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Tracy Skopek and Andrew Garner

Much research over the years has been conducted on the voting participation of various minority groups such as African Americans and Hispanics.[1] However, less attention has been paid in the scholarly literature to voter turnout among Native American voters. According to the 2010 US Census, Native Americans make up only about 1.7 percent of the overall population.[2] Despite this small national population, they nonetheless comprise a significant percent of the population in several states such as Alaska (19.5 percent), Oklahoma (12.9 percent), and New Mexico (10.7 percent). In these states, the Indian vote has the potential to influence local, state, and even national elections.[3] Generally, past studies have shown that the political participation of ethnic and racial minorities tends to be lower than that of other citizens.[4] Likewise, other research has found that Native American voter turnout in national elections is lower than that of the general population even after controlling for factors such as education, income, and other explanations of voting participation.[5] Yet little research has been conducted on changes in this turnout gap between Native Americans and non-Native Americans over the past several decades. Below we examine the extant literature on Native American political

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participation, including factors that decrease turnout relative to the rest of the population as well as possible changes in the legal, cultural, and political environment that might have increased Native American turnout. Included in the list of potential factors changing the political environment is the complicated and nuanced role of casinos and reservation gaming on voter turnout. We then examine Native American turnout over time, using two separate and distinct data sets. Our findings show that not only has Native American turnout increased generally, but that the gap between Native Americans and the rest of the population has significantly declined.

PAST STUDIES ON NATIVE AMERICAN VOTING BEHAVIOR

Research on Native American voting behavior can be traced back to Helen Peterson's research in the 1950s examining election data in various western states.[6] Peterson concluded that in some states in the West, Native American voting was influential in election outcomes.[7] Similarly, Daniel McCool's study of Native American voter participation in Arizona from 1952–1980 argued that Indians often vote in surprising numbers.[8] One study of Navajo voter turnout in both local and state elections (including some US Senate races) from 1986–1994 argued that, contrary to the prevailing literature on turnout which indicates low overall rates among Indians, the Navajo had a turnout rate higher than other tribes.[9] Nationally, however, Native American turnout has been shown to be significantly lower than that of other citizens after controlling for common explanations of participation such as education and income.[10] Generally, most studies have found that, similar to other ethnic and racial minorities, Native Americans do not vote in national and state elections as often as other members of the population.

There are several explanations that help account for the historically low voter turnout and general lack of political participation among Native Americans in the past. One of the biggest obstacles to voter participation among Indians has been discrimination by state and local governments. Various discriminatory practices used by states over the years to inhibit Native American voting rights include constitutional prohibitions, residency requirements, and literacy tests.[11] These discriminatory practices—combined with a long-held mistrust of the federal government, a sense of separation from nontribal politics due to their semi-sovereign status, and a tribal culture based on a decentralized style of governance—helped contribute to lower voter turnout.

Native Americans were granted US citizenship in 1924 under the Indian Citizenship Act. While this act granted tribal members citizenship at the federal level with all rights accorded a US citizen, including the right to vote,

many states were resistant to the idea.[12] A number of states with large Native American populations have used a variety of tactics to hinder voting rights. Some states argued, even after the Indian Citizenship Act, that Indians were not in fact residents of the state and therefore ineligible to vote in state and local elections.[13] States also prevented Native American voting by excluding those considered "not taxed" from voter eligibility. Since many Native Americans on reservations are exempt from a variety of state and local taxes, such as property taxes, states were able to justify this means of keeping Indians off the voting rolls.[14] In addition, some states used methods to deny voting rights to Native Americans similar to those often used against African Americans. Literacy tests were widely used against many minority groups as a way to inhibit their voting rights. Well into the middle of the twentieth century, many Native Americans living on reservations still only spoke their native language. Because some Native Americans spoke only their tribal language, they were deemed illiterate and ineligible to vote. In addition, many of those educated in reservation schools could not pass the literacy tests required to vote due to severe inadequacy of that education.[15]

While subsequent court cases have helped eliminate many of the practices that prohibited voting, together with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, discrimination still remains. Even into the 1980s, states with large Native American populations such as New Mexico have sought legislative ways to prevent Indians on the reservations from voting in certain state and local elections.[16] Most such legislation fails, although more recent legal battles involving Native American voting rights focus on redistricting plans intended to dilute the Indian vote.[17]

Finally, tribal customs and culture can play a significant role in voter participation, as well. Among some Native American tribes, members actually consider it treason to vote in a nontribal election. While such views are not common on reservations, it is indicative of a culture that eschews political participation in national and state elections among Native Americans. Tribal elections are often considered the most important, and, in fact, many tribes hold such elections on different days than the general election.[18] The longstanding distrust between tribes and the federal government (as well as state governments) has evolved into a "complicated set of attitudes and values about their relationship to their nation and the United States that affects their involvement or lack of involvement in tribal, state and federal elections."[19] Research on political participation has long viewed a sense of civic duty to vote in elections as among the most important attitudinal explanations for voter turnout.[20] The findings by Wilkins and colleagues suggest that this sense of civic duty is reduced by tribal culture and there exists among some

Native Americans a cultural belief that values nonparticipation in federal and state elections.

A Changing Political Climate?

The historical pattern of discrimination against Native Americans combined with cultural values that reduce the importance of participation in United States elections (along with lower levels of education, income, and other resources that are correlated with the likelihood of voting) have created generally lower turnout rates relative to other United States citizens. However, there are several reasons to believe that different historical, cultural, and economic factors have reduced the turnout gap between Native Americans and other citizens in the United States.

First, with the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and subsequent court cases, much of the discrimination against Indians by states has been struck down by the court system. While discrimination still exists today toward many minority groups, Native Americans included, most of the blatant and widespread denial of voting rights has been eliminated via the legislative and judicial process. As noted above, most of the litigation and legal concerns raised by Native Americans regarding voting rights focus on the legislative redistricting process that can dilute the votes of minority populations. While research has shown that redistricting can lower participation by increasing information costs, institutional and legal barriers have been shown to have a much larger effect on turnout rates.[21]

In addition to the decline of discrimination, the significant economic development that has occurred due to reservation gaming might create a political climate more conducive to increased political participation among Native American tribes. Within the last twenty years, legalized gambling on Native American reservations has become a major source of economic development for many tribes and is now calculated to be a multibillion-dollar-per-year industry. Since the late 1970s with the opening of the first reservation bingo parlor in Florida, tribal governments have sought ways to gain access to casino operations and, once attained, to protect those enterprises. The advent of Indian gaming in recent years has in many ways reshaped the relationship among the tribes, states, and the federal government.

First, while Native Americans certainly are not new to lobbying in Washington—they have protected treaty rights for several centuries, for example—gaming wealth has given many tribes the resources necessary to make a significant impact.[22] Reservation gaming is likely to have brought greater wealth, education, and other resources that are strongly related to

political participation at the individual level. Education, income, and spare time are important explanations for political participation and voter turnout, as well as personal motivations such as feelings of efficacy or a sense of civic duty to participate in government.[23] Thus, in addition to the greater wealth and other resources, the greater involvement of tribes with local, state, and federal governments regarding reservation gaming could significantly change the traditional cultural obstacles to voting in United States elections.[24]

Yet, according to Rosenstone and Hansen's theory of participation, economic resources and individual motivations are only half of the explanation. These individual factors interact with the strategic motivations of politicians to win elections by mobilizing the electorate. As Rosenstone and Hansen find, the parties and candidates strategically mobilize those citizens who are most likely to vote and who provide resources such as campaign donations and volunteer services to their campaigns. "Because political leaders cannot afford to mobilize everyone," the authors write, "they concentrate their efforts on people they have the greatest chance of mobilizing."[25] If reservation gaming brought greater resources to Native American tribes in terms of lobbying governments and changing cultural views about political participation, then candidates and parties would begin to take notice of them as potential voters to be mobilized on Election Day. The result would be that voting in state and national elections would become more relevant as Native Americans saw a greater benefit from political participation.

As noted earlier, Native Americans represent a large portion of the population in several states, and evidence indicates that candidates for public office began to take notice of them in the 1990s as Indian gaming began to grow. David Mark has argued that Native Americans could be a "new swing vote" in these states.[26] Mark claims, for example, that in the 1992 presidential election the Native American vote helped Bill Clinton win Montana, a historically red state. Moreover, Mark identifies the Native American vote as being crucial in the 2002 South Dakota race for US Senate between Senator Tim Johnson (D) and US Representative John Thune (R). That same year, the Democratic National Committee also launched a major effort to gain Native votes in at least six states with large Indian populations. For the 2004 election, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the National Voice organized a major "Get Out the Native Vote" drive.[27] Such increased mobilization by candidates and parties beginning in the 1990s to register and increase turnout among Native Americans on Election Day presumably would result in a decline in the turnout gap between Native Americans and the rest of the citizenry.

In sum, the policy issues associated with reservation gaming, together with the monetary windfall gaming has afforded many reservations, may have acted

as a catalyst to thrust Native Americans into the political arena. This political activity can take a variety of forms, including such things as interest group behavior, campaign donations, and lobbying. The Abramoff scandal notwithstanding, tribes are becoming more politically savvy in terms of protecting their interests when it comes to gaming operations. This greater participation with state, local, and federal governments is likely to have affected Native American tribes in ways that facilitate greater voter turnout. The greater resources and willingness to participate in United States elections through donations and voter turnout, in turn, is likely to increase efforts by parties and campaigns to mobilize Native Americans. Tribes not only give money to campaigns to help elect those candidates most favorable to their gaming operations and economic development, but also view voting as a necessary part of their increased participation in the political arena.[28] Indeed, absent the votes needed to influence elections, political elites have little incentive to give attention to Native Americans.

Nonstructural factors would also contribute to a decline in the turnout gap. First, changes in the way in which the US Census bureau and survey firms categorize racial and ethnic groups could have led to an increase in the number of citizens self-identifying as American Indian. The number of citizens identifying as American Indian who had previously self-identified as "white" has increased, especially among mixed marriages, suggesting that Indian identity has become more appealing in recent years.[29] These citizens are less likely to be enrolled members of a recognized nation and less influenced by the cultural and attitudinal factors discussed above that have traditionally lowered Native American turnout. This change in patterns of self-identification would also be affected by the statistical concept of selection bias: that is, citizens who are already more likely to turn out on Election Day increasingly self-select into Indian identification, leading to an increase in turnout rates among those identifying as Native Americans.

Second, studies have shown a pattern of urbanization among many Native Americans.[30] American Indians who move to cities would presumably be less influenced by the traditional cultural factors that reduce turnout among Indian tribes and are more likely to be exposed to mobilization efforts by political parties that boost turnout. Moreover, it is possible that such urbanization would affect education levels, income, and other demographic characteristics associated with higher voter turnout. There is robust debate about differences in turnout rates between urban and rural voters, with some earlier research suggesting that urban citizens were less likely to vote than rural voters.[31] However, movement among Native Americans from reservations to urban areas, especially large cities, would likely result in higher overall turnout rates that are independent of the role of casinos and Indian gaming discussed above.

No single factor is likely to have driven large-scale and aggregate changes in Native American turnout over the past several decades. However, several factors point to a changing political climate that would suggest an increase in Native American turnout and a decline in the turnout gap between Native Americans and other citizens in the United States.

Data and Methods

The lack of quality data on Native American political participation has been a constant concern for past studies. Most election surveys do not include a large enough subsample of Native Americans to make statistical analysis feasible, while aggregate data are prone to ecological fallacy concerns, such as confusion between individual correlations and aggregate ones. The data for this paper are drawn from two sources designed to alleviate the small subsample problem. First, we rely on the pooled American National Election Survey (ANES) cumulative file to increase the sample size of Native Americans.[32] The sample size for each biannual survey ranges between about 1,200 to about 2,700 respondents, depending upon the election year. Pooling the surveys from 1972–2008, however, results in a sample size of over 34,000, including nearly 1,000 Native American respondents. While the subsample of American Indians is still relatively small, the ANES nonetheless offers a longer time period for studying changes in American Indian turnout behavior. Second, we supplement the ANES with 1996–2008 data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the United States Census Bureau.[33] The CPS is a significantly larger national survey with sample sizes exceeding 120,000 respondents per election year, ranging from about 1,500 to about 1,850 American Indian respondents, depending upon year.

Voter turnout varies sharply between presidential and midterm election years, with midterm elections typically drawing substantially fewer voters than presidential elections. Because of the volatility across time due to the lower turnout in midterm years, only data from presidential election years are included in the analysis. Finally, to allow the estimates from our CPS models to be comparable with past research, we follow Peterson's study in limiting the analysis to the states with higher numbers of American Indian respondents.[34] These states include Arizona, Florida, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota.[35] The smallest subsample of American Indians was 619 respondents in 2008 and the highest was 867 respondents in 1996.

For both data sets, the dependent variable is coded one if the respondent voted in the general election and zero if the respondent did not vote. The models are estimated using logistic regression. The independent variables

include a dummy variable indicating whether the respondent identifies as an American Indian and a second dummy indicating whether the respondent is female. The respondent's age is measured in years for both data sets, as well. For the ANES models, education is measured on a four-point scale ranging from high school or below to college graduate while family income is measured on a five-point categorical scale. For the CPS models, education is measured on a six-point scale with "less than a high school diploma" coded as zero and "Bachelor's degree or higher" coded as five, while total household income is measured using a sixteen-point categorical scale that includes various ranges of income levels.[36] In addition, dummy variables for each state were included in the CPS models with Arizona excluded as the baseline. These state dummies capture interstate differences in political culture and unique factors that can affect turnout rates.

The ANES model also includes a time trend variable that begins in 1980 (coded zero) and ends in 2008 (coded thirty-six).[37] This time trend variable is interacted with the American Indian dummy variable to model the change in the difference in turnout between American Indians and the rest of the population over time. The American Indian coefficient is expected to be negative and statistically significant, indicating lower turnout among Native Americans than among non-Native Americans, while the interaction term is expected to be positive and statistically significant, indicating that the difference between American Indians and other citizens has declined from 1980 to 2008. Finally, pooling across ANES election surveys from presidential election years means that respondents are clustered by state and election year in the data set. The logistic regression model for the ANES data was estimated using clustered standard errors (clustered by state and year) to ensure that the standard errors are not artificially inflated due to the pooling of data across surveys.

Results

Table 1 shows the logistic regression results for the ANES model. As expected, the interaction term (Native Americans x Time) is positive and statistically significant at greater than the .01 significance level. The Native American coefficient indicates how different Native American turnout is from the other respondents. Thus, a negative coefficient indicates that Native Americans are less likely to turn out than are other respondents, as expected. The interaction term indicates the degree to which the gap between Native Americans and other citizens has changed over time. A positive interaction term therefore shows that the size of the turnout gap has shrunk, indicating that the difference (or gap) between Native Americans and the rest of the respondents was

larger in 1980 than it was in 2008. For 1980, the coefficient for American Indian is -1.559, but declines to -0.083 by 2008.[38] The control variables in the model operate as expected. Voter turnout increases with education, income, age, and gender (voter turnout being higher for women than for men). All four coefficients were statistically significant at traditional significance levels and each has a substantive effect on voter turnout. As with ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, the logistic regression model accounts for the effects of these variables simultaneously.

The results for the CPS models are shown in table 2. Each column includes the results for the logistic regression model for the four most recent presidential elections. As with the ANES model, the coefficients for gender, education, income, and age were strong and statistically significant at greater than the .01 significance level across all four presidential election years. Women, older Americans, and those with higher education levels and incomes had the highest probability of voting. Moreover, the size of the coefficients change little

Table 1. Logistic Regression Results Predicting Turnout, ANES Model

	ANES 1980–2008 Turnout
Native American	-1.559***
	(0.369)
Native American	0.041***
(x Time)	(0.016)
Time	-0.000
	(0.004)
Female	0.134**
	(0.053)
Education	0.786***
	(0.033)
Income	0.391***
	(0.024)
Age	0.035***
	(0.001)
Constant	-2.369***
	(0.119)
Observations	12,243
Log-likelihood	-5945.88
Proportional Reduction in Error	8.15%

Note: Cell entries are unstandardized logistic regression coefficients with clustered standard errors (state and year) in parentheses.

*** $p<0.01$; ** $p<0.05$; * $p<0.1$

across all four models, indicating considerable robustness in the effect of these variables on turnout across time.[39] As indicated in the previous section, the state dummy variables capture interstate variation in voter turnout rates, most likely due to differences in political culture and unique political events. Most of these coefficients were positive and statistically significant at greater than the .10 significance level, indicating that turnout rates in the six states were higher than turnout rates in Arizona (the baseline).

In contrast, the coefficient for American Indian is negative and large for the 1996 and 2000 models, indicating that American Indians are substantially less likely to vote than other citizens. By 2004, however, the negative coefficient has shrunk to -0.007 and is no longer statistically significant at conventional significant levels ($p < 0.954$). Likewise, in 2008, the coefficient is small, positive, but not statistically significant at conventional levels ($p < .704$). These results are consistent with those from the ANES showing that the turnout gap has declined considerably over time, to the point that as of 2008 there is essentially no difference in turnout between American Indians and other citizens.

While the changes in the size of the coefficients indicate that the turnout gap between American Indians and other citizens has significantly declined over time, the coefficients in logistic regression models must be converted to predicted probabilities in order to gauge the substantive effect of the variables. Table 3 shows the predicted probability of turnout (converted to percentages) for American Indians and non-American Indians for each election year included in the ANES and CPS analyses. In addition, the difference in predicted turnout between American Indians and non-American Indians is also shown for each election year. In 1980, the ANES model predicts that 79.4 percent of other citizens would indicate an intention to vote in the general election while only 53 percent of American Indians would indicate vote intention, a difference in turnout rate of about 26 percent. By 2008, the difference in turnout rates had declined to only about 1 percent. Similarly, the CPS shows a decline in the difference in turnout rates between Native Americans and non-Native Americans. In 1996 and 2000, the difference was statistically significant and the turnout rate for Native Americans was about 5.5 percent lower than for non-Native Americans. During 2000 and 2004, however, the difference was not statistically significant at the .10 significance level and the predicted turnout rates were virtually identical.

Table 2. Logistic Regression Results Predicting Turnout, CPS Models

	1996 Turnout	2000 Turnout	2004 Turnout	2008 Turnout
Native American	-0.192*	-0.288**	-0.007	0.050
	(0.112)	(0.115)	(0.125)	(0.133)
Female	0.216***	0.177***	0.219***	0.214***
	(0.047)	(0.049)	(0.053)	(0.057)
Education	0.436***	0.434***	0.464***	0.484***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.024)
Income	0.112***	0.116***	0.101***	0.097***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Age	0.037***	0.037***	0.035***	0.029***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
North Dakota	0.700***	0.966***	0.278**	0.205*
	(0.102)	(0.103)	(0.109)	(0.115)
South Dakota	0.661***	0.539***	0.124	0.322***
	(0.101)	(0.099)	(0.104)	(0.112)
Montana	0.866***	0.836***	0.115	0.300**
	(0.101)	(0.100)	(0.114)	(0.124)
Oklahoma	0.465***	0.558***	-0.034	-0.014
	(0.097)	(0.102)	(0.111)	(0.116)
Florida	0.236***	0.441***	0.113	0.501***
	(0.082)	(0.080)	(0.093)	(0.103)
New Mexico	0.407***	0.432***	0.072	0.278**
	(0.099)	(0.100)	(0.114)	(0.132)
Constant	-3.737***	-3.925***	-3.058***	-3.110***
	(0.130)	(0.137)	(0.142)	(0.156)
N =	9,801	9,234	8,786	7,635
Log-likelihood	-5484.76	-5070.26	-4374.09	-3788.55
Proportional Reduction of Error	21.52%	19.44%	9.48%	9.58%

Note: Cell entries are unstandardized logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01; ** p<0.05; * p<0.1
Source: Current Population Survey, United States Census Bureau.

TABLE 3. PREDICTED PROBABILITIES OF TURNOUT BY ELECTION YEAR

Year	American National Election Survey			Current Population Survey (Census)		
	Non-Native American	Native American	Difference	Non-Native American	Native American	Difference
1980	79.4%	53.0%	-26.4	na	na	na
1984	79.4%	57.1%	-22.3	na	na	na
1988	79.4%	61.1%	-18.3	na	na	na
1992	79.3%	64.9%	-14.4	na	na	na
1996	79.3%	68.5%	-10.8	66.4%	62.0%	-4.4
2000	79.3%	71.9%	-7.4	68.6%	62.0%	-6.6
2004	79.3%	75.2%	-4.1	77.3%	77.1%	-0.2
2008	79.3%	78.1%	-1.2	77.6%	78.4%	0.8

Note: Cell entries are the predicted percent turnout for Non-American Indians and American Indians; percent change is the percent change in predicted turnout between Non-American Indian and American Indians.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has examined the decreasing gap in voter turnout between Native Americans and non-Native Americans over the past several decades. Like other racial and ethnic minorities, Native Americans traditionally have been less likely than other citizens to participate in United States elections. It is clear that the legal, cultural, and political climate has changed over the past several decades in ways that have facilitated greater Native American voter turnout, thus closing the traditional gap between Native Americans and other citizens. Our findings from two separate data sets show that this turnout gap has largely disappeared in recent years, with Native Americans voting at rates not significantly different from the rest of the population. This trend of a disappearing turnout gap, moreover, holds after controlling for factors such as education, income, and other predictors of voter turnout.

The legal, cultural, and political changes outlined above are likely to affect Native American turnout in complex and nuanced ways. Investigating the separate and distinct effect of each causal mechanism is beyond the scope of this paper and it is likely that some combination or interaction of these trends best explains the disappearing turnout gap between Native Americans and non-Native Americans. For example, to whatever extent Indian gaming has increased education, income, and altered attitudes about tribal members' role in American politics, these changes would make American Indians more attractive targets for mobilization by political parties. We would note, however, that our data merely shows that the traditional voter turnout gap between Native Americans and non-Native Americans has declined in recent years.

Future research on Native American turnout should focus on trying to determine the precise causal mechanisms that best explain this declining gap and how these mechanisms might work to reinforce one another.

While no single factor is likely to explain the declining gap, the ANES data set can provide some tentative insight into changes in the attitudinal, informational, and behavioral factors underlying Native American political participation. Table 4 shows attitudinal, informational, and participation differences between Native Americans and other citizens for election years prior to 1990 and those after 1990. Because of the small subsample of Native Americans in the ANES, pooling across a large number of years was necessary

TABLE 4. CHANGE IN NATIVE AMERICAN POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND PARTICIPATION BEFORE AND AFTER 1990

	Native American	Non-Native American	Difference	P-value
Care which party wins				
Pre-1990	0.53	0.60	-0.07	0.02
Post-1990	0.80	0.79	0.02	0.59
Interest in Election				
Pre-1990	1.60	1.81	-0.15	0.00
Post-1990	1.76	1.82	-0.06	0.25
Politics is too complicated for a person like me				
Pre-1990	1.50	1.45	0.05	0.42
Post-1990	1.37	1.38	-0.01	0.90
Level of Political Information				
Pre-1990	1.72	2.02	-0.30	0.00
Post-1990	2.08	2.27	-0.19	0.00
Discuss politics				
Pre-1990	0.52	0.70	-0.18	0.00
Post-1990	0.73	0.80	-0.06	0.00
Saw campaign information on television				
Pre-1990	0.72	0.78	-0.06	0.01
Post-1990	0.83	0.82	0.01	0.70
Read campaign information in newspaper				
Pre-1990	0.55	0.69	-0.14	0.00
Post-1990	0.60	0.63	-0.03	0.38

for statistical inference.[40] Thus, prior to 1990, Native Americans were less likely to respond that they cared which party won the election than the rest of the population, a difference that was significant at the .05 significance level (p < 0.02). After 1990, however, the difference between Native Americans and the rest of the population was extremely small and statistically insignificant (p < 0.59). The other variables examined show a similar pattern. Prior to 1990, Native Americans were significantly less likely to show interest in elections, had lower levels of political information, and were less likely to discuss politics through traditional media outlets than the rest of the population. After 1990, however, Native Americans were not statistically different from non-Native Americans on all but two of these attitudinal/informational variables. While the direct and indirect effects that reservation gaming has had on these attitudinal differences are unclear from the present data, these results do provide evidence that significant attitudinal and cultural changes among Native Americans have occurred regarding their involvement with United States elections and political campaigns.

The findings presented above have important political and policy implications for Native Americans. It is easier for politicians and other elites to overlook the policy demands and needs of groups with traditionally low levels of voting participation, creating biases in the representation of minority interests and policy concerns. As Native American turnout rates increase, especially in states where Native Americans represent a large percent of the population, it is likely that candidates and parties will devote more attention to their policy desires in an effort to win their electoral support. If Native Americans are becoming a new swing vote, as David Mark suggests, then the increase in voter turnout demonstrated in this article suggests that their influence in politics will continue to grow. As noted above, there has been considerable research conducted on the political behavior and policy influence of African American and Latino voters. Yet the potential influence of Native Americans that could result from increased voting participation suggests the need for greater scholarly attention to an often-overlooked, but increasingly important, group in American politics.

NOTES

1. See Jeff J. Corntassel and Richard C. Witmer, "American Indian Tribal Government Support of Office Seekers: Findings from the 1994 Election," *Social Science Journal* 34 (1997): 511–25; Arthur H. Miller, Patricia Gurin, Gerald Gurin, and Oksana Malanchuck, "Group Consciousness and Political Participation," *American Journal of Political Science* 25, no. 3 (1981): 494–511; Carol J. Uhlaner, Bruce E. Cain, and D. Roderick Kiewiet, "Political Participation of Ethnic Minorities in the

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2. US Census Bureau, 2010, "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010," http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-10.pdf.

3. David Mark, "A New Swing Vote?" *Campaigns and Elections* 23, no. 6 (2002): 9–10.

4. Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Steven J. Rosenston and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2003).

5. Geoffrey Peterson, "Native American Turnout in the 1990 and 1992 Elections," *American Indian Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1997): 321–31.

6. Helen Peterson, "American Indian Political Participation," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 311 (1957): 116–26.

7. See also Daniel McCool, Susan M. Olson, and Jennifer L. Robinson, *Native Vote: American Indians, The Voting Rights Act, and the Right to Vote* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

8. Daniel McCool, "Indian Voting," *American Indian Policy in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Vine Deloria Jr. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 105–134.

9. Jerry D. Stubben, *Native Americans and Political Participation* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006).

10. Peterson, "Native American Turnout in the 1990 and 1992 Elections," 315.

11. McCool, "Indian Voting"; McCool, Olson, and Robinson, *Native Vote*.

12. David E. Wilkins, *American Indian Politics and the American Political System*, 2nd edition (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007).

13. McCool, Olson, and Robinson, *Native Vote*, 11.

14. Ibid., 13.

15. Ibid., 17; Wilkins, *American Indian Politics*.

16. Stubben, *Native Americans and Political Participation*.

17. Wilkins, *American Indian Politics*.

18. Ibid.; David E. Wilkins and Heidi Kiiwetinepineskiik Stark, *American Indian Politics and the Political System*, 3rd edition (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 11.

19. Wilkins and Stark, *American Indian Politics*, 171.

20. Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes, *The American Voter*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960); William H. Riker and Peter C. Ordeshook, "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting," *American Political Science Review* 62, no. 1 (1968): 25–42.

21. Danny Hayes and Seth C. McKee, "The Participatory Effects of Redistricting," *American Journal of Political Science* 53, no. 4 (2009): 1006–23; Steven J. Rosenstone and Raymond E. Wolfinger, "The Effect of Registration Laws on Voter Turnout," *American Political Science Review* 72, no. 1 (1978): 22–45.

22. Wilkins and Stark, *American Indian Politics.*

23. Rosenstone and Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America.*

24. Obviously, the direct effect of casino gambling would be found among Native Americans on the reservations where casinos were located, as opposed to tribes without gaming establishments. However, an indirect effect is also possible in those cases in which young citizens raised on the reservation but move to more urban areas could also take with them changed values and attitudes about their role as citizens in government.

25. Ibid., 31.

26. Mark, "A New Swing Vote?"

27. Wilkins and Stark, *American Indian Politics.*

28. Ibid.; Corntassel and Witmer, "American Indian Tribal Government Suport of Office Seekers."

29. Nancy Shoemaker, *American Indian Population Recovery in the Twentieth Century* (New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1999).

30. Matthew C. Snipp, "Sociological Perspectives on American Indians," *Annual Review of Sociology* 18 (1992): 351–71.

31. Verba and Nie, *Participation in America*; Raymond E Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

32. American National Election Studies (ANES) Cumulative Data File, 1948–2008 (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 2011-12-05), DOI: 10.3886/ICPSR08475.v14.

33. US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Survey: Annual Demographic File* (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 2008.

34. Peterson, "Native American Turnout in the 1990 and 1992 Elections," 321.

35. Although California has a larger number of Native Americans than the states included in the analysis, the percentage of Native Americans in the overall population is much lower.

36. This model specification essentially replicates the models estimated by Peterson (1997) with the exception of education. Peterson's model included education in years while our model includes a six-point scale.

37. Although the ANES dataset includes data from previous years, beginning in 1972, there was a moderate drop in voter turnout between American Indians and other citizens between 1972 and 1980 (see Supplementary File for raw turnout data from the ANES). Since 1980, however, the increase in American Indian turnout has been steady and approximately linear. Thus, we begin the analysis in 1980 to more accurately model the increase in American Indian turnout over the past three and a half decades.

38. To calculate the coefficient for American Indian for a given year, the American Indian coefficient (-1.559) is added to the interaction term multiplied by the time trend variable. For 1980, time equals zero and thus the coefficient for American Indian is -1.559 * (0.041*0) = -1.559. For 2008, the time trend variable equals 36 and therefore the coefficient for American Indian is -1.559 * (0.041*36) = -0.083.

39. There is no interaction term in these models because the CPS data sets were not pooled across years. An auxiliary analysis pooling the models produced results consistent with those of the split-sample models presented in table 2.

40. The cut point of 1990 was also chosen because it represents the midpoint between the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 and the following presidential election. Indian gaming began to grow during the early 1990s as reservations began building and operating casinos and other forms of gaming.