to make their vote choice decision before election day. Alvarez (1998) describes the timing of the vote choice decision as a function of uncertainty. Voters do not feel comfortable with deciding who to vote for until a certainty threshold is met. This threshold is reached in different ways. Alvarez utilizes a Bayesian learning model to predict when an individual reaches the threshold. Other scholars use a probability model that takes into account voters "core political beliefs, their level of political engagement, and whether they have been exposed to political mobilization efforts" (Gronke and Toffey, 2008).

One of the major controversies surrounding the use of early voting is whether or not the electorate needs a full campaign cycle to be completed before making an informed decision about who to vote for. The literature on voter information includes a debate about how individuals process information and if democratic outcomes result on the amount of information individuals receive. The literature on voter information originated in the 1960's with Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960) in *The*

American Voter in which they examine the electorate as individuals. They found low levels of both received information and interest about politics throughout the electorate. The scholarly literature looks at this problem in two different ways.

First, the effects of information on the aggregate of voters are considered. Page and Shapiro (1992) find that the aggregate public opinion of the electorate is stable and "rational." This finding supports the view that even if some of the individuals in the electorate make the wrong decision, they will effectively cancel each other due to random error. Althaus (1998) finds that there are information asymmetries across demographic levels that cause aggregate preferences to be inaccurate and potentially undemocratic. These information asymmetries occur when predictable groups of individuals, who are more likely to cast ballots, have more information. This translates into a political bias towards individuals who have more political information.

Second, effects of information on the individual are considered. Lau and Redlawsk (1997) explore the effects of information on the individual and find that across the 1972 to 1988 presidential elections, voters overall accuracy was around 80%. This study assigned candidate preferences based on individuals who had similar demographic characteristics. This means that individuals voted 80% of the time with their predicted correct vote.

The literature on voter information highlights the complexity of the way in which information availability affects electoral outcomes. The introduction of early voting introduces another dimension to the examination of the effects of voter information on electoral outcomes. There are three possible effects early voting could have on how voter information effects electoral outcomes. The three effects are no effect, a negative effect, or a positive effect.

An argument for early voting having no effect on voter information and electoral outcomes is that early voting only moves the date of vote and does not change any other electoral behavior of the voter. Voters still acquire all the information they need and cast their ballots during the period. An argument for early voting having a negative effect on voter information and electoral outcomes is that the shortened time period could lead to less time for information collection, which could lead to poor voting choices. Information that becomes available after an early vote is cast could cause a voter to

become unhappy with his or her vote choice. In this case, early voting would prevent a voter from gathering adequate information and cause a poor vote choice. An argument for early voting having a positive effect on voter information and electoral outcomes is that as parties and groups sent out information to coincide with the expanded election period, early voting may produce more information for a longer time frame during the election. Overall, early voting is unique because individuals get to choose when they vote. Some people choose to wait to the last minute and vote on election day and others choose to vote as soon as early voting polls open.

Summary of Early Voting Literature

Examinations of the early voting literature show that there are significant differences between election day voters and early voters. These differences are related to political and personal factors. Political factors include the individuals political attitudes related to vote choice, namely strength of partisanship (Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Miller, 2008). Personal factors include income, education, and age (Stein, 1998). The early voting literature also shows that there is evidence that early voting leads to a small, but significant, increase in voter turnout (Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Miller, 2008).

There are many factors related to the choice to early vote that have not been fully addressed in the early voting literature. The role of group mobilization has not been examined, particularly in how interest groups are effective in influencing individuals to vote early or on election day. Although early voting has been examined in the context of state and local elections, a national examination of early voting that addresses issues present across states has not been done. For example, states with no registration may have high levels of early voting and state with strict registration laws may have lower levels of early voting.

This dissertation addresses issues related to early voting by utilizing nationally representative data sets, which allow me to explore the effects of individual and state-level factors on early voting. Specifically, the use of a large number of early voting cases allows for the examination of factors that are different across states. Differences across the states in early voting policy are examined. The inclusion of different state factors also provides an opportunity to test findings from the current early voting literature.

The variable names and coding for these variables are listed in Appendix 5.1. The data set I use in this paper is compiled from different sources. First, the individual level data come from a nationally representative sample population, the 2004 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES) data set. The NAES data is a collection a data from the 2004 presidential election period starting during the pre-primary season in the fall of 2003 and continuing through the general election in the fall of 2004. In this chapter I only use observations from the 2004 general election time frame (i.e., from October 2004 to November 2004). The portion of the data set that is not used includes observations from the 2004 primary elections, national party conventions, and the 2004 presidential debates.

Second, the data for state-level variables come from various sources and are compiled by the author. The state-level measures are collected for the presidential election year 2004. These state-level measures are accounted for later in this chapter through the use of a cluster by state option in Stata, which allows for the state-level variables to be controlled and accounted for across an individual-level analysis.

THEORY OF EARLY VOTING

Why Do Voters Vote Early?

In this chapter I discuss and present hypotheses relating to why individuals would choose to cast an early ballot and if the availability of early voting increases the probability of an individual voting. Each hypothesis is tested using multivariate statistical analysis. Many of the variables examined have already been shown in the literature to be significant predictors of individual political participation, and in this research I incorporate those findings into my statistical models.

Convenience

Election laws address the issues of when individuals vote, what they need to bring to the polling place, when the polls are open, and how many opportunities a potential voter has to vote. Early voting, specifically, is a way to increase the number of opportunities that individuals have to vote. I predict that individuals who are very busy (i.e., individuals who have various other responsibilities or obligations) and individuals who are not busy at all (i.e., individuals who have very few responsibilities or

obligations) would be likely to take advantage of the opportunity to cast an early ballot. Based on the non-linear relationship between use of early voting and level of personal activity, I model this relationship using both the busy variable and the square of the composite busy variable. The logic behind there being a connection between individuals being very busy or not busy at all and casting an early ballot is that individuals who are busy know that they are more likely to be busy on election day and may miss casting a ballot. These individuals look ahead and choose to bank their vote during the early voting period. On the other hand, individuals who are not busy have the opportunity to vote at almost any time due to their few responsibilities or obligations and will choose the most convenient time to cast an early ballot. The specific hypotheses relating to the placement of individuals on the busy – not busy scale are tested using many different variables, some of which represent busy potential early voters and others represent non-busy early voters.

Citizens who have busy schedules may benefit from the increased opportunity to cast a ballot over an extended voting period. Specifically, individuals who have full time jobs or family obligations may be able to fit voting into their busy schedules if they have more than one day to vote. The real advantage for individuals who live in early voting states is that once they decide to vote, they have many different chances to cast a ballot.

H_{1A}: Individuals residing in early-voting states who have full time jobs will be more likely to cast an early vote than other individuals.

H_{1B}: Individuals residing in early-voting states who are married will be more likely to cast an early vote than other individuals.

H_{1C}: Individuals residing in early-voting states who have children will be more likely to cast an early vote than other individuals.

There is a different way to look at the possible avenues to early voting besides convenience voting by those individuals who are busy. Individuals who do not have busy schedules also may utilize the convenience of early voting. This potential group of early voters would include the elderly.

101

H_{1D}: Individuals residing in early-voting states who are elderly or retired will be more likely to utilize early voting than other individuals.

The last two hypotheses related to convenience are associated with physical proximity to the polling place. Individuals who find themselves close to an early voting place before election day could eliminate an extra trip back to the polls on election day if they utilized early voting.

Voters who reside in rural areas also may take advantage of the convenience of early voting. Due to the large commuting time between home and the town, residents of rural areas should be more likely to utilize early voting to save both time, in terms of driving, and money, in terms of gas.

H_{1G}: Individuals residing in early-voting states and who reside in rural areas will be more likely to utilize early voting than other individuals.

Low Information Needs

Individuals who do not require additional time or information during the campaign season to make their vote choice should be more likely to cast an early vote. There are different causal paths that would lead early deciders to become early voters. First, highly partisan individuals do not require the entire election period to make their electoral choice decision. Campbell et al. (1960) finds that the highly partisan electorate does not need campaign events, debates, or political ads to obtain information on how to vote. This means that there is possibly a large group of individuals (i.e., individuals who are partisan) who could cast their ballot a year before election day and not think about changing their minds. These individuals are more likely to identify themselves as strong partisans who hold strong views concerning the differences between Republicans and Democrats. The converse of this argument also should hold in that individuals who identify themselves as Independents should need the most possible time in order to collect information concerning their electoral decision (Flanigan and Zigale, 1994).

Individuals with high levels of ideology (i.e., individuals with high levels of liberal or conservative viewpoints) are predicted to early vote. I predict that voters with a

high level of ideology will have clear candidate preferences and will not require the entire election period to make their voting choice.

Education levels also may have an effect on the amount of information that the potential voter needs to acquire before making the decision to vote. Individuals with high levels of education may be more familiar with collecting information from many different contexts and formulating a choice quickly.

H_{2A}: Individuals who reside in early-voting states and who have high levels of partisan strength will be more likely to early vote than individuals with low levels of partisan strength.

H_{2B}: Individuals who reside in early-voting states and who have high levels of ideology will be more likely to early vote than individuals with low levels of ideology.

H_{2C}: Individuals who reside in early-voting states and who have high levels of education will be more likely to early vote than individuals with low levels of education.

Mobilization

Members of social and interest groups may be encouraged to vote early by leaders and fellow members of groups with which they are affiliated. The traditional voter turnout literature finds that mobilization is a strong predictor of voting (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). In terms of early voting, groups may encourage potential voters to cast an early ballot in order to bank votes before election day. Banking early votes can maximize a group's effectiveness by reducing the chance that voters find themselves too busy on election day to vote. Members of groups may also find out about early voting from other members in their group. This type of political information should be disseminated through groups in a similar manner as other political information.

The mobilization effect should be most pronounced in political groups and other groups that have an underlying political component. For example, evangelical church members may be encouraged to vote by church leadership and union members may be encouraged to vote by union leadership. To disentangle the mobilization effects between early voting mobilization and election day mobilization, I predict that individuals with group associations should be more likely to be mobilized to vote before election day due

to the social aspects of groups. For example, evangelical church members may go to vote together.

H_{3A}: Individuals with union group associations will be more likely to early vote than other individuals.

H_{3B}: Individuals with evangelical church associations will be more likely to early vote than other individuals.

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The next section of this chapter presents a model of early voting that includes the three major hypotheses for early voting discussed previously and other control variables for political participation. The purpose of the model is to find the differences between early voters, election day voters, and non-voters.

RESEARCH METHODS

This section examines the factors that lead individuals to vote early, vote on election day, or to abstain from voting. Traditionally, voter turnout studies (e.g., Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993) use logistic regression to estimate the effects that lead individuals to vote due to the dichotomous dependent variable (1=voted and 0=abstain). In the present analysis, I use multinomial logit regression to examine the determinants of three different voting behaviors. I use multinomial logit regression (Long and Freese, 2005). Multinomial logit regression is used because of the non-ordered nature of the three level categorization of the dependent variable. The three categories of variables are early voter, election day voter, and non-voter. The categorized dependent variable was coded in order to compare early and election day voters to non-voters by the following coding scheme, 2=early voter, 1=election day voter, and 0=non-voter. I use a non-ordered multinomial logit as opposed to the more traditional ordered multinomial due to the non-stackable nature of comparing early voters, election day voters, and non-voters.

Regression is most appropriately used in models with dependent variables that are continuous and that have a wide range of variation (e.g., household income, percentage support, or age of death). Ordered logit is commonly used when a dependent variable is

measured as an ordinal variable. For example, in studies that predict strength of partisanship where the depended variable ranges from 0, strong Republican identification, to 6, strong Democratic identification, the difference between a 0 and 1 and the difference between a 5 and 6 are assumed to be the same theoretical difference. For example, if an individual changed his or her feelings from a 0 to a 1and another individual changed his or her feelings from a 5 to a 6, it would mean that both individuals changed their feelings the same amount. Ordered logit models impose a standard theoretical space between each numeral that is not appropriate for modeling early voters, election day voters, and non-voters. In this chapter the difference between the variables coded 0 (non-voter), 1 (election day voter), and 2 (early voter) are not the same theoretical distance apart so ordered logit is not the appropriate method of estimation in this chapter. Clearly, the difference between non-voters (0) and election day voters (1) and the difference between election day voters (1) and early voters (2) are not the same. In this chapter, the voting categories are assumed to be different from the non-voting category, so I use non-ordered multinomial logit. This allows me to find determinants that predict which category each individual belongs to. All observations used in this chapter include individuals who reside in states with at least one type of early voting policy. This means that every individual in this data set has the opportunity to cast some type of early vote and individuals who reside in states without an early voting policy are dropped. This also means that the sample size is around 1200 in this chapter and around 5000 in the next chapter where all states, early voting state or not, are included in the sample population.

I also estimate a second logit model to identify any significant differences between early voters and election day voters. The second regression addresses questions concerning possible differences across voters in their method of voting. These differences are less apparent in the first estimated model but are directly addressed in the second model). For example, in the first model, if income is found to be a significant positive predictor of both early voting and election day voting, it would be difficult to distinguish between those two significant coefficients. The second model allows for direct comparison of the differences between early and election day voters. The sample population used in the second model includes all the individuals who voted in the election with the distinction being made between early voters and election day voters (1=early

voters and 0=election day voters). For the second model I use a logit analysis because the dependent variable is a dummy variable with an early voter and election day voter category.

Before presenting the two models I will discuss how state-level factors are incorporated into my individual-level model. Because my data set includes individual-level and state-level data, there is the potential for state-level effects to have an effect on the individual observations that are not accounted for by the state-level variables. For example, individuals that live in different states are exposed to different political cultures (Elazar, 1972), weather conditions, or other state factors that I have not accounted for. I use a cluster function for both of the models in this chapter order to account for the variation between states.

I will estimate two models in this chapter (1) the multinomial logit model that estimates three behaviors of early voting, election day voting, and non-voting and (2) the logit model that estimates the two voting behaviors of early voting and election day voting. I also estimate a model that differentiates two categories of early voters: in-person early voters and mail-in early voters. This model allows for the use of a marginal effects post-estimation of the relative effects of each of the variables as the variables are manipulated. This allows for relative effects of variables to be compared. For example, when two variables are both found to be significant, one may have a 10% effect on early voting and the other may only have a 3% effect.

The use of marginal effects estimation allows for the interpretation of results in a similar manner as ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation. For example, most OLS regression results are read as a relative change in the dependent variable based on a relative change in the independent variable holding all other variables constant. Logit regression does not allow for these statements to be interpreted with ease. Due to the use of logit, the marginal effects can be read as a change in the relative probability of the dependent variable based on a relative change in the independent variable holding all other variables at their means. The classification of the two different models allows for more specific questions to be answered concerning who is using specific types of early voting.

Variables for Models Predicting Who Early Votes

Dependent variable. Voter turnout is measured as a polychotomous variable, coded 2 if the individual early votes, 1 if the individual votes on election day, and 0 if the individual abstains from voting. Due to the non-ordered nature of this dependent variable, I use multinomial logit to estimate the parameters of this model. The second model uses a dichotomous variable that is coded as 1 if the individual early votes and 0 if the individual votes on election day; this model is estimated using binary logit.

Independent variables. The independent variables permit me to estimate the effects of convenience, low information needs, and mobilization on the probability that individuals cast an early ballot. This analysis also will include control variables that have been shown to predict other forms of political participation. The independent and control variables come from the voter turnout literature and are defined in Appendix 5.1. The independent variables include the demographic variables sex, black, Hispanic, education, married, working, years at address, suburban, urban, and income. These demographic variables act as control variables in predicting early voting use. These variables are further examined as predictors of voter turnout in Chapter 6 of this dissertation and are discussed in Chapter 4 as possible predictors of early voting. The political and state-level variables include care about election, network news use, cable news use, Ranney competition index, statewide races, per capita political spending, ballot measures, and registration closing date.

Convenience variables. Convenience is measured by a number of variables. Some of the variables address individuals with high time demands, or individuals considered busy, and the other variables address individuals with low time demands, or individual considered to have a great deal of free time. The high time-demand is measured by full-time job status and family obligations. Full time job status is measured as a dummy variable coded 1 if the individual has a full time job and 0 otherwise. I expect that full time job status will be positively related to election day voting and early voting in the first model but only with early voting in the second model. Part-time job status is measured by a dummy variable coded 1 if an individual has a part time job and 0 otherwise. I expect that part time job status will be positively related to election day voting and early voting in the first model, but only with early voting in the second model.

Family obligations are measured as a dummy variable coded 1 if the individual has a spouse and 0 otherwise. I expect that family obligations will be positively related to election day voting and early voting in the first model but only with early voting in the second model. Family obligations are also measured by a variable that represents the number of children in the household. This variable ranges from 0 for individuals without children to 5 for individuals with 5 or more children. I expect that children will be positively related to election day voting and early voting in the first model, but only with early voting in the second model. College student status is measured by a dummy variable coded 1 if the individual is a college student and 0 otherwise. I expect that current college attendance will be positively related to election day voting and early voting in the first model, but only with early voting in the second model.

Level of urbanization in the respondents' home communities is coded with two dichotomous variables. Rural residency is measured as 1 for respondents living in urban areas and 0 otherwise. Suburban residency is measured as 1 for respondents residing in suburban areas and 0 otherwise. The rural and suburban variables are hypothesized to have a positive effect on voter turnout and early voting in the first model, but only early voting in the second model. Suburban residents have more possible early voting sites (i.e., court house, city hall, or libraries) that are closer than rural area residents have. For rural residents, I predict that the cost of an extra trip would provide an incentive for rural residents to vote early before election day as they go about their regular activities.

Low information needs variables. The degree to which individuals have low information needs is measured by two variables that account for strength of partisanship and undecided voters. Strength of partisanship is measured as a folded 7-point scale that ranges from 3 high partisanship to 0 pure independent. Individuals who have strong partisanship are more likely to have the necessary information to make their vote choice early in the election period. Strong partisans have what Campbell et al. (1960) describe as a partisan filter through which all information passes, this allows individuals to see the best in their party and the worst in other parties when new information in obtained. I predict that individuals who have higher levels of partisanship will be more likely to cast an early vote due to the lack of need to consume more information as the campaign progresses toward election day.

Mobilization variables. There are two measures of mobilization use in this study. Dummy variables are coded 1 for membership in a union and coded 1 for evangelical church membership and 0 otherwise. Mobilization by groups, traditionally unions, represents the role that civic organizations play in turning out the vote. Putnam (2000) argues that the decline of U.S. participation in groups also has led to a decrease in the level of civic activity by Americans. By separating the two group membership variables I can see if there is a different group mobilization effect between groups that are more connected to employment (i.e., unions) and groups that are more connected to social ties (i.e., churches). I predict that both group membership variables will have a positive effect on early voting and voter turnout in the first model, but only a positive effect on early voting in the second model.

FINDINGS

In this section I discuss the findings from my two models, which are displayed at the end of this chapter in three tables. The first model I discuss is the voter turnout model that predicts early voting, election day voting, and non-voting electoral behavior. The model results are presented in Table 5.1 and show the estimations of the multi-logit model that predicts early voting, election day voting, and non-voting. Table 5.1 displays the coefficients for early voting and election day voting compared to the excluded category of non-voter using the three major hypotheses presented in this chapter and demographic and state-level control variables. The second model I discuss is the model that predicts early voters from the pool of all individuals who cast any type of ballot (i.e., early or election day). Table 5.2 shows the estimated effects of the three major hypotheses and demographics and state-level control variables from the model in Table 5.1. In addition to the presentation of the early voting models, I present the estimated effects of changing the independent variables and the percentage change on the probability that an individual would early vote in the last column of Table 5.2. For example, when the variable 65 years of age or older changes from 0 to 1, the percentage probability for early voting increases by 4%. These estimations are used to show the relative effects of the independent variables.

Findings from Table 5.1.

In Table 5.1, I present the estimated coefficients for the first model across the five groups of variables (convenience, information needs, mobilization, demographic, and state-level). The first column shows the estimates for election day voting, while the second column shows the results for early voting. Each coefficient indicates the change in the log-odds ratio of election day or early voting in comparison to the log-odds ratio of not voting. The significant coefficients from the first column are the convenience hypothesis (suburban and employment), information needs hypothesis (none), mobilization hypothesis (none), demographic control variables (income,), and state-level control variables (number statewide elections). These significant variables are standard predictors of voter turnout and serve as control variables for the estimates in the second column where the early voting coefficients are displayed. The four significant coefficients in the first column in Table 5.1 predict election day voter turnout compared to non-voting.

Table 5.1 shows that individuals who are employed are more likely to vote on election day. This finding matches the findings of Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) and Timpone (1998) that working individuals are more likely to cast a ballot. This is due to social factors like discussing politics at work and working in an industry or sector that is regulated by the government (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980).

In Table 5.1, the negative significant coefficient on suburban means that individuals who live in suburban areas are less likely to vote on election day compared to rural individuals. The two significant convenience hypotheses provide evidence that employed individuals are more likely to vote on election day and suburban individuals are less likely to vote on election day.

The last two significant coefficients that predict election day turnout are the income and number of statewide elections. Again, level of income is one of the standard predictors of voter turnout and I confirm that here (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). The number of statewide elections has a significant negative coefficient meaning that individuals living in states with more statewide elections are less likely to vote on election day. This is an unexpected finding due to the number of election outcomes a voter could affect with more voting decisions to make on one ballot. States with high numbers of statewide elections may provide too many choices and lead potential election

110

day voters to give up on information gathering on all their electoral choices and choose to not participate at all.

In the second column of Table 5.1 I present the findings for early voters, which are of specific interest in this dissertation. The variables with significant coefficients (from the second column) are the convenience hypothesis (employed), information needs hypothesis (none), mobilization hypothesis (none), demographic control variables (income), and state-level control variables (number ballots, political spending per capita and registration closing date). The employment variable is found to be significant and in the predicted direction. Full time employment is a predictor of early voting, and it appears that fully employed individuals are taking advantage of the opportunity to cast an early vote. This finding falls in line with my convenience hypothesis that states that if individuals are busy and have time constraints, early voting provides an opportunity for voters to plan ahead and vote early.

The remaining significant coefficients come from the demographic and state-level control variables. Income is the second predictor of early voting. Individuals with higher levels of income are more likely to cast early ballots. As discussed in the election day section of this model, income is one of the consistent findings in the electoral behavior literature. I find that the number of ballots in a significant and negative coefficient for predicting early voting. When the number of ballot initiatives and referenda increases, the likelihood that an individual will vote early decreases. This may be caused by the more ballots an individual has to learn about and research makes a voting decision requires more time spent on information gathering and pushes the voting decision back to election day.

Political spending per capita is shown in Table 5.1 to be a positive and significant predictor of early voting. Political spending per capita measures how much money is spent on campaign advertizing. This political advertizing acts to cover the costs of participation by informing the public of a candidate's positions. When the population of a state is exposed to more political spending I find that the people are more likely to vote early. This may be because individuals who are exposed to more campaign information will make their electoral decisions earlier in the campaign season and be able to cast a ballot without needing the full campaign to make a choice.

Finally, registration closing date is found to be a significant and positive predictor of early voting. This state-level institution allows for voters with registration dates close to election day to register and vote early with only a few days in between. In the next section I discuss the differences between early and election day voters including an estimation of the relative effects of each significant coefficient.

Findings from Table 5.2

Table 5.2 shows the estimated effects of the Table 5.1 variables on early voting as well as the marginal effects of the logit model. The model shown in Table 5.2 includes observations of all voters (i.e., early voters and election day voters only), with nonvoters excluded from the analysis. Table 5.2 shows the same significant coefficients as the early voting column in Table 5.1 and provides a direct comparison between early and election day voters.

The last column of Table 5.2 shows the change in probability associated with a one-unit change in the significant coefficients used in Table 5.2. First, none of the significant effects produce more than an 8% change in the probability of casting an early vote. Second, the effects of the significant convenience coefficients added together would lead to around a 8% change in the probability of casting an early vote (i.e., full time employment 8%). This means that all the largest effects of the four significant coefficients added together would change the probability in casting an early voter over an election day vote by -5% (i.e., full time employment 8%, suburban -7%, income 2%, and statewide elections -8%). The next section sums up this chapter and makes suggestions for future research possibilities in this research area.

Looking at the findings from this chapter, there does not appear to be a group of factors that can define who an early voter is or what motivates early voting. First, early voters may not be any different than election day voters. I think that one of the reasons that my models have found relatively few differences between early voters and election day voters is that there may not be many difference between the two voting groups. The information required to cast an early vote compared to an election day vote is very similar. Second, early voters may be different from election day voters in a way that is not captured by any of the variables used in the models. There may be political or social variables that were not included. Specifically, political or social factors such as letter

112

writing or the number of groups an individual is active in could be examined. Third, early voters observed in 2004 have not established voting patterns that make their voting behavior predictable. Last, due to the different dates that people vote, a snapshot model may not capture the voting dynamics in the same way that a time series model would. A long-term type of model would be better able to examine the specific choices and influences that lead to early voting.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I examine the differences between election day voters and early voters. Moving forward with this analysis, I would expand the number of factors that may predict early voting. This could be done at the individual level through surveys and individual voter interviews. Interviews could provide an opportunity to see what voters are thinking about when they cast an early vote. The interview results could then be used to identify ideas and attitudes on future surveys.

Of my hypotheses for predicting early voting, the convenience hypothesis is shown to be the strongest. This provides evidence that individuals who are busy will take advantage of early voting if it is available to them. The low information needs hypothesis not being supported may be the result of voters having the information they need but not using it to make a decision before election day. One of the findings from Chapter 3 shows that some individuals believe that they should vote on election day for the social benefits of participating in a nationwide election. Such thinking may be working against the use of early voting. This traditional voting view comes into conflict with the new non-traditional early voting view that individuals should vote whenever they choose. I think that with time, the traditional view of voting will slowly fade away.

One way to improve this analysis will be to add more years of observations to the models. The data used in this dissertation are taken from the 2004 presidential election. Including data from the 2006, 2010 midterm elections and the 2008 presidential election would allow an examination to be done to determine if the same variables are significant in the elections following 2004. The addition also would bring in more observations of early voting in new contexts, specifically the midterm elections. The characteristics of midterm voters (i.e., more partisan and more politically active individuals) may make

their inclusion in my models particularly useful in testing my hypotheses on low information needs and high political partisanship. This would address one of the questions central to early voting research, which is who early votes. Finally, an examination of social groups and their decision of when and how to vote would flesh out the relationship between group membership and early voting. For example, it would be interesting to interview group leaders during the election cycle to see if and when they encourage their group members to vote.

CHAPTER 6: EARLY VOTING AND VOTER TURNOUT

The scholarly literature addresses many categories of factors that affect voter turnout (e.g., demographic, political, and institutional).   One of the most important findings across single country and cross-country analyses is that electoral institutions can have a significant impact on the size of the electorate. Constitutional issues such as how votes are turned into representation in government, procedural aspects of voting, such as when individuals may vote, registration requirements, and election day holidays. All have been shown to be electoral institutions that affect the size of the electorate. Early voting represents one of the new electoral institutions in the U.S., and in this chapter I address the links between early voting and voter turnout.

Voter turnout in the U.S. is one of the most studied issues in the area of electoral behavior. Voter turnout is such an area of focus because the U.S. has one of the lowest turnout rates of any post-industrial western democracy (Franklin, 2001). There is an underlying concern that low voter turnout translates into inaccurate representation. Inaccurate representation means that governing bodies do not follow the will of all the people and that the government is essentially only concerned with those who vote. Variation in turnout across the U.S. and other Western democracies are often attributed to differences in electoral laws and policies. The major difference among these countries is the method used for the selection of representatives for governing institutions. The U.S. has a majoritarian system where the winner takes all. This creates many "wasted" votes, which creates a disincentive for individuals to vote. That is, if an individual feels his or her preferred candidate will win the majority of votes with or without his or her vote, there may be little incentive to cast a ballot. The majoritarian system also can lead to a disincentive to vote in that votes for losing candidates are considered wasted since they are not represented in the final election outcome.

In contrast to majoritarian systems, many European voting systems are considered to be more representative of the population in that they use a proportional allocation of votes and seats. A system of true proportionality would formulate representation based on the total voting population divided by the number of seats in each governing institution, usually a congress or parliament. In this example a seat would be awarded to

each party that received the minimum of votes needed to gain a seat. In the U.S. winner-take-all system, representation goes to the candidate who has the most votes. The incentives for each system are in contrast; in the U.S. if a voter's preferred candidate is an underdog there is little incentive to vote, while in many European systems, second and third place vote getters still can receive a proportion of the representation. There is an incentive for voters in the U.S. to stay away from the polls if the election is not competitive. The U.S. system does not differentiate between a candidate that wins 50% plus one of the votes cast and a candidate that wins 80% of the vote. In proportional systems, a higher percentage of the vote translates into more representation in the government. In proportional systems, effectively all the votes are counted when determining the standing government, but in the winner-take-all system the only vote that decides the election is the vote that puts one candidate into the majority.

Many changes in U.S. electoral laws focus on the how easy or difficult it should be to cast a ballot. One example of this includes the Motor Voter Act of 1993, which required states to provide access to registration forms at most public offices (most notably the Department of Motor Vehicles) and which required that registration cards be excepted at least 30 days before the date of the upcoming election. Another more recent example is the Help America Vote Act of 2002, which provided funds for states to improve voting technology and otherwise assist voters during the voting process.

While scholars have found that the Motor Voter and Help America Vote Acts make it easier to participate in U.S. elections, there is considerable debate regarding the effectiveness of these programs in increasing the level of turnout. The debate centers on the issue of whether these new programs bring in new voters or if these programs simply make it easier for regular voters to vote. This debate continues with the advent of new early voting laws across the country.

Recently, early voting laws have become popular across many of the states, with over half of the states now allowing some type of early voting. This policy change allows scholars to gather and examine new data related to the ability of new election laws to pull in new voters. In this chapter, I address whether or not making voting more convenient through early voting leads to an increase in voter turnout. I examine the link between early voting laws and a possible increase in the probability that individuals will

turnout to vote. This will provide evidence concerning the hypothesis that when individuals are given the opportunity to early vote they are more likely to turn out.

LITERATURE REVIEW ON VOTER TURNOUT

The voter turnout literature is one of the largest in the field of electoral behavior. In order to provide a review of the large number of theoretical perspectives and empirical findings, this review is broken into three main components. This review includes (1) a review of the major theoretical perspectives on voter turnout, (2) a review of the literature that concentrates on institutional factors and electoral laws (e.g., registration laws), and (3) a review of the literature on early voting.

The first major theoretical prospective on voter turnout is the cost benefit calculation, or economic voting model, formulated by Downs (1957). This theory states that individuals will turn out when the expected benefits of voting are greater than the expected costs of voting. The voter's decision is based on the (B) benefits gained from the difference in utility between the two candidates, the (C) costs of information and getting to the polls, the (P) probability that his or her vote is the deciding vote, and (D) the long-run utility of maintaining democracy. This model has gone through many changes due to the debate concerning the measurement of the four above defined terms. The changes have been made as an attempt to solve the voting behavior paradox related to the original Downs model, which predicts that it is irrational to vote. This means that the original Downs model predicts that no one is expected to participate in elections, but as we observe every election day, many do. The first change was made by Riker and Ordeshook (1968), who reformulated the D term to represent the level of citizen duty felt by the individual. This change has caused great debate in the literature as to the legitimacy of the rational choice model (Aldrich, 1993).

There are many scholars who have challenged the ability of the rational choice model to predict voting with the inclusion of the D term. Ball (1976) assumes that voters will not pay for something they can get for free, meaning that a voter will not incur costs of time and money to vote if his or her candidate will win without his or her vote. Ball also questions the degree to which the duty term fits within a rational-choice framework. Green and Shapiro (1994) also are critical of the degree to which the rational choice

model can predict reality and are critical of the model's ability to move voting behavior research forward. Green and Shapiro (1994) argue that the rational choice paradigm has pushed the political science research agenda for long enough and a new paradigm needs to emerge.

The debate over the usefulness of the rational choice model is important in the voter turnout literature because on one level the assumption that individuals will engage in political behaviors if the benefits of participation outweigh the costs stands on strong economic grounds and translates to many other types of human behavior. For example, in social networking contexts the benefits of attending a conference (finding new research partners or learning about job opportunities) out weigh the costs (flight and hotel). On another level, rational choice theory involves psychological benefits to voters, which lead to problems related to how to account for and quantify these psychological benefits from political behavior. For example, the feeling of doing one's civic duty by voting is a psychological factor that would be difficult to quantify.

The second change to the Downs model was made to the C term by Aldrich (1993), who explains that political leaders have the opportunity to cover much of the costs of participation (such as information costs) through campaign events, television ads, and other mobilization techniques. The changes in the formulation of C help to describe voter turnout by allowing for political influences to decrease the participation costs to individuals. The third change to the Downs model also was to the C term. Blais (2001) changed the C term by removing the economic rationality restraints placed on it by Downs. Voting is a low cost and low benefit activity, which Blais argues makes the decision to vote such a low cost activity it, is not rational to spend the time thinking about the costs and benefits.

The second major theoretical prospective of turnout deals with individual political attitudes. These have been examined by many scholars starting with Campbell et al. (1960) in *The American Voter*. Political influences include individual partisanship and strength of partisanship. The theoretical justification for the inclusion of political variables is that individuals who are highly involved in politics and who have emotional ties to the parties are much more likely to participate in elections than others who do not have strong partisan ties. Party attachment has typically been measured as individuals'

scores on the 7-point partisanship scale (strong Republican to strong Democratic) (see Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). The partisanship scale is determined by asking respondents questions regarding their party affiliation and the strength of that affiliation. For example, if a respondent stated that he or she was affiliated with the Republican party, he or she then would be asked if they are affiliated with the party was strong or weak. This leads to strong Republicans and Democrats to be coded as 7 or 1 respectively and Independents to be coded as 4. Partisanship is also measured using a folded measure of partisanship that ranges from non-partisan (coded 0) to strong partisan (coded 3). This second measure captures the strength of the individual's Republican or Democratic partisanship. The measurement of partisan strength has been greatly debated due to the non-linearity of the relationship between the partisanship and vote choice and partisanship voter turnout (Keith, Magleby, Nelson, Orr, Westlye, and Wolfinger, 1992). Keith et al. (1992) finds that there are many "closet" partisans that behave similarly to partisan identifiers but do not admit to being partisans. The problem with using the folded partisanship measure is that the difference between non-partisans (coded 0) and weak partisans (coded 1) is not the same difference as between weak partisans and partisans. This problem is specific to the folded partisanship measure when predicting voter turnout.

The third major theoretical prospective of turnout deals with campaign effects. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) have greatly contributed to the understanding of the positive effects of mobilization on voter turnout. At the outset of a political campaign, individuals may have relatively little information about the policy positions of competing candidates. Campaigns correct this by informing the public on these matters. Rosenstone and Hansen find that parties choose what groups to mobilize in order to maximize their support relative to the costs of mobilization. This is typically measured as contact with the campaign during the election period. In their experimental study of the town of New Haven, CT, Gerber and Green (2000) find that in-person contacts are much more effective in mobilizing voters than phone calls and leaflets. Scholars have also examined the role of interest groups as mobilizers. For instance, Kenny, McBurnett, and Bordua (2004) examine the role of the National Rifle Association (NRA) in shaping elections, while McDermott (2004) examines the ability of labor unions to provide cues

to Democratic voters. These studies provide support that groups have the ability to send signals during the campaign season to their own supports.

Another type of campaign effect on voter turnout is the effect of television advertizing on the electorate. The effects televisions ads have on the electorate can be viewed as (1) an information source for campaign information and (2) a possible method to affect voter turnout. There is a debate in the campaign effect on turnout literature as to the ability of negative TV ads to increase or decrease turnout. Lau, Sigelman, Heldman, and Babbitt (1999) found, using a meta analysis, that negative ads do not have a negative effect on turnout. Brader (2005) examines the emotional effects of negative advertisements and finds that negative ads do have a negative effect on voter turnout. Overall, the literature on an individual's emotional and cognitive reactions to campaign ads finds that the effects of ads may be either mobilizing or de-mobilizing depending on the individual's views of each candidate.

The forth major theoretical prospective of turnout involves social effects. Putnam (2000) examines the relationship between social capital and turnout and suggests that declining social capital is one reason for the decrease in turnout over the past fifty years. It is hypothesized that when individuals are involved in many social activities they are more likely to become informed about politics and be more likely to participate in political activities such as voting. In terms of the rational choice model, social networks act as a conduit for information distribution that decreases the cost of participation. Social capital has been measured in a number of different ways at the aggregate-level (e.g., number of groups in a state) and individuals level (e.g., number of times friends come over for dinner). Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) find that social effects are a positive predictor of voter turnout in their civic voluntarism model, which predicts that social networks create opportunities for political action, and through those opportunities, individuals can more easily participate in politics (including voting).

The fifth major theoretical prospective of turnout deals with personal resources. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) have examined the role of individual resources in predicting voter turnout. The theoretical reasoning behind this is that individuals with high levels of education should be more able to understand how the political system works. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) find that income, age, and type of employment

have an effect on voter turnout. They suggest this is due to the chances that political discussions will occur in higher paying jobs, that citizens gain experience as they age, and that professional or managerial workers will be more likely to engage in political discussions with coworkers.

The sixth theoretical prospective on voter turnout to be considered in this section deals with institutional factors. Institutional factors such as registration closing date and early voting fall within the rational choice framework. The rational choice framework allows for predictions of increased voting to be made when the costs of participation are lowered or eliminated. Changes in many institutional factors could greatly lower participation costs. For example, the 16th Amendment eliminated many costs of participation (e.g., poll taxes), so scholars using the rational choice model would predict an increase in turnout following the passage of the 16th Amendment. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) find that African American turnout has increased since the Voting Rights Act was passed in the 1960's.

The institutional voting laws literature examines electoral variations within countries (e.g., within the U.S. or Germany) and across countries (studies that include new democracies or advanced Western industrial democracies). This section presents a review of the policies that are examined in the both the U.S. and international voter turnout literature.

The Voting Rights Act had a significant effect on Southern and black voters during the 1960's. The policy made it easier for blacks and poor voters in the South to become registered and participate in elections. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) credit the Voting Rights Act, along with the civil rights movement, for increasing black voter turnout. This act also effectively increased the total number of potential voters by standardizing registration requirements across states.

The Motor Voter Act (1993) addressed low voter turnout by making registration for elections much easier than it was before. The Motor Voter Act required that all states permit mail-in registration, registration at certain public offices, and specifically for registration at the Department of Motor Vehicles. This act addressed the concern that an increasingly mobile public was finding it difficult to become registered to vote in time to cast a ballot. Timpone (1998) and Knack (1995) examine the effects of this act at the

individual and state-level and find that many more potential voters are becoming registered. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993), Timpone (1998) and Knack (1995) conclude that the increase in registration did not translate into an increase in voter turnout.

Many studies have examined the roll of strictness of registration requirements. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) define the registration requirement as a barrier to participation and quantify this as the number of days before the election that registration closes. The logic behind their assumption that registration closing date is a barrier to participation is that many individuals may become aware of an upcoming election only as election day approaches, yet some states close registration 30 days before the election. This does not allow individuals to be caught up in the campaign and decide to vote at the last minute. States that do not require voters to be registered, or allow for same-day registration, are seen as reducing the cost of participation by not requiring an additional trip for individuals to become registered.

There are many policies examined in the comparative literature for affecting participation costs. The first is election day as a national holiday. An election day holiday eliminates the problem for many people of having to squeeze in voting before or after work. In the U.S., concerns about time constraints on election day are addressed with early voting rather than an election day holiday. Early voting policies are seen as a solution to the work problem, in the sense that when the election period is expanded, individuals can schedule voting to be done at a more convenient time.

A second policy that could reduce the cost of voting is government registration. Currently, individuals have the responsibility to register on their own, but proposals to turn responsibility over to the government are hypothesized to create higher turnout rates. This would effectively turn all elections into same-day registration elections, thus allowing for individuals to decide on election day to cast a ballot.

The six theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter (i.e., rational choice, political attitudes, campaign effects, personal resources, social effects, and institutions) serve as the foundation for the research conducted later in this chapter. The next section addresses the connections between the different theoretical perspectives presented.

Synthesis of Competing Theoretical Perspectives

The six theoretical perspectives for voter turnout presented in the last section do not fall into cut and dry categories. Instead, these six perspectives can be viewed as being connected in certain aspects.

First, the institutional and the rational choice perspective are related. The institutional concept of barriers to participation and the rational choice concept of costs and benefits are linked in that as barriers to participation are reduced, the cost of participation also is reduced. For example, election day registration reduces the cost of participation by not requiring the voter to register before elections.

Second, campaign activities and the rational choice perspective are connected. Many political campaign activities act to reduce the cost of participation. For example, mobilization by political parties provides costly political information to politically active citizens. By reducing the cost of participation, political parties in turn increase the chance that individuals will turnout to vote. Television ads are a specific type of mobilization used by political parties and other groups to subsidize the cost of participation and increase turnout.

Third, social effects and resource effects are connected. These two concepts are related in that level of resources is related to level of social effects. For example, individuals who are well educated or have a large income will be more likely to have a job that encourages political activity. Both high levels of resources and social connections predict that individuals will be more likely to vote than individuals who have few social connection and low levels of resources.

Fourth, political attitudes and campaign effects are connected. Theses two concepts are inversely related in that when individuals have high levels of political attitudes or knowledge, the effects of campaigns are mitigated. Among individuals who have a high level of partisanship, it is possible that campaigns will have little or no effect on voter turnout due to the high level of commitment to a specific party the individuals have. The converse to this relationship also should hold in that individuals with weak partisanship may be open to viewing campaign events as information sources and be persuadable to vote in the upcoming election.

The next section addresses the theoretical links between early voting laws and voter turnout. Many of the theoretical perspectives presented in this chapter on voter turnout can be used to explain the effects that early voting has on voter turnout.

THEORIES OF THE EFFECT OF EARLY VOTING ON VOTER TURNOUT

Based on the institutional voting literature, barriers to participation keep individuals who would have normally voted from participating in elections. Early voting policies have changed the process of voting in a way that should theoretically decrease the barriers and costs of participation.

The civic volunteerism model examines voter turnout in terms of social factors and political opportunities. This literature presents political participation as a function of the types of opportunities individuals have to participate in government. By increasing the number of days individuals are allowed to vote, the opportunity for participation increases and that should lead to an increase in voter turnout. The rational choice, opportunity, and mobilization perspectives help to explain the effect of early voting on participation.

Rational Choice

The most common theoretical justification for the argument that early voting policy encourages participation is the Downsian rational choice framework that addresses the costs and benefits of participation (Downs, 1957). This theoretical perspective predicts that individuals who reside in states with early voting policies will face fewer costs associated with voting. Specifically, voters have a longer opportunity to cast a ballot during the election period. This allows busy potential voters to have many opportunities to cast a ballot. The reduction in costs follows from the ability of the individual to decide when he or she casts a ballot instead of being required to wait for election day. This can be viewed in game theory terms as playing the vote decision game over multiple days instead of just on election day. This means that if an individual has a 10% chance of casting a ballot on any one given day, he or she will have the same 10% chance of voting for many days in a row. If there are 10 early voting days this means that the individual will, on average, cast a ballot during the election period. This view assumes that individuals have a given desire to cast a ballot and that given many chances

124

to vote they will be more likely to take advantage of an expanded voting period. With an expanded voting period individuals can choose the time to vote that is the least expensive for them. For example, time may be relatively expensive on a workday, so a voter may be more likely to vote on a day off when time is less expensive. Early voting allows individuals to vote when it is the least costly to them. By expanding the election period, potential voters are exposed the campaign events and have the option of casting a ballot before the campaign is over.

H_1: Individuals who reside in states with early voting policies will be more likely to vote than other individuals.

Opportunity

The civic voluntarism model presented by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) uses the civic connections an individual has in his or her community to predict participation in many different political and non-political civic activities. Group membership is found to predict an increase in the probability of casting a ballot in the Civic Volunteerism Model. I hypothesize that there will be an interaction between group membership and early voting opportunity that will increase the change of casting a ballot when compared to the individual effects of group membership and early voting opportunities on voter turnout.

H_2: Individuals who reside in states with early voting policies and who have group memberships will be more likely to vote than other individuals.

Mobilization

Early voting laws not only provide individuals with the opportunity to cast early votes, they also provide the opportunity for political parties to mobilize their supporters to vote before election day. Political parties may use stronger mobilization efforts in states that allow early voting in order to maximize support.

H$_3$: Individuals who reside in states with early voting policies and who are contacted by a political party will be more likely to vote than other individuals.

<p align="center">*****************</p>

In the next section of this chapter I present a model of voter turnout that examines the hypotheses presented in this section.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this section I specify a logit model that accounts for the effects of both individual-level and state-level factors on individual voter turnout. This model is a standard logit model that predicts individual voter turnout predicted by the factors listed in the variables section of this chapter (Long and Freese, 2005). Using logit analysis allows for the control of state-level factors while pooling voters from different states together to make a representative sample. This is done using the cluster by state option in all the models of voter turnout. The sample population used for this chapter is all individuals who provided an answer to the question, "did you cast a vote for President?"

Beyond a single logit model that predicts voter turnout across all states, I also use a voter turnout model that uses only observations from states with early voting laws and a second voter turnout model that uses only observations from states without early voting laws. These two models provide the opportunity to compare the effects of predictors on voter turnout. Any differences in the estimated coefficients that are found will provide evidence that the presents of early voting changes the voting environment. I use the stata command mfx to estimate the marginal effects of the independent variables. This estimation provides a percentage change in the dependent variable (voting early) than all other independent variables are held at their means.

In the next section of this chapter I present the variables that are used in the voter turnout models. Variables are presented with their coding and the expected effect of each on voter turnout.

Variables for the Voter Turnout Models

Dependent variable. Voter turnout is a dichotomous variable coded as 1 if the individual voted in the 2004 general presidential election and 0 otherwise. The major issue with collecting self-reports on voter turnout centers on the over-reporting problem. The over-reporting problem is related to social desirability, with individuals having a tendency to say that they have voted even if they did not. This comes from the feeling in the U.S. that being a good citizen is linked to participation in elections. Studies have examined the over-reporting problem across national contexts (Karp and Brockington, 2005) and within the U.S. (Sigelman, 1982). Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy (2001) examine the determinants of over-reporting and find that there are predictable groups who over-report, namely individuals who are educated, partisan, and religious. Using the Current Population Survey Voting Supplement, Highton (2005) finds that race is a significant predictor of over-reporting voter turnout, with over-reporting rates of 3.6% for whites, 6.1% for blacks, and 5.5% for Latinos.

Reduction of cost. Policies that reduce the cost of early voting can have an effect on turnout, so I include in my models a state-level variable that measures what early voting policies each state has available for voters to use. Early voting policies are measured in one model by two dummy variables, and early voting policies are measured by one composite variable in the other model. States with in-person early voting are coded as 1 if the state allows for in-person early voting and 0 otherwise. The second dummy variable is coded as 1 if the state allows for no excuse mail-in voting and 0 otherwise. The composite variable is the number of early voting mechanisms allowed per state and is measured from 0 (no early voting policies) to 2 (both no excuse mail-in and in-person absentee). This composite measure will only be used when dummy variables for each type of early voting policy are not used. I also estimate a separate model includes the two early voting dummy variables and not the composite variable to show any differences between in-person and no-excuse mail-in voting policy effects on voter turnout. I expect that all the early voting measures have a positive effect on voter turnout.

Opportunity to vote. Opportunity is measured by two dummy variables. Specifically, individuals who are members of unions and evangelical Christian groups

will be coded as 1 for each group membership considered here. Evangelical Christian is measured as 1 for the individuals responding that they are an evangelical Christian and 0 otherwise. I hypothesize that the evangelical Christian variable has a positive effect on voter turnout due to mobilization efforts of those churches. This measure may lead to higher voter turnout the church by groups covering much of the information costs of participation, such as gathering information on when and where to vote, and providing social motivation by encouraging all members of the group to participate in the election.

Union household is coded as 1 as for homes with at least one union member and 0 otherwise. I hypothesize that the union household variable will have a positive effect on voting based on the political exposure that being in a union brings through meetings and political information provided by union representatives. In addition, unions invest substantial resources in mobilizing union members during elections, so union members should be more likely to vote as a result of these mobilization efforts. This measure may lead to higher voter turnout by groups, in this case unions, covering much of the information costs of participation, such as when and where to vote, and providing social motivation by encouraging all members of the group to participate in the election.

Mobilization. Contact by a party is measured as 1 for individuals who were contacted by a political campaign during the election and 0 for individuals who were not contacted. I hypothesize that party contact will have a positive effect on voting due to the decrease in costs associated in information gathering during the election (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Party contact is associated with the mobilization motivation of voter turnout.

Individual level variables. Included in my models of voter turnout are several independent variables that represent individual attributes found in previous research to be related to turnout behavior. Previous research has found that men are more likely to participate in politics than women (Timpone, 1998), but women have slowly begun to overtake men in participation rates. I measure sex of respondent as a binary variable coded 1 for women and 0 for men, and I hypothesize that sex is positively related voter turnout.

Over 65 years of age of respondent is measured on a scale from 18 years to 97 years of age. Over 65 years of age is related to voter turnout in a number of ways. One

way age effects voter turnout is by determining when individuals were socialized into the political system. Time of socialization translates into higher participation rates for voters who first were able to vote during WWII and early post war period. A downward trend in voting is seen from the WWII era generation to individuals who were first able to vote during the Vietnam War period (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Over 65 years of age effect on voter turnout also may be related to interest in the issues addressed by the government. Issues important to younger voters (e.g., college tuition) frequently are not addressed as much as are issues important to the elderly (e.g., taxes on retirement income). I expect over 65 years of age to have a positive effect on voter turnout. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) find that increases in age up to age 65 is associated with increased voter turnout and after age 65.

Race of respondent is measured using two variables, one variable for black respondents (coded 1 for blacks and 0 otherwise) and another variable for Hispanic respondents (coded 1 for Hispanics and 0 otherwise). In past research, scholars have found that individuals from racial minority groups are less likely to participate in politics. Historically, minority groups have participated less in politics due to few electoral options to vote for someone of a similar race or the opportunity to reelect someone with a similar race (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Thus, I hypothesize that each of my two race variables will be negatively related to voter turnout.

Married status is measured as a binary variable coded 1 for married respondents and 0 otherwise. Married individuals are more likely to vote for the same candidate due to a variety of social reasons (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Specifically, married respondents are more likely to talk together about the election and are more likely to have someone to go to the polls with (i.e., one another). I hypothesize that married status will have a positive effect on voter turnout.

Residential mobility is measured by the number of years the respondent has lived at his or her current address. Moving does bring about certain problems in relation to voting. The need to register to vote in the new location is one of the common impediments to turnout for individuals who move from one location to another. New residential locations also may bring about uncertainty about local political happenings. That uncertainty has the potential to put new residents at an informational disadvantage,

and that can result in lower levels of participation. Lastly, moving to a new residents means that potential voters also have to find new polling places and become familiar with local voting technology and procedures before voting (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Given this, I hypothesize that the number of years individuals reside at their addresses will have a positive effect on voter turnout.

Education of respondent is measured on a scale ranging from 1 (8th grade education) to 10 (graduate degree). Increased education has been found to lead to higher voter turnout by providing citizens with more information on how to navigate the political environment (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). I expect education to have a positive effect on voter turnout.

Income of respondent is measured on a scale from 1 (income of less than $10,000) to 9 (income of more than $150,000). Higher levels of income may provide an incentive to vote in elections due to the potential higher levels of taxation that may be voted on. Voters with higher levels of income also may have a job in an industry that is more directly affected by politics, such as education, law, or business. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) and Stein (1998) find that income is related to political participation, and I expect that income will have a positive effect on voter turnout.

Current employment status is measured as a binary variable, coded 1 for working respondents and 0 for all other respondents. Current employment status is hypothesized to have a positive effect on voter turnout based on findings of past research (Rosenstone and Wolfinger, 1978). Some research has suggested that unemployed individuals should have more time for politics and thus may vote at higher rates. Alternatively, others contend that unemployed individuals will be distracted from politics by their unemployed status and will be primarily searching for employment, and hence unemployed individuals should have lower rates of turnout. Rosenstone and Wolfinger (1978) find that unemployment predicts not voting, and I expect employment will have a positive effect on voting in my models.

Urban, suburban, or rural residence is measured with two dichotomous variables. Urban is measured as 1 for respondents living in urban areas and 0 otherwise. Suburban is measured as 1 for respondents residing in suburban areas and 0 otherwise. The urban and suburban variables are hypothesized to have a positive affect on voter turnout.

Residents of highly concentrated areas have more pubic service centers that are closer to homes than they are in rural areas, making participation easier in that polling places are closer. Individuals also have higher levels of social connectedness in non-rural areas, and this may translate into higher levels of voter turnout (Putnam, 2000).

Strength of party identification is measured by creating a folded measure of partisan strength with strong Democrats and Republicans coded as 3, regular Democrats and Republicans coded as 2, leaning Democrats and Republicans coded as 1, and Independents coded as 0. I expect that strength of partisan identification will have a positive effect on voting because highly partisan individuals are generally highly motivated to participate, and they have been described as having a high sense of citizen duty due to their strong partisan connection (Downs, 1957; Stein, 1998).

Network and cable television news viewership is measured by two variables, one measure for network television news use and one measure for of cable television news use. Both are measured on a scale of 1 to 7 based on the number of days a week each type of news media is viewed. I hypothesize that both network and cable television news viewership has a positive effect on voter turnout and election day voting due to the reduction in information costs associated with participation (Downs, 1957). These two news media measures represent individuals directly gathering their own information as opposed to indirectly gathering information from political campaigns or social groups. Potential voters can gain information related to candidate issue positions and practical information about when and where they can vote in their own local area.

State-level variables. State-level competition is measured using election outcome results. This measure is calculated by using the Ranney competition index for states in the year 2004. Lower numbers (i.e., where there are higher margins between the two parties) represent lower levels of competition and higher numbers (i.e., where there are lower margins between the two parties) represent higher levels of competition. I predict that competition has a positive effect on voter turnout. Competition brings more voters into the election by increasing the chance that their one vote may be the vote to win the election for their candidate. Increased competition also leads political parties to get more potential gains from higher levels of campaign spending, which can lead to more participation. The Ranney competition index also includes the number of Democrats and

Republicans in each statehouse. This component of the measure is not expected to have an effect on voter turnout rates. Overall, the Ranney index provides a general measure of state-level competition.

Registration closing date is measured on a scale ranging between 0 to 30 days before the election. Individuals in states that allow for registration a few days before the election face fewer costs than individuals in states that set a deadline of 30 days before the election. I predict registration dates to have a negative effect on voter turnout because states with early registration dates do not provide the opportunity for potential voters to register during the last few weeks of the campaign. This means that as the strongest mobilization efforts are taking place, some likely voters will not be able to participate due to the registration date passing. In other states with registration closing dates very close to or on election day unregistered potential voters who are caught up in the last days or hours of the campaign can participate in the election.

The ballot initiatives variable is measured as a simple count of all the statewide initiatives and referenda that were available for voter consideration on the 2004 ballot. A higher number of initiatives and referenda means there were a larger number of groups who provided campaign information concerning not only their specific ballot initiative, but also provided information concerning the times and dates when individuals could participate. A large number of groups providing information about the election reduces the information costs to the individual. I predict that individuals residing in states with more initiatives and referenda on the ballot will demonstrate a higher propensity to cast a vote.

Gubernatorial and senate races also are opportunities for political actors to mobilize supporters. Political races are coded with a dummy variable for states that had a gubernatorial race on the 2004 ballot and with a dummy variable for states that had a senatorial race on the 2004 ballot. I predict that individuals in states with more political races will be more likely to turnout than individuals in states with no gubernatorial or senate races. Increasing the number of electoral choices provides more motivation for individuals to turnout because one trip to the polls will allow them to affect statewide election outcomes and the presidential election outcome (Tolbert, Donovan, King, and Bowler, 2008).

Political spending by the two major presidential candidates of the 2004 election is measured by adding the money spent by both candidates, their national committees, and special interests groups. The total spending amount is calculated by dividing the total amount of money spent by the population of the state to produce a per capita measure of political spending by state (Shaw). I predict that higher levels of state political spending will have a positive effect on voter turnout.

Differences between early voting and non-early voting states. In order to compare turnout for states with early voting and states with election day voting, I estimate separate models for these two sets of states. The different voting environments in early voting and non-early voting states may have an effect on the significance of some of the variables and the magnitude of the coefficients.

FINDINGS

I present the findings from Chapter 6 in four different tables. The four tables represent four different voter turnout models. The four tables include estimated logit effects of each of the independent variables and the marginal effects of each of the variables on the dependent variable voter turnout. Table 6.1 shows the findings of the voter turnout model that includes all individuals in my data set. The model in Table 6.1 includes an ease of early vote variable to account for the availability of mail-in and in-person early voting policies. Table 6.2 shows the estimates of my voter turnout model with the ease of early vote broken into two dummy variables. Table 6.3 shows the estimates of my voter turnout model from individuals residing in states with no early voting policies. This model does not include the ease of early voting variable because the states used in the model all have values of 0 for that specific variable and does not include individuals from non-early voting states. Table 6.4 shows the findings of a voter turnout model that includes all individuals residing in states with at least one type of early voting option. This fourth model includes all the variables from the model in Table 6.3 that allow for a comparison of marginal effects across the models shown in Table 6.3 and Table 6.4. The next section of this chapter examines the four models and their findings.

Table 6.1 shows that there are many significant predictors of voter turnout. The most important finding from the model shown in Table 6.1 is the positive and significant

predictor ease of early voting. This means that the presents of one or more early voting policies in a state leads to an increase in the probability that an individual will cast a ballot. My opportunity hypothesis is supported with the significant finding of the ease of early voting variable. Specifically, with increased opportunity to cast a ballot individuals who reside in states with early voting laws are more likely to cast any type of ballot. This may be do to individuals being informed of early voting possibilities well before election day through social institutions, work place interactions, media outlets, or political advertizing. Individuals in early voting states may hear about early voting becoming available and start to think about the electoral choices they can make on election day. In this respect, states with early voting are reminding the potential voters of the upcoming electoral choices they much make. This awareness of an upcoming election may not be as prevalent in states that do not allow for any type of early voting.

The other significant variables are over 65 years of age, level of income, suburban, party strength, network television news, cable television news, and the Ranney competition index. All of these variables are in the predicted direction and are associated with an increase in the probability of casting a vote. Specifically, individuals over the age of 65 are a strong voting group due to their socialization (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993), social groups and ties (Putnam, 2000), fewer time constraints (Downs, 1957), and dependence on social security or other benefits provided by the government.

Level of income is a significant positive predictor of voting.   One of the theories on why level of income has an effect on voter turnout is that individuals with high levels of income pay more taxes and are more interested in how their taxes are being spent. Also, individuals in professional jobs may belong to a union or be more likely to discuss politics with coworkers (Roenstone and Hansen, 1993).

Living in the suburbs was expected to have a positive effect on voter turnout, but suburban residence is found to be a negative significant predictor of voting. This may be because suburban residents are too busy to cast a vote or that the polls are in a inconvenient location (Gimpel and Schuknecht, 2003). Party strength, as expected, is found to be a significant positive predictor of voter turnout. Partisan strength measures the commitment to a specific party and I find that individuals who have more at stake, in terms of party, are more likely to vote. Party support may be considered in this sense to

be similar to supporting a favorite team, and supporting your team can provide intrinsic benefits that cover all cost of participation (Downs, 1957).

The two news variables, cable and network television news, are both found to be positive and significant predictors of voter turnout. Watching any type of television news should reduce the costs of voting because the potential voter all ready has information about who the candidates are and their issue positions. Individuals who are in the habit of keeping up with the news do not have to do any additional information seeking, or homework, to take part in an election. Finally, the Ranney competition index is found to be a positive significant predictor of voting. When competition in an election is high, every vote is perceived to have the potential to make the difference. As show in Table 6.1, I find that the closer the election is, the higher the voter turnout. Overall my model provides a typical view of the modern electorate with many of the traditional high voter turnout factors, including over 65 years of age and income.

Several of the non-significant variables shown in Table 6.1 were unexpected. The most noticeable are the education variable and the state-level variables of registration closing date, number of ballots, statewide elections, and spending per capita. Education is a common significant predictor in the voter turnout literature (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Timpone, 2000), but was not shown to be in this study. The state-level variable coefficients also are not significant with the exception of the state-level composite early voting variable.

The last column of Table 6.1 shows the marginal effects of all the estimated coefficients. These marginal effects allow for interpretation of the estimated coefficients as a percentage change in the change of casting a vote in the 2004 presidential election. The marginal effect of the variable ease of early voting in column 2 of Table 6.1 shows the change in probability for ease of early voting is 2.2%. This estimation means that one early voting policy in a state increases the probability of casting any type of vote by 2.2% and two types of early voting in a state increases the probability of casting any type of vote by 4.4%. This finding suggests that the addition of early voting policies can lead to an increase in turnout.

Table 6.2 shows the estimated model from Table 6.1with the ease of early voting measure broken into two variables, in-person early voting policy and no-excuse absentee

voting policy. Neither of the two early voting coefficients was found to be significant.
This means that while early voting policies in the aggregate were found to predict higher
voter turnout, they were not significant predictors of voter turnout when taken as two
separate policies. This finding supports the idea that state-level laws can have an effect
on overall voter turnout rate but not with a one-policy solution. The findings related to
the early voting policies suggest that election policies need to be examined in a group or
bundle as well as individually. The other significant coefficients in Table 6.2 are the
same as in Table 6.1 and are in the expected directions.

The last two tables are used to compare the significant predictors of voter turnout
across states with early voting policies and without early voting policies. The significant
findings shown in Table 6.3 from the non-early voting states include party strength,
network television news use, cable television news use, NRA membership, registration
closing date, and number of ballot measures. The significant findings shown in Table 6.4
from the early voting states include over 65 years of age, level of income, suburban
residency, network television news use, Ranney competition, and registration closing
date. Interesting findings from the models shown in Table 6.3 and Table 6.4 can be
found in the differences between the early voting and non-early voting states. These
differences come in the form of significant variables (age 65 years and older and the
Ranney competition) in the early voting states that are not significant in the non-early
voting states. The significance of the Ranney competition variable in early voting states
is important because this finding means that increased competition is leading to an
increase in voter turnout only in states with early voting laws. Age over 65 years also is
only significant in early voting states leading to the conclusion that elderly voters will
turnout in states with early voting.

There are notable differences between the significant coefficients in the non-early
voting states and the early voting states. First, registration closing date has a significant
positive coefficient in the early voting state model and a significant negative coefficient
in the non-early voting state model. This means that states with early voting and short
registration closing dates have higher voter turnout. Having a registration closing date
close to election day appears to remove barriers to voting in early voting states. In the
non-early voting state context, registration closing date acts as a barrier to participation.

Second, in states with high levels of competition, states with early voting have more turnout than non-early voting states. High levels of competition appear to lead to higher participation rates when potential voters have more access to the ballot box. Perhaps in early voting states voters can see that an election will be competitive or close and bank their vote early to guard against something coming up on election day. Third, the party strength coefficient is only significant and positive in the non-early voting model. This provides evidence that in states with no early voting, and thus higher barriers to participation, high levels of party strength become more important in predicting voter turnout. Fourth, number of ballot measures is only significant and positive in the non-early voting model. Again, the number of ballot measures act as an extra pull to the polls, but may require more time to gather information on all referenda prior to casting a ballot. These findings support the idea that in state contexts with a high demand on voting, (i.e., where the election is close or there are potential voters with free time) early voting increases voter turnout.

The overall findings from the voter turnout models provide evidence that early voting policies can lead to more voting participation and that some variables become significant when examined in states with early voting. These findings suggest that state-level context can have can effect on voter turnout.

CONCLUSION

A great deal of voter turnout literature focuses on the low voter turnout rate found in the U.S. compared to other western democracies. Both the federal government (through HAVA) and state governments (through registration and early voting polices) address the low voter turnout issue. This chapter directly addresses early voting as a solution to the voter turnout issue. The first major finding form Chapter 6 is that the number of early voting policies does have a positive effect on individual voter turnout. As suggested in Chapter 2, the finding from this chapter suggest that many states still have the use of early voting laws as a viable option for improving political participation.

The second major finding from Chapter 6 is that state-level context has an effect on the factors that predict voter turnout. The models used in this chapter were meant to examine the differences between early and non-early voting states and I find that there

137

are individuals choosing to cast ballots early that may lead to in increase in overall participation. Living in a state with early voting laws appears to be one of the differences between voting and non-voting individuals. Early voting laws allow individuals to participate in elections with more convenience and are predicted to increase voter turnout when measured as an early voting policy count variable.

The examination of the differences between early voting states and non-early voting states is important due to the political consequences of electoral participation. The predictability of the models presented in this chapter could be improved by adding more observations across different elections. An alternative measure of early voting could be used that is similar to the measurement of registration closing date. The alternative measure of early voting would account for the number of days before election day that early voting opens. This would better measure the amount of opportunity that early voting gives voters in a certain state, and may be more predictive of turnout that the measure of early voting which simple categories states as allowing or not allowing early voting. In the next chapter I present a future research agenda for early voting research and summarize the findings from this dissertation.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The purpose of the research presented in the previous six chapters is to increase knowledge of how early voting effects turnout, who early votes, and the affect and multitude of factors on early voting. As noted in Chapter 1, one measure of how well a democracy functions is to measure the number of eligible citizens who exercise their right to vote. In the U.S., participation rates are low compared to those of other Western Democracies with turnout rates between 55% and 60% for presidential elections. Such low turnout may be symptomatic of a variety of factors such as the majoritarian structure of the U.S. electoral system, which creates a sort of apathy among the electorate due to "wasted votes." Other factors affecting low turnout may be costs in terms of time or information gathering. Regardless of the cause of low participation in the U.S., the cure, according to some theorists, must be found in order to ensure the health of the U.S. democracy. Classical participation theorists view active participation of the electorate as necessary to a strong democracy. From the classical stance, the identification of factors that increase voter turnout as extremely important. Early voting opportunities were found in this dissertation to be a viable option for state to increase turnout.

On the other hand, low participation in the U.S. is not always viewed as necessarily negative. Elitist participation theorists see active participation as not necessary to a strong democracy because only a subset of the population has the resources to make good vote choices. From an elitist stance, the identification of factors that increase voter turnout are not the primary focus when looking for ways to maintain or increase the health of the U.S. democracy. The potential that early voting has to make the voter process more convenient for the subset of eligible voters who do exercise their right to vote is of interest to those of a more elitist view. Early voting opportunities were shown in this dissertation to be a way to increase voting convenient for those citizens who typically vote.

As early voting policies were passed over the last 20 years, they were believed to produce a dramatic increase in participation in U.S. elections. Based on the early research on early voting we would expect to see increases in voter turnout by 10%. Based on the research in this dissertation, I find that each early voting policy increases the probability that an individual will cast a vote by only 2.2%. While early voting

opportunities do not represent a panacea for increasing voter turnout, they do affect a significant increase, specifically when we consider that only half of the states have early voting policies. The relatively low increase in voter turnout translates into traditional voters moving to early voting from election day voting without bringing in new non-traditional voters.

Looking at the political implications of the expansion of early voting policies, the expected political advantage of an expanding electorate is for the Democratic party. The Democratic party coalition includes individuals that are not considered typical voters, such as minorities, the young, and the poor. Since early voting presumably makes the voting process easier, it expected that early voting policies would cause an increase in voter turnout among those less typical Democratic voting cohorts. As with the Motor Voter Law which increased the ease of voting, I have found that early voting does not dramatically increase the level of voter turnout.

Early voting can also be examined in a comparative context. Some counties in Europe, including Estonia, have used early voting as well as e-voting in national and local elections (Alvarez, Hall, Trechsel, 2009). The use of e-voting brings up similar questions as early voting does. Questions such as who uses the new voting technology, which political party gains from the new technology, and will the new technology increase participation will need to be examined in order to understand how e-voting may potentially effect election outcomes.

Regardless of the reason early voting is considered important, the potential it has to affect the ease and accessibility of voting warrants the attention of those who wish to better understand the state of U.S. democracy. In order to examine early voting in the U.S., Chapters 2 through 6 of this dissertation address different questions related to factors that influence early voting policy and what the affect of early voting options and opportunity has on the electorate. The major questions addressed are what affects do state-level factors have on early voting policy passage (Chapter 2), how early voting affects party mobilization efforts (Chapter 3), how early voters differ from election day voters (Chapter 4), what factors predict early voters (Chapter 5), and does early voting affect voter turnout (Chapter 6).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN THIS DISSERTATION

The effects of state-level factors on early voting policy passage are addressed in Chapter 2 through examining the history and expansion of early voting since 1980. Nearly half of the states currently have early voting laws of one type or another (i.e., no-excuse absentee or in-person early voting. Based on results from the state-level models presented in chapter 2, the growth of in-person early voting laws appears to be due to state-level ideological factors (i.e., conservative citizen ideology, Democratic statehouse control, passage of the motor voter act, statehouse times gini coefficient and registration closing date). Neighbor effects (i.e., diffusion) are shown to have a positive effect on any early voting policy passage and no effect in my models of in-person or no-excuse absentee early voting policy passage. I find little support for the idea that early voting policies diffuse in a similar manner as other policies such as the use of a state lottery or levels of welfare support. The findings of chapter 2 are not meant to describe what should be done in order to increase the likelihood of a state passing early voting policy, but rather are meant to be taken as a description of the type of state political environment that is conducive to the passage of early voting policy.

The manner in which early voting influences state party mobilization efforts is addressed in Chapter 3 through the use of interviews with state-level political party representatives. These representatives talked about the changes in mobilization due to the change in early voting laws. The findings of Chapter 3 indicate political rallies immediately followed by early voting were utilized for early voting mobilization more so by Democratic state parties than Republican state parties. Phone calls and targeted messages were used more in Republican early voting mobilization efforts that Democratic early voting mobilization efforts. Despite differences in the specific method of early voting mobilization that state party representatives discussed using, a major theme emerged across all interviews with regards to the costs and benefits of early voting mobilization. Representatives from both parties recognized that early voting created more opportunities to mobilize their supporters, but also noted that early voting mobilization is costly. Overall, both parties saw early voting as positive, but neither thought that early voting mobilization greatly influence the vote outcomes in their state for the 2004 election.

The ways in which early voters differ from election day voters is addressed in Chapter 4 through a descriptive examination of demographic, political, and state-level factors. Demographic factors of age and type of area lived in are found to describe some differences between early and election day voters with early voters being older and, regardless of age, more likely to live in urban areas. State-level factors pertaining to the length or registration and the number of statewide initiatives and referenda on the ballot also describes some differences between early voting and election day voters. Early voters tend to live in state with long registration process. Early voters also are found to live in state, with few statewide initiatives and referenda on the ballot. Interestingly political factors such as ideology and partisanship strength are not found to describe a difference between early and election day voters.

The findings of Chapter 4 are not meant to be predictive of who among voters will choose to early vote. The findings simply identify factors that were found to be different for groups who early vote compared to groups that election day vote. The identification that observable differences do exist between early and election day voters is important because those differences indicate that there may be factors that are in fact predictive of who among voters will choose to early vote. The demographic factors and state-level factors that were found to describe differences among early and election day voters informed the selection of factors examined in Chapter 5 to predict early voting use.

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to examine factors that predict early voting, not just describe differences between early and election day voting as Chapter 4 does. Convenience factors for voting are found to predict who early vote or election day vote with being employed predicting election day voting area predicting early voting. Early voting also is predicted by the demographic factor of level of income. In addition to the convenience factor of being employed election day voting is predicted by the state-level factor of living in a state with fewer direct democracy measures on the ballot.

The identification of predicable differences between early voters and election day voters is important in that such differences show the two groups of voters to be unique groups in the electorate that may be targeted in the unique ways. The identification of early voters as a unique groups of voters gave rise to the questions of whether or not early

voters were a new group of people who did not vote prior to early voting opportunities. This question is addressed in Chapter 6.

The purpose of Chapter 6 is to examine whether the passage of early voting policies affects an increase in voter turnout. If early voting opportunities do affect an increase is overall turnout, than early voters are, at least in part, a group who previously did not vote. That is, early voting opportunities act to increase political participation. The findings of Chapter 6 show that early voting policies do have a small but significant effect on getting more individuals to the polls. This means that early voting policies lead to support among classical theorists by expanding the electorate as well as elite theorists by making the voting process easier for individuals who would have normally voted.

The results from this dissertation contribute to the discussion concerning the different effects of early voting on the U.S. political system. Even when electoral institutional and individual-level changes are small, the changes have the opportunity to change different aspects of the political system from how parties mobilize the electorate to who choose to exercise their right to vote.

EARLY VOTING POLICY TODAY AND BEYOND

During the completion of this dissertation the implementation of early voting policies has changed and become more flexible than I expected. In some cases early voting state have changed the rules regarding the number of days that early voting options are available. Specifically, states have decreased the number of days that early voting in available before election day. This may be due to two different reasons. First, states may want to save money by limiting their number of early voting days. Cutting back a few days of early voting does not change the nature of the state election but only limits the possible effects of the early vote.

Second, states may not want to make the voting process more easy or convenient. The limiting of early voting can be viewed in a number of different ways. One view is that the political parties may want to limit the use of early voting in order to increase their chances of winning an election. This makes sense when taking the view that in some states the majority party would be able to keep control of the statehouse with lower voter turnout if the majority of the state population would vote against them. A second view is

that early voting may not conform to a secure voting system. Different models of early voting such as mail-in and on-line voting have brought up security concerns. Some states may wish to avoid such security issues by focusing just on election day voting.

THE CONTUNIED STUDY OF EARLY VOTING

Towards an ease of voting measure

In this dissertation I examine early voting policies and other state-level electoral policies as individual policies and not as a group or collection. Early voting research could be expanded by combining all types of electoral policies into one ease of voting measure. All of the individual measures I examined in this dissertation (i.e., in-person early voting, no-excuse absentee, and registration closing date) focus on the relative ease or difficulty of casting a vote. These measures could be combined using a factor analysis that determines an overall ease of voting score. More factors of ease of voting could be added such as voter ID requirement, how many polling places there are in the local area, how long the polls are open, and how many days early voting is available. The factor analysis variable could then be tested in a model similar to the voter turnout model used in Chapter 6 in order to determine if ease of voting brings more people to the polls and a method of vote model used in Chapter 5 to determine if ease of voting contributes to voters deciding to vote early. Combining all ease of voting measures together also should allow for comments about which single institution is the most effective in bringing individuals to the polls or if a grouping of institutions lead to more participation. The debate on how easy or difficult it is to cast a ballot will continue but the wide range of electoral institutions available for study should allow the opportunity to find which institutions are effective in bringing individuals to the polls or keeping them away.

Examining the day-to-day of early voting

A second way to examine how early voting affects the U.S. political system would be to directly view the inner workings of a campaign by talking directly to early voters as they come out of the polling place. This embedded method requires many hours of watching campaign workers do their work or standing outside of polling places and asking early voters why they went to the polls early. This idea is closely related to the examination of methods of mobilization in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. Direct

interaction between subject, in this case political party and the voting public, allows for a clear view of individual political behavior. By talking to people coming out of the polling place a deeper understanding of what brought people to the polls that specific day could be found. For example, questions such as why did you early vote today, do you usually vote on election day, and would you have voted if early voting was not available? There are many different patterns that could emerge, from people leaving work a few minutes early, to retried voters, to parents with three kids.

Early voting and internet voting

Another avenue for future research in the use of technology and voting is at the ballot box, specifically if the ballot box becomes a virtual place with internet voting. As internet or e-voting becomes more of a possibility, there are new questions that will need to be addressed. Those questions are similar to the questions addressed in this dissertation about early voting, but have aspects that are unique to e-voting. Specifically, questions relating to how to provide a secure method for casting a ballot over the internet, the possible digital divide between individuals who have internet connections and those who do not, and whether or not if older voters will embrace the new voting technology like they have with early voting will need to be addressed.

THE FUTURE OF EARLY VOTING

With the recent reduction of early voting days in many states the future of early voting remains uncertain. While I think that some states will decreases the number of days for early voting I expect that early voting will remain an option for voters in states with current laws. For states that do not have early voting laws, I expect that most will pass some type of in-person early voting policy. Also, I expect that early voting laws will begin to cluster around allowing early voting for one week before election day in all states. This will effectively make in-person early voting a national-level policy.

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APPENDICES

Table 2.2: State-level variable measurement

Variable	Measurement	Data Source	Value
In Person Early Voting Policy	Dummy for Passage of In Person Early Voting Policy	Gronke	0 or 1
No-Excuse Absentee Policy	Dummy for Passage of In No-Excuse Absentee Voting Policy	Gronke	0 or 1
Neighbor State	Dummy for States Sharing a Common Border	Author	0 or 1
2000 Year Event	Dummy for Years After 2000	Author	0 or 1
Party Control of State	Count Variable of State Government Held By Democrats (Upper House, Lower House, and Gov. Office)	Book of the States	0 to 3
State Public Opinion	State Public Opinion from Conservative (value 0) to Liberal (value 100) Measured by State Opinion Polls	Berry	.96 to 97
Voter Turnout	Voting Eligible Population Measure of State-Level Voter Turnout	Popkin and McDonald	20% to 80%
Voter Turnout Square	Voting Eligible Population Turnout Squared	Popkin and McDonald	4% to 60%
Income Inequality	State-level Gini Coefficient for Income Inequality Measuring State-Level Wealth Concentration	US Census	.16 to .57
Population Density	Population of State Divided by Number of Square Miles per 1000 Square Miles	Book of the States	.40 to 1170
Motor Voter Passage	Dummy for Passage of Motor Voter Law Before 1993	Counsel of State Legislatures	0 or 1
Registration Closing Date	Number of Days Before Election that Registration Closes	Counsel of State Legislatures	0 to 30

155

Table 2.3: Predicting no-excuse absentee early voting policy passage, 1980-2006

Variable	No-Excuse Absentee Passage	
	b	z
Diffusion		
Absentee Voting State Neighbor (+)	0.006	1.19
Events		
Event Year 2000 (+)	0.495	1.12
State-Level Political		
Statehouse Party Control (+)	1.773	0.88
State Citizen Ideology (+)	0.001	0.07
State-level Voter Turnout (+)	-10.320	-0.44
State-level Voter Turnout Squared (-)	8.380	0.41
State-Level Demographic		
Gini Coefficient (+)	18.442	1.40
Population Density (+)	-0.003	-1.48
Gini X Statehouse Party Control (+)	-4.348	-0.80
Early Policy Adoption		
Motor Voter Passage (+)	-0.339	-0.97
Registration Closing Date (+)	-0.017	-1.26
Constant	-4.807	-0.62
N	288	
χ^2	13.24	

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient and directional predictions use one-tailed tests.

***prob < 0.01
** prob < 0.05
* prob < 0.10

Table 2.4: Predicting in-person early voting policy passage, 1980-2006

	In-Person Early Voting Passage	
Variable	b	z
Diffusion		
In-Person Voting State Neighbor (+)	-0.146	-1.65
Events		
Event Year 2000 (+)	3.440	1.34
State-Level Political		
Statehouse Party Control (+)	-27.392	-1.75*
State Citizen Ideology (+)	0.235	1.74*
State-Level Voter Turnout (+)	-78.961	-0.39
State-Level Voter Turnout Squared (-)	116.537	0.66
Gini X Statehouse Party Control (+)	75.703	1.98*
State-Level Demographic		
Gini Coefficient (+)	-123.174	-1.15
Population Density (+)	-0.016	-0.95
Early Policy Adoption		
Motor Voter Passage (+)	10.361	1.93*
Registration Closing Date (+)	0.215	1.91*
Constant	38.173	0.60

N	256
χ^2	15.34

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient and directional predictions use one-tailed tests.

***prob < 0.01

** prob < 0.05

* prob < 0.10

Table 2.5: Predicting any early voting policy passage, 1980-2006

Variable	Any Early Voting Passage	
	b	z
Diffusion		
Absentee Voting State Neighbor (+)	-0.013	-1.14
In-Person Voting State Neighbor (+)	0.015	1.98**
Events		
Event Year 2000 (+)	0.481	1.09
State-Level Political		
Statehouse Party Control (+)	1.134	0.52
State Citizen Ideology (+)	0.000	0.03
State-Level Voter Turnout (+)	-9.862	-0.42
State-Level Voter Turnout Squared (-)	7.698	0.37
Gini X Statehouse Party Control (+)	-2.501	-0.43
State-Level Demographic		
Gini Coefficient (+)	19.503	1.43
Population Density (+)	-0.003	-1.60
Early Policy Adoption		
Motor Voter Passage (+)	-0.167	-0.47
Registration Closing Date (+)	-0.017	-1.25
Constant	-5.297	-0.67

N	224
χ^2	16.28

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient and directional predictions use one-tailed tests.

***prob < 0.01

** prob < 0.05

* prob < 0.10

Table 2.6: Predicting no-excuse absentee early voting policy passage, 1980-2006

Variable	No-Excuse Absentee Passage No Interactions	
	b	z
Diffusion		
Absentee Voting State Neighbor (+)	0.007	-1.09
Events		
Event Year 2000 (+)	0.710	1.12
State-Level Political		
Statehouse Party Control (+)	0.222	1.09
State Citizen Ideology (+)	0.002	0.17
State-level Voter Turnout (+)	-0.624	-0.21
State-Level Demographic		
Gini Coefficient (+)	11.101	1.15
Population Density (+)	-0.004	-1.14
Early Policy Adoption		
Motor Voter Passage (+)	-0.310	-0.80
Registration Closing Date (+)	-0.018	-1.05
Constant	-5.041	-1.16
N	228	
χ^2	3.646	

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient and directional predictions use one-tailed tests.
***prob < 0.01
** prob < 0.05
* prob < 0.10

Table 2.7: Predicting in-person early voting policy passage, 1980-2006

	In-Person Early Voting Passage No Interactions	
Variable	b	z
Diffusion		
In-Person Voting State Neighbor (+)	-0.029	-1.45
Events		
Event Year 2000 (+)	0.147	0.22
State-Level Political		
Statehouse Party Control (+)	0.265	0.86
State Citizen Ideology (+)	-0.031	-0.89
State-Level Voter Turnout (+)	6.426	0.67
State-Level Demographic		
Gini Coefficient (+)	9.006	0.43
Population Density (+)	-0.003	-0.95
Early Policy Adoption		
Motor Voter Passage (+)	1.273	0.93
Registration Closing Date (+)	0.015	0.40
Constant	-8.652	-0.91
N	256	
χ^2	2.48	

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient and directional predictions use one-tailed tests.

***prob < 0.01

** prob < 0.05

* prob < 0.10

Table 2.8: Predicting any early voting policy passage, 1980-2006

| | Any Early Voting Passage No Interactions | |
| | ------------------------ | |
Variable	b	z
Diffusion		
Absentee Voting State Neighbor (+)	-0.013	-1.22
In-Person Voting State Neighbor (+)	0.015**	2.02
Events		
Event Year 2000 (+)	0.524	1.21
State-Level Political		
Statehouse Party Control (+)	0.224	1.47
State Citizen Ideology (+)	0.001	0.09
State-Level Voter Turnout (+)	-1.144	-0.45
State-Level Demographic		
Gini Coefficient (+)	14.125**	2.13
Population Density (+)	-0.003	-1.69
Early Policy Adoption		
Motor Voter Passage (+)	-0.143	-0.41
Registration Closing Date (+)	-0.017	-1.27
Constant	-5.783	-1.99
N	224	
χ^2	16.59	

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient and directional predictions use one-tailed tests.

***prob < 0.01

** prob < 0.05

* prob < 0.10

Table 3.1: Breakdown of party contacts and state early voting laws

	Republican	Democrat
New Early Voting State	2	1
Old Early Voting State	3	1
Non Early Voting State	2	3

Table 3.2: Revised Breakdown of party contacts and state early voting laws

	Republican (7)	Democrat (5)
Early Voting State	5	2
Non Early Voting State	2	3

Table 3.3: Summary of early voting mobilization techniques (Question 1)

	Republican (7)	Democrat (5)
Political Rally	29% (2)	60% (3)
Door-to-Door	86% (6)	80% (4)
Flyers	100% (7)	100% (5)
Phone Calls	100% (7)	60% (3)

Note: Count numbers and percentages are by party

Table 3.4: Differences in techniques (Question 2)

	Republican (7)	Democrat (5)
Political Rally		+ 31%
Door-to-Door	+ 6%	
Flyers	NA	NA
Phone Calls	+ 40%	

Note: Percentage differences are between the use figures in Table 3.4

Table 3.5: Summary of early voting as helping candidate (Question 3)

	Republican (7)	Democrat (5)
Yes	14% (1)	40% (2)
No	86% (6)	60% (3)

Note: Percentages are calculated by party

Table 3.6: Use of targeted early voting mobilization (Question 4)

	Republican (7)	Democrat (5)
Targeted	71% (5)	40% (2)
No	29% (2)	60% (4)

Note: Percentages are calculated by party

Appendix 3.1 Interview Script for: State Party/Interest Group Representative

Thank you _____ for taking the time answer a few questions about early voting. I will start off with some general questions about early voting before moving into specifics. To ensure our definitions are the same I consider early voting as in-person or advance voting as well as no-excuse mail-in voting. Feel free to make distinctions between these two types of early voting.

1) How have your mobilization strategies changed due to early voting? Does early voting make your mobilization strategies more efficient?

2) Have your mobilization strategies changed due to the actions of other parties and groups? How are other parties and groups utilizing early voting?

3) How has early voting increased the changes of your candidate being elected? How has early voting decreased the changes of your candidate being elected?

4) Do you make any type of targeted mobilization for specific types of voters during early voting and to which groups? Do these groups include new voters?

5) The media describe early voting as simply expanding election day, do you feel that this is an accurate description of early voting? Why not? Do you view early voting as a policy tool that leads to increased voter turnout? How has early voting made your job easier or more difficult?

Appendix 4.1: Independent Variables

Variable	Measurement	Source
Sex	1=Female, 0=Male	NAES
Age	18-97 Years Old	NAES
Black	1=Black, 0=otherwise	NAES
Hispanic	1=Hispanic, 0=otherwise	NAES
Education	0= Did not finish High School to 10= doctoral degree	NAES
Married	1-married, 0=otherwise	NAES
Working	1=Currently full-time working, 0=otherwise	NAES
Years at address	1 to 97 for number of years at current address	NAES
Suburban	1=Suburban, 0=Rural	NAES
Urban	1=Urban, 0=Rural	NAES
Income	1= less than $15,000 per year to 9= more than $250,000 per year	NAES
Union	1=Union member living in household 0=otherwise	NAES
Party Strength	0=Non-Partisan, 1= Weak Partisan, 2=Partisan 3=Strong Partisan	NAES
Care for Election Outcome	1=Yes, 0=No	NAES
Evangelical	1=Identify as an evangelical Christian, 0=otherwise	NAES
Network TV Use	0=No Network TV use to 7=Network TV use everyday	NAES
Cable TV Use	0=No Cable TV use to 7=Cable TV use everyday	NAES
Ranney Competition Index	.5 to 1 from Low Levels of Competition to High	Politics of the American States
Statewide Races	Count variable of number of statewide races from 0 to 2	Book of the States
Per Capita Political Spending	Dollars Spent per capita by party	Daron Shaw
Ballot Measures	Number of ballot measures count from 0 to 16	www.ncsl.org
Registration Closing Date	Number of days before election day that registration closes, ranges from 0 (no closing date) to 30 (closes one month before)	Book of the States
Early Voting Policies	Count variable of number of early voting policies from 0 to 2	Kinsky 2005

Continued from Appendix 4.1

Accurate Vote	1=Very Doubtful to 4 Very Confident	NAES
Election Makes a Difference	-2=Strong Disagree to 2 Strong Agree	NAES
Feel Guilty if You Did Not Vote	-2=Strong Disagree to 2 Strong Agree	NAES
It is American to Vote	-2=Strong Disagree to 2 Strong Agree	NAES
Party Strength	0=No Party Affiliation 3=Strong	NAES
Attend Religious Services	0= Never to 3=+1 per Week	NAES
Follow Politics	0=Never to 3=Most of the Time	NAES
Discusses Politics	0=Never to 3=Most of the Time	NAES
Perception of Personal Economy	0= Poor View to 3=Excellent	NAES
Perception of National Economy	0= Poor View to 3=Excellent	NAES
Country is Going in Right Direction	1= Right Direction, 0=Wrong Direction	NAES
Party Identification	1=Strong Democratic to 7= Strong Republican	NAES
Ideology	1=Strong Liberal to 5=Strong Conservative	NAES

Table 4.1: Mean and F-test of independent variables

Variable	Number of Cases	Mean Early Voter	Mean Election Day	Mean Non-Voters	ANOVA F-Statistic
Demographic Variables					
Sex	2357	0.508	0.583	0.584	1.25
Age	2324	51.279	47.767	39.887	2.80***
Income	2099	5.831	5.762	3.864	16.01***
Education	2320	5.828	5.681	3.894	21.01***
Married	2357	0.631	0.601	0.450	12.38***
Black	2357	0.105	0.066	0.103	4.08***
Hispanic	2357	0.026	0.049	0.299	106.36***
Employed	2357	0.561	0.553	0.526	1.44
Years at Residents	2327	11.090	12.149	6.996	1.45
Urban	2320	0.334	0.287	0.275	0.81
Suburban	2320	0.446	0.503	0.509	0.20
Union	2357	0.114	0.138	0.155	1.92
Evangelical	2357	0.421	0.342	0.374	0.07
Network News Viewership	2342	2.824	3.154	1.976	4.64***
Cable News Viewership	2346	3.717	3.342	2.003	8.67***
Number of Kids	2357	0.657	0.814	1.137	10.00***
Part Time Employment	2357	0.105	0.127	0.192	6.21***
Political Variables					
How Soon Mind Was Made Up	975	2.511	2.423	N/A	0.34
Bush Vote	1558	0.431	0.472	N/A	0.26
American to Vote	1324	0.878	0.828	-0.454	26.38***
Guilty if You Don't Vote	1314	1.104	1.008	0.045	22.50***
Elections Make a Difference	1337	1.468	1.366	0.878	10.59***
My Vote Will be Counted Accurately	1873	2.548	2.666	N/A	0.93
Ideology Folded	2320	2.177	2.249	2.297	1.26
Party Strength	2152	2.221	2.223	1.826	11.55***
State-Level Variables					
Registration Closing Date	2350	26.359	23.382	24.597	2.18
Ballot Measures	2350	2.754	3.603	4.134	6.27***
Governors Race	2350	0.167	0.144	0.117	7.11***
Senate Race	2350	0.544	0.759	0.731	0.18
Rep. Spending per Capita	2350	3091775	4360669	4060975	5.66***
Dem. Spending per Capita	2350	3541171	4669610	4348184	6.04***
State Population	2350	8340695	8749496	1.03E+07	3.27***
State Wide Elections	2350	0.711	0.904	0.848	3.57***

*prob < .05
**prob < .01
***prob < .001

Table 4.2: T-test between early voters and election day voters

Variable	Number of Cases	Difference	T-ratio	Prob.
Demographic Variables				
Sex	1317	-0.024	-1.54	0.123
Age	1299	0.001	2.27	0.023**
Income	1190	0.001	0.34	0.734
Education	1300	0.002	0.67	0.5
Married	1317	0.010	0.64	0.524
Black	1317	0.049	1.59	0.111
Hispanic	1317	-0.040	-1.09	0.274
Employed	1317	0.002	0.18	0.86
Years at Residents	1302	-0.001	-0.84	0.403
Urban	1317	0.036	2.12	0.034**
Suburban	1317	-0.043	-2.75	0.006**
Union	1317	-0.016	-0.71	0.476
Evangelical	1317	0.028	1.7	0.089
Network	1308	-0.004	-1.26	0.209
Cable	1311	0.004	1.34	0.182
Kids	1317	-0.009	-1.37	0.171
Part Time	1317	-0.016	-0.68	0.5
Political Variables				
How Soon Mind Was Made Up	952	0.013	1.05	0.294
Bush Vote	632	-0.014	-0.6	0.551
American to Vote	1291	0.003	0.61	0.544
Guilty if You Don't Vote	1280	0.004	0.79	0.432
Elections Make a Difference	1302	0.004	0.64	0.521
My Vote Will be Counted Accurately	1281	0.004	0.39	0.697
Ideology Folded	1298	-0.012	-1.08	0.282
Party Strength	1192	-0.001	-0.02	0.982
State-Level Variables				
Registration	1313	0.003	3.48	0.001***
Ballots	1313	-0.003	-1.73	0.083*
Gov Race	1313	0.014	0.65	0.518
Sen Race	1313	-0.089	-5.07	0***
Rep Spending	1313	-0.000	-1.71	0.088*
Dem Spending	1313	-0.000	-1.38	0.168
Population	1313	-0.000	-0.58	0.565
State Wide Elections	1313	-0.042	-3.29	0.001***

*prob < .05
**prob < .01
***prob < .001

Appendix 5.1: Independent Variables

Variable	Measurement	Source
Sex	1=Female, 0=Male	NAES
Over 65 Years of Age	65 or More Years Old	NAES
Black	1=Black, 0=otherwise	NAES
Hispanic	1=Hispanic, 0=otherwise	NAES
Education	0= Did not finish High School to 10= doctoral degree	NAES
Married	1-married, 0=otherwise	NAES
Working	1=Currently full-time working, 0=otherwise	NAES
Years at address	1 to 97 for number of years at current address	NAES
Suburban	1=Suburban, 0=Rural	NAES
Urban	1=Urban, 0=Rural	NAES
Income	1= less than $15,000 per year to 9= more than $250,000 per year	NAES
Union	1=Union member living in household 0=otherwise	NAES
Party Strength	0=Non-Partisan, 1= Weak Partisan, 2=Partisan 3=Strong Partisan	NAES
Care for Election Outcome	1=Yes, 0=No	NAES
Evangelical	1=Identify as an evangelical Christian, 0=otherwise	NAES
Network TV Use	0=No Network TV use to 7=Network TV use everyday	NAES
Cable TV Use	0=No Cable TV use to 7=Cable TV use everyday	NAES
Ranney Competition Index	.5 to 1 from Low Levels of Competition to High	Politics of the American States
Statewide Races	Count variable of number of statewide races from 0 to 2	Book of the States
Per Capita Political Spending	Dollars Spent per capita by party	Daron Shaw
Ballot Measures	Number of ballot measures count from 0 to 16	www.ncsl.org
Registration Closing Date	Number of days before election day that registration closes, ranges from 0 (no closing date) to 30 (closes one month before)	Book of the States
Party Strength	0=No Party Affiliation 3=Strong	NAES
Party Identification	1=Strong Democratic to 7= Strong Republican	NAES
Ideology	1=Strong Liberal to 5=Strong Conservative	NAES

Table 5.1: Predicting election day voting, early voting, and non-voting

Variable	Election Day Voter b	Election Day Voter z	Early Voter b	Early Voter z
Convenience				
Employed (+)	0.494	2.16**	0.484	2.22**
Married (+)	-0.219	-0.99	-0.171	-0.78
Number of Children (+)	-0.042	-0.42	-0.056	-0.58
Over 65 Years of Age (+)	0.392	1.36	0.037	0.13
Rural (-)	-0.328	-1.25	0.078	0.38
Suburban (-)	-0.546	-2.26**	-0.268	-1.11
Information Needs				
Party Strength (+)	0.100	0.93	-0.061	-0.61
Ideology Strength (+)	-0.160	-1.05	0.128	0.87
Education (+)	-0.708	-1.41	0.068	1.41
Mobilization				
Union (+)	0.205	.065	-0.141	-0.39
Evangelical (+)	-0.142	-0.68	0.153	0.08
Demographic				
Sex (+)	-0.106	-0.52	-0.226	-1.15
Black (-)	-0.543	-0.99	0.376	1.03
Hispanic (-)	0.454	1.29	-0.130	-0.30
Years at Residents (+)	0.006	0.81	0.002	0.20
Income (+)	0.157	2.50**	0.115	1.94**
Network News Use (+)	0.026	0.70	0.040	1.12
Cable News Use (+)	0.009	0.27	0.004	0.15
State-Level				
State Wide Elections (+)	-0.612	-2.52**	0.192	0.55
Spending per Capita (+)	-0.097	-1.31	0.336	2.54**
Number of Ballots (+)	0.191	3.56***	-0.282	-2.79**
Registration Closing Date (-)	-0.120	-3.28***	0.169	2.73**

N	1266
Pseudo R^2	.384
χ^2	132.60
Prob (χ^2)	0.0000

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient for the early voting group, the constant is not shown, and directional predictions use one-tailed tests.

***prob < 0.01

** prob < 0.05

* prob < 0.10

Table 5.2: Predicting early voting from all voters

Variable	Early Voter		Marginal Effects
	b	z	dy/dx
Convenience			
Employed (+)	0.477	2.89**	0.080**
Married (+)	-0.202	-1.24	-0.034
Number of Children (+)	-0.044	-0.60	-0.007
Over 65 Years of Age (+)	0.239	1.09	0.041
Rural (-)	-0.089	-0.47	-0.014
Suburban (-)	-0.404	-2.25**	-0.066**
Information Needs			
Party Strength (+)	0.020	0.26	0.0003
Ideology Strength (+)	-0.019	-0.17	-0.003
Education (+)	0.001	0.04	0.003
Mobilization			
Union (+)	0.029	0.12	0.004
Evangelical (+)	0.013	0.09	0.002
Demographic			
Sex (+)	-0.171	-1.16	-0.027
Black (-)	0.048	0.16	0.008
Hispanic (-)	0.190	0.66	0.032
Years at Residents (+)	0.004	0.69	0.001
Income (+)	0.135	2.96**	0.022**
Network News Use (+)	0.035	1.29	0.006
Cable News Use (+)	0.006	0.25	0.001
State-Level			
State Wide Elections (+)	-0.502	-2.54**	-0.082**
Spending per Capita (+)	0.019	0.30	0.003
Number of Ballots (+)	-0.027	0.58	0.004
Registration Closing Date (-)	-0.026	-0.82	-0.004

N	753
Pseudo R^2	.383
χ^2	50.89
Prob (χ^2)	0.0000

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient for the early voting group, the constant is not shown, and directional predictions use one-tailed tests.

***prob < 0.01

** prob < 0.05

* prob < 0.10

Table 6.1: All states voter turnout model

| Variable | Turnout Estimates | | Marginal Effects |
	b	z	dy/dx
Ease of Early Vote (+)	0.029	2.18**	.0223**
Sex (+)	0.441	0.77	.0067
Black (-)	0.673	-0.42	-.0117
Hispanic (-)	0.399	0.84	.0188
Over 65 Years Old (+)	0.006	2.75**	.0421**
Years at Residents (+)	0.477	0.71	.0002
Married (+)	0.118	-1.56	-.0180
Income (+)	0.006	2.78**	.0090**
Education (+)	0.197	1.29	.0025
Urban (+)	0.829	0.22	.0044
Suburban (+)	0.007	-2.71**	-.0377**
Party Strength (+)	0.010	2.57	.0144*
Network News Use (+)	0.000	4.18***	.0076***
Cable News Use (+)	0.004	2.89**	.0057**
Union (+)	0.606	-0.52	-.0069
Evangelical (+)	0.654	0.45	.0045
NRA (+)	0.589	0.54	.0058
Ranney (+)	0.001	3.24***	.2796***
Registration Closing Date (-)	0.193	1.30	.0011
Ballots Measures (+)	0.262	1.12	.0017
Statewide Elections (+)	0.150	-1.44	-.0198
Spending Per Capita (+)	0.417	0.81	.0035

N	5003
Pseudo R^2	.370
χ^2	388.38
Prob (χ^2)	0.0000

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient the constant is not shown, only significant marginal effects are shown, and directional predictions use one-tailed tests.

***prob < 0.01
** prob < 0.05
* prob < 0.10

Table 6.2: All states voter turnout model with early voting and absentee

Variable	Turnout Estimates		Marginal Effects
	b	z	dy/dx
Early Voting	0.352	1.24	.048
No-Excuse Absentee	0.048	0.15	.006
Sex (+)	0.045	0.68	.006
Black (-)	-0.108	-0.50	-0.014
Hispanic (-)	0.002	0.71	.019
Over 65 Years Old (+)	0.299	2.77**	.042**
Years at Residence (+)	0.002	0.71	.000
Married (+)	-0.133	-1.54	-0.018
Income (+)	0.069	2.71**	.009**
Education (+)	0.019	1.36	.003
Urban (+)	0.014	0.09	.002
Suburban (+)	-0.292	-2.75**	-0.038**
Party Strength (+)	0.109	2.53**	.014**
Network News Use (+)	0.058	4.22***	.008***
Cable News Use (+)	0.043	2.77**	.005**
Union (+)	-0.030	-0.29	-0.004
Evangelical (+)	0.017	0.21	.002
NRA (+)	0.047	0.58	.006
Ranney (+)	1.591	1.26	.209
Registration Closing Date (-)	0.000	0.01	.000
Ballots Measures (+)	0.018	0.80	.002
Statewide Elections (+)	-0.110	-1.04	-0.014
Spending Per Capita (+)	0.019	0.61	.002

N	5003
Pseudo R^2	.370
χ^2	388.38
Prob (χ^2)	0.0000

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient the constant is not shown, only significant marginal effects are shown, and directional predictions use one-tailed tests.

***prob < 0.01

** prob < 0.05

* prob < 0.10

Table 6.3: Non-early voting state voter turnout model

Variable	Turnout Estimates		Marginal Effects
	b	z	dy/dx
Sex (+)	0.127	1.38	.0137
Black (-)	-0.206	-0.68	-.0207
Hispanic (-)	0.352	1.13	.0429
Over 65 Years Old (+)	0.113	0.70	.0125
Years at Residents (+)	-0.001	-0.06	-.0000
Married (+)	-0.139	-1.08	-.0153
Income (+)	0.060	1.45	.0065
Education (+)	0.011	0.49	.0012
Urban (+)	0.091	0.36	.0100
Suburban (+)	-0.203	-1.29	-.0220
Party Strength (+)	0.190	2.93**	.0173**
Network News Use (+)	0.040	1.92	.004
Cable News Use (+)	0.072	3.14***	.0078***
Union (+)	0.029	0.22	.0031
Evangelical (+)	0.091	0.84	.0098
NRA (+)	0.196	2.06*	.0221*
Ranney (+)	0.676	0.80	.0729
Registration Closing Date (-)	-0.017	-1.98*	-.0018*
Ballots Measures (+)	0.102	2.81**	.0111**
Statewide Elections (+)	-0.155	-1.22	-.0168
Spending Per Capita (+)	0.023	0.57	.0024

N	2644
Pseudo R^2	.303
χ^2	2984.83
Prob (χ^2)	0.0000

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient the constant is not shown, and only significant marginal effects are shown.
***prob < 0.01
** prob < 0.05
* prob < 0.10

Table 6.4: Early voting state voter turnout model

Variable	Turnout Estimates		Marginal Effects
	b	z	dy/dx
Sex (+)	-0.010	-0.10	-.0016
Black (-)	-0.025	-0.08	-.0038
Hispanic (-)	0.084	0.47	.0134
Over 65 Years Old (+)	0.446	3.08	.0757
Years at Residents (+)	0.004	1.24	.0006
Married (+)	-0.125	-1.15	-.0197
Income (+)	0.086	2.84**	.0132**
Education (+)	0.024	1.34	.0038
Urban (+)	-0.044	-0.22	-.0068
Suburban (+)	-0.337	-2.36*	-.0518*
Party Strength (+)	0.070	1.18	.0109
Network News Use (+)	0.068	3.39***	.0104***
Cable News Use (+)	0.020	0.97	.0032
Union (+)	-0.070	-0.43	-.0107
Evangelical (+)	-0.047	-0.44	-.0072
NRA (+)	-0.058	-0.46	-.0089
Ranney (+)	2.146	2.42*	.3334*
Registration Closing Date (-)	0.013	2.13*	.0021*
Ballots Measures (+)	-0.006	-0.48	-.0009
Statewide Elections (+)	-0.048	-0.31	-.0075
Spending Per Capita (+)	0.047	1.18	.0072

N	2359
Pseudo R^2	.340
χ^2	461.96
Prob (χ^2)	0.0000

Note: The symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient the constant is not shown, and only significant marginal effects are shown.

***prob < 0.01

** prob < 0.05

* prob < 0.10

VITA

James Michael Siira grew up in Royal Oak, Michigan. He holds degrees from Michigan State University, West Virginia University, and will receive a doctorate in philosophy from Louisiana State University in the summer of 2012. While writing his dissertation on early voting James cast early ballots from Florida, Turkey, and South Korea. James most enjoys traveling to new places around the world as well as returning to the United States to visit family with his wife Dana. He currently lives in Pyeongtaek, South Korea and teaches elementary school at Osan Air Force Base.