

THE IMPACT OF VOTE CENTERS ON EARLY VOTING IN INDIANA

**Dr. Joseph Losco
Dr. Raymond H. Scheele
Dr. Steven R. Hall**

**Department of Political Science
The Bowen Center for Public Affairs**

**Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana**

Paper prepared for delivery at the annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association,
April 1, 2010, San Francisco, CA

A portion of this research was supported by a grant to the Bowen Center for Public Affairs from the Pew Charitable Trusts under the Make Voting Work initiative. The authors are solely responsible for the data, research and findings reported herein.

Abstract

Nearly 30 percent of American voters cast early ballots in the 2008 presidential election. The availability of early voting has been tied by some observers to an uptick in voter turnout. Similarly impressive turnout was experienced in those jurisdictions which permitted Vote Centers, combined polling places that allow voters to choose where they cast their ballots. In some jurisdictions, Vote Centers were combined with early voting opportunities, permitting voters to choose both the time and location of voting. One of the states experimenting with both Vote Centers and early voting is Indiana. In this paper, we examine the impact of early voting and Vote Centers on voter behavior. Both aggregate and individual level data are analyzed for the impact of early voting and vote centers on turnout. We find that vote centers tend to 1) greatly increase the likelihood of early voting; 2) are somewhat more successful in attracting both new and infrequent voters than traditional precincts; and 3) are most successful in attracting infrequent voters in the age range from 30 to 64.

The last few election cycles have seen an uptick in voter turnout in American national elections, rebounding to levels not seen since the 1960s. The Census Bureau estimates that 131 million people voted in the 2008 presidential election, an increase of over 5 million from 2004 (CPS 2008). Turnout in the 2004 presidential race exceeded 2000 turnout by about 4 percent and represented the highest turnout since 1972 when 18 year-olds were first eligible to vote (CPS 2004). Even midterm elections have seen increases in turnout. Ninety-six million Americans voted in the 2006 congressional elections, an increase of 7 million from 2002 when about 48 percent of voting-age citizens cast a ballot, representing the highest turnout since 1994. (CPS 2006). Whether we use Voting Age Population (VAP) or the more accurate Citizen Voter Eligible Population (VEP) measure, figures reveal a steady increase in turnout since bottoming out in 1996 (McDonald 2008).

Further, recent elections have witnessed a substantial increase in the number of voters from traditionally underrepresented groups. For example, 2008 saw about 2 million more black voters, 2 million more Hispanic voters and about 600,000 more Asian voters, even as the number of non-Hispanic white voters remained statistically unchanged (CPS 2008). Turnout for Blacks and Hispanics increased over each of the last four presidential elections. Turnout among young voters between 18-24 years of age also has increased over the last three presidential and midterm cycles. Most impressive is the trend in youth voting among minorities. As Kirby and Kawashima-Ginsberg (2009) point out:

Fifty-eight percent of African-American youth voted on November 4th, the highest turnout rate of any youth racial/ethnic group since 1972. Moreover, among young people, African-American youth had the highest turnout: nearly six in ten young African Americans voted in the 2008 election. Turnout among this group rapidly increased between the 2000 and 2008 elections, rising by nearly 20 percentage points. This increase represents the greatest increase in turnout of any racial or ethnic minority groups since 1972.

Clearly, many factors may have contributed to these increases. Most notably, the 2008 presidential contest combined high interest and saliency with increased mobilization and new get-out-the-vote techniques. The Obama campaign took advantage of research citing the importance of local door-to-door mobilization (e.g., Gerber and Green 2000) in developing sophisticated neighborhood canvassing techniques combining the wide reach of Internet technology with personal face-to-face appeals (Pfloff 2009). Both political parties have increased micro-targeting techniques to craft messages for specific audiences (Bai 2004; Erickson 2008).

The increasing sophistication of election management techniques also may have increased turnout and while it is difficult to disentangle the effects of high saliency, mobilization and ever-changing campaign methods, we seek to explore in this paper the potential impact of two changes in election management on turnout in Indiana's recent elections. One change is the early voting that is now permitted on a widespread basis and the second change is the pilot program allowing certain counties to adopt Vote Centers.

Early Voting

One way election administrators can increase turnout is by reducing the costs associated with exercising the franchise. The literature on the costs and benefits of political participation is venerable and long (see, for example, Downs 1957; Rosentone and Hansen 1993; Aldrich 1995). The costs associated with voting include time, proximity, and scheduling. Efforts to reduce these costs by devices like same day registration, Motor Voter registration, voting entirely by mail, and increased use of absentee balloting have produced little dramatic change in turnout (e.g., Knack 1995; Rhine 1996; Stein and Garcia-Monet 1997; Berinsky, Burns and Traugott 2001). Scholars like Teixeira (1992) hold that election reforms aimed at reducing costs are not as significant as

voter engagement or perceived benefits in explaining the decision to vote. This corresponds with the idea that the costs of voting are already quite low and increasing voter turnout is largely a function of increasing the benefits of voting. Such benefits can be enhanced by finding ways to make the political system more responsive to citizens. Nevertheless, the quickening pace of American life where voters face increased time related pressures like working multiple jobs or balancing the duties of work and parenthood has led many election administrators to find ways to increase the convenience of voting and alleviate time constraints for the voter. Even if voting turnout has not significantly increased as a result of these efforts, more voters are availing themselves of more convenient voting opportunities such as early voting.

According to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, fewer than two-thirds (60.2%) of all Americans cast ballots in 2008 in the traditional manner: at polling places on Election Day (EAC 2009:1). Nearly 17 percent (16.6%) voted by domestic absentee ballot; less than 1 percent (.7%) by overseas absentee ballot; and 13 percent by early voting before Election Day. Provisional ballots counted after Election Day accounted for another 1.3 percent. The figure for early voting nearly doubled from the 2006 elections (from 6.4% to 13%). In some of the 22 states allowing some form of early voting (e.g., Nevada, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas), nearly half of all votes were cast early (EAC 2009: 9-10). Even prior to 2008, early voting had steadily increased over the last quarter century from about 4 percent of all voters in 1972 to 20 percent in 2004, according to the Census Bureau.

Early voting occurs in a variety of forms. Absentee voting by mail is one such form. In some states, voters must declare valid reasons (like travel) in order to vote early. Some states with early voting have turned to “no-excuse” early voting. Others have long provided “traveling boards” in which teams of election officials from both major political parties visit shut-ins prior

to Election Day and allow them to vote. Several states use “vote centers” which allow voters to cast ballots in any of several locations. In some states like the Washington and Oregon, most voters receive their ballots in the mail and after they are completed they are mailed back to the election office.

There is a small but growing literature on the types of voters most likely to participate in early voting. Stein and Vonnahme (2008) report that early voters tend to be persistent voters and Stein’s earlier research found them to be more partisan, ideological, and more politically engaged than others. (Stein, 1998).

Vote Centers

Another way to reduce the cost of voting is to allow voters to choose where they vote within their county. Beginning in Larimer County, Colorado in 2003, super-precincts known as vote centers were employed, allowing voters multiple locations near where they work, shop, and go to school on Election Day. The institution of statewide voter registration systems linked by Internet allowed election administrators to flag names of those who voted to ensure they could not vote elsewhere. A number of states have adopted the vote center concept since then, at least in some voting jurisdictions. While there is some evidence that accessibility to polling places does have an impact on turnout (Gimpel and Schuknecht, 2003; Haspel and Knotts, 2005; Dyck and Gimpel, 2005), studies have only recently begun to address the impact of vote centers on turnout, cost of election operation, and voter satisfaction.

Scheele, Losco, Crawley, and Vasicko (2008) found vote centers in Indiana had a minimal independent impact on increasing turnout, yet served to significantly reduce administrative costs, and registered a very high level of satisfaction among those who voted. The analysis largely employed aggregate level data on turnout by comparing rates of turnout in

vote center counties and matched counties that used traditional precinct-based voting. Other researchers estimate that vote centers may have a cumulative effect in spurring long term increases in voting among those first attracted by vote centers (Stein, Leighley, and Owens, 2005; Stein and Vonnahme, 2006).

Stein and Vonnahme (2007) found that the use of Election Day vote centers in Colorado had a small positive effect on increasing participation among infrequent voters. These researchers utilized individual level data in their study of vote centers used on Election Day. In that study Stein and Vonnahme used a procedure which extracts from state election files samples of voters with certain characteristics such as vote history, gender, and age and compares the behavior of this group with a comparable “matched set” of voters from control counties employing traditional precinct-based voting.

Our study will expand on these earlier findings by examining the impact of both early voting and the use of vote centers in Indiana where both types of convenience voting were employed in the 2008 elections. Our primary question is whether the presence of vote centers increases early voting and, if so, what types of voters take advantage of the early voting.

Our Study

In 2005, Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita led a delegation of legislators and local election administrators to Larimer County to watch vote centers during an actual election. The Indiana visitors were impressed with the operations of the vote centers and in the 2006 Indiana legislative session a measure was passed authorizing the Secretary of State to select up to three counties to run a pilot vote center program in the 2007 Municipal and 2008 Primary and General Elections. Two counties were selected by the Indiana Secretary of State from applications submitted to his office: Tippecanoe County and Wayne County. Of these two, only Wayne

County had contested races in the 2008 May primary where vote centers were used. Tippecanoe County did not have a primary election but did conduct a mock election to test some of their vote center operations. Another county, Cass, was granted permission to join with Tippecanoe and Wayne and utilize vote centers in the 2008 primary and general elections.

Cass County is located in Northern Indiana, approximately 84 miles North Northwest of Indianapolis. The population of Cass County in 2008 was 39,123 and the county seat, Logansport, comprised 47.7 percent of the county's population. Tippecanoe County, located approximately 60 miles northwest of Indianapolis, includes the cities of Lafayette and West Lafayette. The 2008 countywide population was 164,237, ranking 8th in Indiana. Wayne County is located approximately 75 miles east of Indianapolis, on the Indiana/Ohio border, with the largest city being Richmond. Wayne County's 2008 population was 67,795, the 24th largest in Indiana. The City of Richmond's population was 36,733, comprising 54.2 percent of Wayne County's population.

Indiana law allowed early voting between October 6 and November 3, 2008, but the counties had latitude to open early voting for any number of days during that time span. Moreover, the vote center counties could decide how many early voting centers would be opened on what days and during what hours. Cass County provided one early voting center throughout the time span, and opened an additional three centers for the last four days. Tippecanoe County operated the majority of their vote centers for nine full days prior to Election Day. Wayne County opened four vote centers for five days prior to Election Day.

To provide a comparison with traditional precinct voting, the three vote center counties were matched with three other counties in Indiana on the basis of population size and per capita income. Indiana has 92 counties, three of which were vote center counties. The other eighty-

nine counties—including the control counties--used traditional precincts and state law permitted them to open one “satellite office” for early voting in the county courthouse. Upon unanimous approval of the county election board, additional “satellite offices” could also be provided. In the two control counties of Bartholomew and Monroe, the only in-person early voting “satellite office” was in the courthouse. Jackson County opened four early voting polling places.

The three control counties were selected to match the vote center counties closely in population and income. In order to evaluate the potential impact of vote centers on voter turnout, we compared voting rates in Cass, Tippecanoe, and Wayne with turnout in the three control counties. Cass was paired with Jackson County, Tippecanoe was paired with Monroe County, and Wayne with Bartholomew County. The demographic comparisons are provided in Table 1.

[Table 1 About Here]

Technically, the use of the phrase “early voting” does not pertain to Indiana. The Indiana election code refers to “satellite” offices where voting can occur before Election Day. (IC 3-11-10-26). Other references are to “absentee voting,” but not “early voting.” This legal phrasing leads to the federal Election Assistance Commission’s website indicating that there were no early voting results recorded in Indiana in the 2008 general election. The reason for this is that ballots cast prior to Election Day, whether in-person at a “satellite office” or by a mailed-in absentee ballot, are not counted until Election Day. In practice, however, some vote centers as well as some traditional precincts were open for several days in advance of Election Day in 2008, but they were not legally called “early voting” places.

The statewide average turnout by number of registered voters in the 2008 general election was 62 percent, which is very close to the estimated national turnout of 61.6 percent. Obama won the Indiana presidential race, receiving 1,374,039 votes to McCain’s 1,345,648, for a

winning percentage of the two-party vote of 50.52 percent. (Indiana Secretary of State 2008 final results, January 14, 2009; available at www.in.gov/sos/elections/2903.htm).

Table 2 displays the 2008 general election turnout and election results for the three vote center counties and the three control counties. These figures are based on the number of registered voters in the state, according to the figures from the Indiana Secretary of State, not the voting eligible population (VEP). The range in turnout based on registered voters among all ninety-two Indiana counties was from a low of 49 percent to a high of 79 percent. Both of these figures are from counties that used traditional precincts.¹ Turnout was up significantly in all of the examined counties as it was in the state and the nation as a whole. Obviously factors like campaign salience and mobilization had a widespread impact.

[Table 2 About Here]

While Cass County, which utilized vote centers, showed significantly higher turnout than its control companion, Jackson County, overall turnout at vote center and control counties appears at this level of specificity to be somewhat comparable. Vote center and matched control counties are also comparable with respect to voter preferences for presidential candidates. The increased turnout in Cass over Jackson in 2008 might be explained in part by the traditionally high number of absentee ballots cast in Cass County. Cass has traditionally held a lead in absentee voting even prior to their adoption of vote centers. In 2006, Cass delivered 5 percent more absentee

¹The data for Indiana are the final turnout figures reported and updated on January 14, 2009. Researchers who use election data are familiar with the many difficulties in ascertaining the exact number of votes that are reported as “final” or “official results.” Local officials often report votes cast and counted on election night, but those totals are likely to change after provisional ballots are processed and calculations double-checked. Those changes may or may not be included in the “official” figures. A perennial problem in calculating the turnout percentage is determining the denominator. The number of registered voters is what the Indiana Secretary of State uses, but even public officials admit that number is inflated. Using the total adult population also presents obvious problems.

ballots than the state average. In the 2006 midterm elections, it delivered 8 percent more than the statewide average. With the adoption of vote centers, its share of absentee ballots ballooned to 67 percent, almost three times the state absentee average of 24 percent. (Figures from Office of the Secretary of State, <http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/2400.htm>).

The aggregate data provides a framework for us to more closely investigate the impact of vote centers by analyzing additional aggregate data within each county. In addition we will investigate the behavior of individual voters in the vote center and control counties. The behavior of individual voters is made possible by our obtaining the a list registered voters in the six counties from the statewide voter registration system (SVRS), an electronic file of registered voters required under the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA). The information we obtained on each voter was a vote history, i.e., whether the citizen voted in an election; and the age ranges of the voter. We did not obtain names and addresses of the registered voters, thus assuring anonymity.

Findings

The implementation of vote centers in Cass, Tippecanoe, and Wayne counties prior to the 2008 general election provides an interesting natural experiment. Although data limitations suggest caution in generalizing our results, several preliminary findings nonetheless emerge. In comparing turnout figures between counties and county groupings, we utilize simple t-tests of differences in sample proportions to assess their significance. First, as Table 3 clearly shows, vote centers are associated with striking increases in early voting. Early voting is higher in each of the vote center counties than the control counties utilizing precincts. Especially impressive is the early voting rate registered by Cass and Wayne Counties, as compared to their control counties.

[Table 3 About Here]

The next Table, Table 4, presents the data in a different fashion. It shows the combined early vote turnout from vote center counties in the 2008 general election surpasses that of the three control counties regardless of the turnout measure utilized. A staggering 52 percent of all votes in the three vote center counties were cast prior to Election Day, as compared to 27 percent in the control counties of Bartholomew, Jackson, and Monroe. While this separation narrows when early vote totals are weighted by voting age population and registered voters respectively, the differences remain statistically significant at the .01 level. They are also substantively large at 12 percentage points for early turnout of voting age population and 15 percentage points for early turnout of registered voters.

[Table 4 About Here]

The second finding suggested by our results regards the effect of vote centers on overall voter turnout. Absent the statistical control afforded by a fully specified turnout model, it is difficult to assess this effect with confidence. However, by comparing turnout behavior between the vote center and the similar control counties across the 2004 and 2008 general elections, we hope to reduce omitted variable bias. The opening of vote centers appears to have had a small but positive effect on voter turnout in Cass, Tippecanoe, and Wayne counties.

Looking at Table 5, this effect is not immediately apparent in the data. A comparison of the 2008 turnout of registered voters in the two groupings shows that vote center counties have a slight (.24 percentage points) but statistically insignificant edge in turnout over the control counties. Moreover, the control counties show a larger gain in turnout from the 2004 election (11 percentage points to 7.9 in vote center counties, a statistically significant difference of 3.2 percentage points).

[Table 5 About Here]

However, the finding that the control counties appear to have outperformed vote center counties in increasing turnout among registered voters is driven largely by the vagaries of Indiana election laws and their effect on registration statistics. County clerks have the authority to purge registration rolls based on death certificates, infrequent voting, and other criteria. The clerks have some discretion and latitude in performing the tasks of removing names from the registration lists; hence the timing is not uniform across the state.² Monroe County's registration roll in 2004 actually exceeded state estimates of the voting age population by 2,802 people. The roll was purged prior to the 2008 election leading to an approximate reduction of 12.4 percent of registrations. Although Cass County also purged its registry lowering registrations by 14.7 percent, the impact altered the turnout performance more favorably for the control counties because Monroe County is substantially larger than Cass with over three times the population. Because 2004 turnout was depressed relative to 2008 turnout, Monroe's turnout gains appeared to be much larger than they would be otherwise.

Utilizing voting age population as the denominator in turnout calculations rather than registered voters reveals a different result. As a comparison of Tables 6 and 7 demonstrates, the turnout gain for Monroe County is cut almost in half using the voting age population measure.

Control county turnout of voting age population in 2008 was actually greater than the vote center county turnout by 3.4 percentage points. However, Table 5 shows that vote center counties enjoyed larger gains in turnout over the 2004 general election which occurred prior to vote center implementation. The difference in gains, roughly 1.3 percentage points, is

² Federal law specifies many of the requirements states must follow in maintaining statewide voter registration lists. For a recent summary of the federal requirements and actions of the states under the National Voter Registration Act see Rogers (2009). The Indiana provisions for removing voters from the registration rolls are found in IC 3-7-38.2 ff.

statistically significant and substantively important. As the broad national political context and the socio-economic characteristics of the two county groups are constant in this comparison, this suggests that vote center counties generated larger gains in turnout from 2004 to 2008 than non vote center counties.³

To further assess the origins of these turnout gains, we utilize individual level voting records obtained from the Indiana Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS).⁴ This data includes the number of time each registrant has voted and where the voter falls within a set of age brackets (18-29, 30-44, 45-64, 65+).⁵ We divide voters into three categories. New voters are, as one might expect, those who regardless of their age have not voted in any prior election.

The second category consists of infrequent voters. We deem voters to be “infrequent” on the basis of their vote histories (their total number of votes in elections of any kind). For each age range, we determine the 33rd percentile of the “times voted” variable from the SVRS dataset.⁶ Any individuals falling at or below that number of votes are coded as infrequent, with the exception of new voters. That is, infrequent voters are considered those at or below the 33rd percentile of times voted but greater than zero prior votes. This coding rule leads to the absence of any infrequent voters from the 18-29 year old age group. For this age range, the bottom third

³ Control county turnout was 4.7 percentage points higher in 2004 despite the apparent similarities. Ideally, a fully specified turnout model could control the factors that explain this difference in order to better estimate the effect of vote centers.

⁴ As noted previously, these data will not directly match the turnout data reported by the Secretary of State because the latter are initial counts and not consistently updated based on final county reports.

⁵ Indiana law allows individuals under age 18 to vote if they “will be at least eighteen (18) years of age” at the next election. IC 3-7-13-1.

⁶ The cutoff number of votes (at or below which a voter is considered infrequent) for each group are as follows: 18-29, one vote; 30-44, two votes; 45-64, four votes; 65+, eight votes. Although it might appear that this would ensure that the category would consist of one-third of the number of voters, it does not. The removal of new voters from the category reduces the size of this group. Also, because the number of times a voter has voted takes on a small number of discrete values, using the number associated with the 33rd percentile as a cutoff could include more than one-third of the voters.

consists of new voters. Finally, we consider all remaining voters who are not either new or infrequent to be in a residual category that we label “regular.”

Our data show, broadly, that the gains in turnout from 2004 to 2008 were, at best, only minimally driven by the attraction of new voters to the polls. In vote center counties, the increase from 2004 to 2008 of 425 new voters accounted for only 2% of the total increase in number of voters. In the control counties, there were 3260 fewer new voters in 2008 than in 2004 (declining from a total 23255 to 19991). Table 8 shows that of the six counties, only Tippecanoe and Monroe saw increases in new voting as a percentage of total registered voters. Across the board in Table 8, vote center counties posted either larger gains or smaller losses of new voters.

Interestingly, gains in new voter turnout fit with the widely reported emphasis on youth-oriented technologies in the 2008 election. College campuses provide opportunities for registration drives and political activities, particularly through social media due to its intensive use. Monroe County, home of the main campus of Indiana University, gained 881 new voters among the 18-29 age range, despite larger losses of new voters in each of the other age brackets. Tippecanoe County, home of Purdue University, saw 2708 additional new voters in the 18-29 range in 2008 as compared to declines in new voters in each of the other age brackets. In all other counties in each age range, the number of new voters declined from its 2004 level. Table 9 provides an overview of county-level turnout gains (as defined by percent of registered voters) in the infrequent category. The data show that Cass and Wayne suffered fewer losses than their control counties in 2008 over 2004.

Table 10, shows changes in actual vote counts from 2004 to 2008. Infrequent voters constituted 15 percent of the overall gain in vote count for vote center counties, thereby contributing in large measure to the difference in actual vote turnout gains over the control

counties. Vote center counties saw 3,149 more infrequent voters at the polls in 2008 over 2004 while the control counties saw 838 fewer. In the paired comparison of the actual vote gains between vote center and control counties in Table 10, the largest percentage point differences favoring vote center counties come in the infrequent category. This finding supports the hypothesis that vote centers may increase turnout by increasing the convenience of voting for those otherwise more easily dissuaded from doing so and is in keeping with the findings of Stein and Vonnahme (2007).

The age breakdown of this effect in Table 10 underscores this inference. Vote center counties scored their largest gains relative to the control counties among infrequent voters in the 30-44 and 45-64 age brackets. Potential voters in these age brackets are most likely to have families to care for and to be employed in full-time regular work. Hence, potential voters in this group are most likely to benefit from more flexible voting arrangements, such as vote centers near their work places and easy access to early voting in order to avoid Election Day lines.

Conclusion

The results from our study remain tentative given the small sample of vote center counties, the limitations posed by examining one state, and the difficulties in compensating for county differences in purging the voter rolls. Nevertheless, it appears that vote centers tend to 1) greatly increase the likelihood of early voting (presumably by making it more accessible and reducing costs); 2) are somewhat more successful in attracting both new and infrequent voters than precincts; 3) are most successful in attracting infrequent voters in the range of from 30 to 64 years of age. By contrast, non-vote center counties outperform vote centers among regular voters.

Overall, our results seem to confirm research by Stein and Vonnahme (2008) who find that the use of vote centers increases turnout among infrequent voters. Presumably, this occurs by reducing the costs of voting, especially among those in the 30 to 64 age range who find it more convenient to vote in a variety of locations on a day of their choosing. Much more needs to be investigated and we hope to expand our study by obtaining better data from county clerks in Indiana regarding which individual cast ballots early. Nevertheless, as Teixeira (1992), Gans (2008), and others have commented, measures to reduce the cost of voting tend to produce only marginal increases in turnout. Substantial increases may be tied to other factors, such as enthusiasm and voter mobilization efforts by candidates.

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS OF VOTE CENTER AND CONTROL COUNTIES

County	2008 Population	2007 Per Capita Income
Cass	39,123	\$28,255
Jackson	42,193	\$29,900
Tippecanoe	164,237	\$28,891
Monroe	128,992	\$29,522
Wayne	67,795	\$28,859
Bartholomew	75,360	\$36,957
Indiana Statewide total	6,376,792	\$27,134

TABLE 2

TURNOUT AND WINNING MARGINS IN VOTE CENTER AND CONTROL COUNTIES, 2008

Vote Center County	Turnout	Presidential Winner/Margin	Control County	Turnout	Presidential Winner/Margin
Cass	72%	McCain 53%	Jackson	59%	McCain 56%
Tippecanoe	67%	Obama 55%	Monroe	70%	Obama 66%
Wayne	56%	McCain 51%	Bartholomew	59%	McCain 55%

TABLE 3
WHEN VOTERS CAST BALLOTS, 2008 GENERAL ELECTION

	<u>Early</u>	<u>Absentee</u>	<u>Election Day</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Overall Turnout</u>
Cass	8,009 (50%)	2,666 (16.6%)	5,342 (33.4%)	16,017 (100%)	72%
Jackson	2,197 (12.4%)	914 (5.2%)	14,631 (82.4%)	17,742 (100%)	59%
Tippecanoe	34,593 (49.9%)	2,316 (3.3%)	32,440 (46.8%)	69,349 (100%)	67%
Monroe	24,656 (38.7%)	4,181 (6.6%)	34,845 (54.7%)	63,682 (100%)	70%
Wayne	17,420 (60%)	1,694 (5.8%)	9,899 (34.1%)	29,013 (99.9%)	56%
Bartholomew	4,383 (13.9%)	6,405 (20.3%)	20,798 (65.8%)	31,588 (100%)	59%

Note: Indiana statewide total was 662,443 absentee ballots of all kinds, including early Voting, out of 2,143,813 voters, constituting 30 percent. Totals do not always total 100% due to rounding. Overall Turnout is based on registered voters. The data were provided to the authors by the county clerks in the six counties.

TABLE 4**EARLY VOTING TURNOUT IN CONTROL AND VOTE CENTER COUNTIES,
2008 GENERAL ELECTION**

Measure	Non-Vote Center Counties	Vote Center Counties	Difference (VC-NVC)
Number of early votes	31238	60022	28784
Proportion of voting age population	.1609	.2848	.1239***
Proportion of registered voters	.1781	.3364	.1583***
Proportion of votes cast	.2762	.5248	.2486***
* (p<.05) ** (p<.025) *** (p<.01) two-tailed			

TABLE 5**TURNOUT BY ELECTION AND VOTE CENTER AND CONTROL COUNTIES**

	2004	2008	Change (2008-2004)
Non-Vote Center - % of registered	.5283	.6395	.1112***
Vote Center - % of registered	.5628	.6420	.0791***
Difference (VC-NVC)	.0345***	.0024	-.0321***
Non-Vote Center -% of voting age population	.5155	.5779	.0624***
Vote Center - % of voting age population	.4681	.5435	.0753***
Difference (VC-NVC)	-.0473***	-.0344***	.0129***
* (p<.05) ** (p<.025) *** (p<.01) two-tailed			

TABLE 6
VOTER TURNOUT BY COUNTY AND ELECTION, BY PROPORTION OF REGISTERED VOTERS

County	04 General Election	08 General Election	Difference (08-04)
Cass	.5705	.7146	.1441***
Jackson	.5863	.5811	.0052
Tippecanoe	.5677	.6665	.0988***
Monroe	.4917	.6928	.2011***
Wayne	.5501	.5609	.0107***
Bartholomew	.5731	.5815	.0084***
* (p<.05) ** (p<.025) *** (p<.01) two-tailed			

TABLE 7
VOTER TURNOUT BY COUNTY AND ELECTION, BY PROPORTION OF VOTING AGE POPULATION

County	04 General Election	08 General Election	Difference (08-04)
Cass	.4904	.5434	.0531***
Jackson	.5298	.5523	.0224***
Tippecanoe	.4346	.5390	.1044***
Monroe	.5052	.5979	.0927***
Wayne	.5243	.5543	.0300***
Bartholomew	.5266	.5547	.0280***
* (p<.05) ** (p<.025) *** (p<.01) two-tailed			

TABLE 8**NEW VOTER TURNOUT BY COUNTY AND ELECTION, BY PROPORTION OF REGISTERED VOTERS**

County	2004 General Election	2008 General Election	Difference (08-04)
Cass	.0741	.0657	-.0084***
Jackson	.0854	.0507	-.0346***
Tippecanoe	.0903	.1201	.0298***
Monroe	.1557	.1648	.0090***
Wayne	.0916	.0682	-.0234***
Bartholomew	.0926	.0630	-.0296***
* (p<.05) ** (p<.025) *** (p<.01) two-tailed			

TABLE 9**TURNOUT OF INFREQUENT VOTERS BY COUNTY, BY PROPORTION OF REGISTERED VOTERS**

County	04 General Election	08 General Election	Difference (08 – 04)
Cass	.2733	.2587	-.0147***
Jackson	.2405	.1675	-.0730***
Tippecanoe	.2334	.2626	.0292***
Monroe	.2542	.2897	.0356***
Wayne	.1910	.2098	-.0188***
Bartholomew	.2803	.2143	-.0660***
* (p<.05) ** (p<.025) *** (p<.01) two-tailed			

TABLE 10

PERCENT CHANGE IN VOTE TYPE COUNTS FOR 2004 AND 2008 GENERAL ELECTIONS, BY AGE RANGE AND VOTE CENTER AND CONTROL COUNTIES

Age Range	Statistic	Total Votes		New Voters		Infrequent Voters		Regular Voters	
		NVC	VC	NVC	VC	NVC	VC	NVC	VC
All ages	04 count	96179	95636	23251	19121	23925	20359	49003	56156
	08 count	112174	114536	19991	19549	23087	23508	69096	71479
	% change 04-08	16.63	19.76	-14.02	2.24	-3.50	15.47	41.00	27.29
18-29	04 count	20172	16331	13528	10269	--	--	6644	6062
	08 count	29495	25870	13798	12397	--	--	15697	13473
	% change 04-08	46.22	58.41	2.00	20.72	--	--	136.26	122.25
30-44	04 count	14682	13583	3930	3469	2198	1939	8554	8175
	08 count	15586	15818	2519	2882	2614	2996	10453	9940
	% change 04-08	6.16	16.45	-35.90	-16.92	18.93	54.51	22.20	21.59
45-64	04 count	18296	18997	2482	2429	4571	4275	11243	12293
	08 count	18267	19503	1674	1961	4716	5263	11877	12279
	% change 04-08	-0.16	2.66	-32.55	-19.27	3.17	23.11	5.64	-0.11
65+	04 count	43029	46725	3311	2954	17156	14145	22562	29626
	08 count	48826	53345	2000	2309	15757	15249	31069	35787
	% change 04-08	13.47	14.17	-39.60	-21.83	-8.15	7.80	37.70	20.80

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bai, Matt. 2004. "The Multilevel Marketing of the President." *The New York Times Magazine*, April 25, pp. 43-129.
- Berinsky, Adam, Nancy Burns, and Michael Traugott. 2001. "Who Votes By Mail? A Dynamic Model of the Individual Level Consequences of Vote-By-Mail Systems." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65 (2):178-197.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper.
- Dyk, Joshua and James Gimpel. 2005. Distance, Turnout and the Convenience of Voting. *Social Science Quarterly* 86: 531-48.
- EAC (U.S. Election Assistance Commission). 2009. "2008 Election Administration and Voting Survey: A Summary of Key Findings." Available at www.eac.gov/program_areas/doc_2008electionadministrationsurvey_508/attachment_download/file.
- Erickson, David. 2008. "Obama's Microtargeting Campaign," E Strategy Internet Marketing Blog. Accessed on February 14, 2010 at <http://e-strategyblog.com/2008/12/obamas-microtargeting-campaign>.
- Gerber, Alan and Green, Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *The American Political Science Review* 94(3): 653-63.
- Gans, Curtis. 2008. *Much-hyped Turnout Record Fails to Materialize: Convenience Voting Fails to Boost Balloting*. Washington, DC: American University, November 6. Available at www.media.american.edu/electionexperts/election_turnout_08.pdf.
- Gimpel, J. G. and J. E. Schuknecht. 2003. Political Participation and Accessibility of the Ballot Box. *Political Geography* 22: 471-488.
- Haspel, Moshe and H. Gibbs Knotts. 2005. "Location, Location, Location: Precinct Placement and the Costs of Voting." *Journal of Politics* 67 (2): 560-573.
- Hoban, Emily and Kawashima-Ginsberg, Kei. 2009. *The Youth Vote in 2008*. Medford, MA: Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. August 17.

- Knack, Steven. 1995. "Does 'Motor Voter' Work? Evidence from State Level Data." *Journal of Politics* 57(3):796-811.
- McDonald, Michael. 2008. Voter Turnout. Accessed at http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm on February 13, 2010.
- McDonald, Michael. 2009. The Return of the Voter: Voter Turnout in the 2008 Presidential Election. *The Forum* 6 (4), pp. 1-10.
- Plouffe, David. 2009. *The Audacity to Win: The Inside Story and Lessons of Barack Obama's Historic Victory*. New York: Viking Press.
- Rhine, Staci. 1996. "An Analysis of the Impact of Registration Factors on Turnout in 1992." *Political Behavior* 18(2): 171-185.
- Rogers, Estelle H. 2009. "The National Voter Registration Act: Fifteen Years On." American Constitution Society for Law and Policy: Issue Brief. Available at www.acslaw.org.
- Rosenstone, Steven J. and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan.
- Scheele, Raymond H., Joseph Losco, Gary Crawley, and Sally Jo Vasicko. 2008. *Assessing the Impact of Vote Centers on Electoral Behavior: An Examination of Indiana Vote Centers in the 2007 Municipal Elections*. Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual meeting, Chicago, IL, April 4.
- Scheele, Raymond H., Joseph Losco, Gary Crawley, and Sally Jo Vasicko. 2009. *Improving Electoral Administration with Vote Centers: Toward a National Model*. Paper delivered at the Western Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Vancouver, BC, March 19.
- Stein, Robert and Patricia Garcia-Monet. 1997. "Voting Early, But Not Often." *Social Sciences Quarterly* 78: 657-677.
- Stein, R. M., Jan Leighley, and Christopher Owens. 2005. Who Votes, Who Doesn't, and What Can Be Done. Report to the Federal Commission on Election Reform.
- Stein, Robert M. and Greg Vonnahme. 2006. "Election Day Vote Centers and Voter Turnout." Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.
- Stein, Robert M. and Greg Vonnahme. 2008. "Engaging the Unengaged Voter: Vote Centers and Voter Turnout." *The Journal of Politics* 70: 1-11.
- Teixeira, Guy. 1992. *The Disappearing American Voter*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2008. Current Population Survey: Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008 - Detailed Tables. Accessed at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/2008/tables.html> on February 13, 2010.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2006. Current Population Survey: Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008 - Detailed Tables. Accessed at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/2006/tables.html> on February 13, 2010.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2004. U.S. Voter Turnout Up in 2004, Census Bureau Reports. Accessed at <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/voting/004986.html> on February 13, 2010.

U.S. Election Assistance Commission. 2009. *2008 Election Administration and Voting Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Election Assistance Commission, November.