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Type vs. Turnout:
Correlations Between
Types of Higher Education Institutions
And Student Voter Turnout

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty and the Honors Program
Of the University of San Diego

By
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Political Science
2023

Introduction:

In several years, today's youth will hold political offices, inform policy choices, and represent the United States globally. However, the voice of Generation Z is limited, as many in the 18-25 age demographic do not participate in the electoral processes. Youth turnout has historically been low, with a wide range of research exploring this phenomenon and the reasons behind it. Although low, youth voter turnout can play a big role in the outcome of elections, with the youth electorate often tipping the scales in favor of candidates in otherwise competitive elections. In this paper, I will explore how higher education, which serves as a valuable tool during this formative time in young adults' lives, impacts their political participation, specifically in voting. I will focus on how types of higher education institutions and the characteristics that differentiate them might impact young adults' propensity to vote and explore the potential effect of liberal arts education as a promoter of political discussion and critical thinking.

Literature Review:

Although gradually increasing, youth turnout has been historically low across the globe (Fraga and Holbein 2020). Many attribute this low level of participation in the electoral system to a lack of youth representation and interest in politics (Henn, Weinstein, and Forrest 2005). Youth don't feel as though their vote will matter due to a preexisting lack of representation. This can discourage them from voting as they see the costs of voting as outweighing the benefits of making their voices heard.

Overall, younger people have consistently voted at lower rates relative to older people (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). In 2016, less than 50% of youth, aged 18-29 voted, as compared to over 65% of those aged 45-64 (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). Studies find that lower youth voter turnout is linked to the presence of political apathy among young adults. Low turnout in Britain

has been linked to a lack of political efficacy and many youth believe that the government did not represent their concerns effectively, hence rendering their political opinions unimportant and useless (Henn, Weinstein, and Forrest 2005). Other studies refer to the “paradox of voting,” which points to the cost/benefit deficit of voting as a primary dissuader of voting. That is to say, the high cost of voting outweighs the limited benefits of voting (Ferejohn and Fiorina 1974).

There are several factors unique to young voters that can also have an impact on their voter turnout. Many youth have priorities such as education, getting a career, or meeting a significant other which can cause them to ignore politics and undervalue political participation (Strate et al. 1989). Additionally, younger people have a higher tendency to move and relocate than those who are older. This can impact voter turnout as those who live in an area for a shorter period of time are less likely to vote due to the costs associated with getting registered in that area or obtaining an absentee ballot (Conway 2000, 23). While research reflects some of the reasons why voter turnout specifically among youth may be low, it can also give insight into factors that indicate higher turnout rates. There is a correlation between competitive states and voter turnout within local and federal elections, explaining why swing states see higher voter turnout rates overall (Engstrom 2012). This is not exclusive to young voters within swing states, but this phenomenon disproportionately impacts youth voters to an extent. Rural versus urban geographics can also impact voter turnout rates. Those located farther from in-person voting sites in more rural areas vote less frequently than those with close access to voting sites in more urban areas (Dyck and Gimpel 2005). This is not only due to the access from the voting site but also the lack or presence of public transportation in the area. The specifics of how the prevalence of mail-in voting impacts voter turnout are unclear and research is mixed surrounding the impact this has on those in different geographical areas (Dubin and Kalsow 1996). Centralization, that is

the presence of voter sites in areas where people work, shop, and travel has been correlated with increased voter turnout rates, further emphasizing how availability and access can play a role in impacting turnout (Stein and Vonnahme 2012).

The presence of education impacts youth voter turnout more exclusively than other age ranges (Fraga and Holbein 2020). Researchers found that education can help to increase voter turnout among youth, even in the presence of other factors such as low socioeconomic status, which can hinder turnout rates (Pacheco 2008). Although education is indicative of higher turnout rates, there is no evidence that the quality of the institution causes this (Hillygus 2005). Being in an “educational environment,” regardless of the quality, is a primary motivator of increased voter turnout among youth (Tenn 2007). This environment fosters the tools and skills needed to successfully navigate research and information regarding elections, meaning that students can overcome the costs associated with elections adequately compared to those with less education (Dawes, Okbay, Oskarsson et. al. 2021). Relating to higher education specifically, research indicates that being in a college or university environment allows for free access to political information. Additionally, youth have the power to be more social and engage in political discourse with others due to the structure of living on-campus, extracurriculars, and class size to name a few (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, 57). Past research has also demonstrated that overall, college coursework and voter turnout are correlated, with those majoring in STEM-centered subjects like engineering or math having lower turnout rates than those majoring in the humanities and hence taking more humanities-based classes (Hillygus 2005). Further research demonstrates that students who participated in critical discussion about issues in politics voted at higher rates than those who did not participate. Even those who were

required by their professors to engage in such discourse produced increased rates of turnout compared to those who did not attend (Bogard, Sheinheit, and Clarke 2008).

Schools that choose to emphasize the liberal arts and humanities subjects are often referred to as Liberal Arts Institutions. These institutions stress interdisciplinary learning, requiring their students to take several classes outside their major in philosophy, the arts, and social sciences (Godwin and Altbach 2016). Researchers agree that Liberal Arts institutions are beginning to dominate the realm of postsecondary education, both within and outside of the United States (Godwin and Altbach 2016). Liberal arts institutions can be classified by several notable characteristics, including a high population of residential students and small class sizes which allow for class discussion in addition to the interdisciplinary curriculum (Brighouse 2019). Although these individual criteria are not exclusive to liberal arts institutions, it is their collective presence that defines a school as being a Liberal Arts institution.

The echo chamber effect emphasizes why requiring students to take courses in disciplines outside of their major could be beneficial in promoting critical and civic discussion. The echo chamber effect is regularly applied to social media usage and argues that online media users separate themselves from others by consuming one-sided content (Chan, Zhao, and Lee 2023). In doing so, they effectively prevent themselves from being exposed to other worldviews.

Although echo chamber theory regularly operates within the context of social media and news intake, one can also apply it to education. Being in a specialized school such as a business school or a science school can expose students to a limited view, as they are surrounded by people with fairly common interests. This can prevent students from being exposed to other viewpoints, which in turn can breed critical and civic discussion. Research shows that youth are less likely to be impacted by echo chamber effects and that through education overall, students can become

more open to new ideas and experiences (Chan, Zhao, and Lee 2023). Additionally, because young adults tend to be less entrenched in ideas and values, they are less likely to be ingrained in an echo chamber (Chan, Zhao, and Lee 2023). This demonstrates the potential for youth to be open-minded to new ideas and critical discussion.

In regard to how class size can have an impact on critical thinking and civic engagement, research has demonstrated that on test scores, there is very little difference between large and small class sizes (McKeachie 1980). When exploring different desired educational outcomes, however, McKeachie found that larger class sizes were not as effective in areas of retention, critical thinking, and attitude change (McKeachie 1980). This may be due to the fact that faculty can focus more on individual students when the class size is smaller. Additionally, larger class sizes often operate with a lecture-heavy structure whereas smaller class sizes allow for group work and a wider variety of activities within class (McKeachie 1980). These features can further emphasize critical thinking and discussion in smaller class sizes compared to larger ones.

Overall, research regarding the impact of education on voter turnout is plentiful. Firstly, research has shown that overall, education, regardless of quality, does yield higher rates of turnout. This is likely due to the presence of critical discussion that happens within college classes. It is also evident through research that features within higher education both related to curriculum and structure can encourage critical thinking and civic engagement amongst students. Humanities-based coursework often encourages students to reflect on and discuss concepts related to morals, current events, and sociological issues in a way that encourages civic engagement. Structural components such as small class sizes and the exclusion of specialized schools and programs can also yield more quality and in-depth critical discussion in the classroom as well as exposure to different ideas and values from other students. The ways in

which educational institutions encourage civic participation can translate into high levels of participation through voting on behalf of their students. There is little data on whether the formal designation of “Liberal Arts institution” and its criteria impact voter turnout. Furthermore, while it can be argued that separate factors of higher education and humanities classes might have a relationship with turnout rates, the unique criteria that unite Liberal Arts colleges have not been explored readily regarding their impact on turnout.

Hypothesis:

It is clear that liberal arts colleges are unique compared to other kinds of institutions; however, it is unclear how this type of institution’s unique characteristics may correlate with varying rates of voter turnout. In exploring this question, I examined several variables both independently and in relation to each other in order to form a hypothesis.

Research demonstrates that those who take more humanities-based courses and are exposed more to the humanities are more likely to vote than those in STEM disciplines (Hillygus 2005). Given that liberal arts colleges emphasize humanities throughout their curriculum and often have an absence of specialized programs and schools that prevent students from being exposed to such disciplines, it is possible that this could have an impact on turnout rates. Additionally, research has shown that when civil discourse is promoted within higher education, voter turnout rates are higher (Bogard, Sheinheit, and Clarke 2008).

Some characteristics that can promote civil discourse among students include a large on-campus residential population where students from different backgrounds are living together, small class sizes, which allow students to connect with their peers and professors, and a small overall student population, which allows students to form deeper connections with their peers. Also, the theory of the echo chamber demonstrates how specialized schools and programs which

segregate students by major or discipline, can negatively impact their ability to have critical discussion with others.

In addition to these characteristics which promote civil discourse, one can also explore how the paradox of voting plays out among college students. Schools with a higher out-of-state population may see lower rates of turnout because the costs of having to file for an absentee ballot or re-register outweigh the benefits of voting. Research has also shown that states perceived to be swing/battleground states yield higher rates of turnout overall. Hence, this variable, although not directly related to characteristics of higher education institutions, will need to be acknowledged.

Given these considerations, I hypothesize that liberal arts colleges produce higher levels of voter turnout in comparison to national universities and regional colleges.

Cases:

Studies have examined groups of students and non-students to examine the role that education plays in voter turnout overall (Dawes, Okbay, Oskarsson et. al. 2021). Additionally, other research has examined a small cohort of past graduates from specific universities or regions in a longitudinal format to identify how their political involvement has changed over time (Hillygus, 2005). I will focus on different kinds of higher education institutions rather than the presence versus absence of education. Additionally, in order to get a representative sample of schools, I will be focusing on multiple schools in different regions rather than using a case study approach of looking at only one school.

For my cases, I will be using higher education institutions that participated in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in both 2016 and 2020. I have chosen to gather data on these cases because they all have accessible voter turnout rate information which has been formulated

through the ALL IN organization using data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. This organization cross-references public voting records with student enrollment records. This ensures that the data is accurate and is a credible source. Additionally, these cases all offer information about their school's voter turnout rates in similar formats, and the data is all measured by the same metrics. By choosing to participate in this challenge, these schools have made their voter turnout information publicly accessible hence it is ethical to utilize it in my research. The data reflects each university's overall turnout rates and does not include information about specific individuals which also ensures that its use is ethical. All of my data comes from schools that have chosen to participate in the ALL IN Challenge so there is a possibility of selection bias as the kinds of schools that may participate in this challenge may differ from those that do not. Given that I am not looking at participation in this challenge or lack thereof as a factor relevant to my research question, this potential bias holds no bearing on my final conclusions.

When categorizing schools based on institution type, I utilized U.S. News' classifications for National Liberal Arts Colleges, National Universities, and Regional Colleges¹. These classifications were created using ten main categories outlined in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education's Basic Classification System, which is widely used within higher education research. These categories were then split into four main groupings: National Liberal Arts Colleges, National Universities, Regional Colleges, and Regional Universities, the first three of which I am focusing on for this study. The definition of each type of institution is as follows:

- National Liberal Arts College

¹ All definitions come from U.S. News Best Colleges Ranking Category Definitions

- Liberal arts colleges are institutions that prioritize undergraduate learning meaning that they have little to no graduate student population. Additionally, liberal arts colleges award at least 50% of their degrees in majors rooted in the liberal arts.
- National University
 - National universities strongly emphasize research and traditionally have a student body made up of some combination of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students. Additionally, some universities in this category offer professional degrees such as M.D.s, J.D.s and Pharm. D.s.
- Regional College
 - Regional colleges are similar to liberal arts colleges in that they traditionally focus on undergraduate study. However, unlike liberal arts colleges, they grant less than 50% of their degrees in liberal arts-related majors.

When controlling for swing state designation, I used Politico's reports of swing states during the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections. These swing states were designated as such by Politico by looking at polling, demography, voter registration, recent and past electoral history, and conversations with campaigns, pollsters, and political operatives (Politico 2020). This is important because the public perception of a state as a swing state impacts the civic participation of the residents in that state. As pollsters, campaigns, and the general public were approached in order to make these designations, it is evident that these are states that the average citizen believes to be a battleground/swing state. In 2016, I designated Ohio, Florida, Nevada, Colorado, North Carolina, Virginia, Iowa, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Michigan as

swing states. In 2020, I designated Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin as swing states in line with Politico's designations.

Methods:

Using all schools that participated in the All In Voter Challenge in 2016 and/or 2020, I culminated a list of 568 schools in total. From there, I worked on classifying each school as either a liberal arts college, a national university, a regional college, a regional university, or a special school as outlined by the U.S. News rankings and classifications.

Once I had my categories, I randomly selected a smaller number of institutions from each category. For National Universities, I randomly selected 76 out of 220 institutions. For liberal arts colleges, I randomly selected 75 out of 90 institutions. For regional colleges, I kept all institutions as there were only 30 total. This brought me to 181 institutions total used for my analysis.

My main outcome variables were student voter turnout rates in 2016 and 2020, and the change in turnout between years. The key independent variable that I'm interested in testing is institution type. I also gathered data on relevant variables that may also affect turnout². These include specialized colleges and programs³, faculty-to-student ratio, percentage live-on population, undergraduate enrollment, graduate enrollment, total enrollment, percentage out-of-state, and swing state designation⁴. Table 1A below shows a sample of my data and the way in which I chose to organize/format it, including how and when I used decimals, percentages, and dummy variables.

² Information and statistics came from U.S. News and each institution's professional website

³ Indicated using dummy variables, 1=National University, 2=Liberal Arts College, 3=Regional College

⁴ Expressed using dummy variables, 1=yes, the school had specialized programs and/or schools, 0=no, the school did not have specialized programs or schools.

Table 1A: Organization of Data

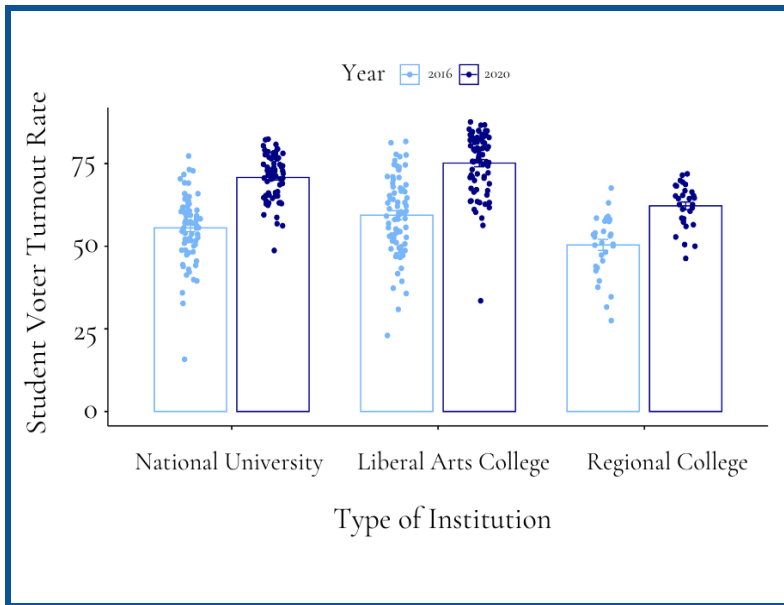
Institution Name	Type Of Institution	Turnout 2016	Turnout 2020	Change In Turnout 2016 2020	Specialized Colleges And Programs	Number Of Faculty Per Student	Percentage Live On Population	Undergrad Enrollment	Graduate Enrollment	Total Enrollment	Percentage Out Of State	Swing
Alvernia University	1	55.5	70.4	14.9	1	13	58	2032	504	2536	25.44	1
Barry University	1	58.3	63.2	4.9	1	15	34	3332	400	3732	46.33	1
Cardinal Stritch University	1	62.8	63.1	0.3	1	8	28.35	877	488	1365	14	1
Carnegie Mellon University	1	61.8	70.6	8.8	0	6	48	7365	8453	15818	86.98	1
Chapman University	1	59.3	79.5	20.2	0	12	38	7714	2277	9991	35.37	0
Clark Atlanta University	1	41.3	65.3	24	1	19	61	3427	573	4000	71.65	1
Clemson University	1	58.4	71.5	13.1	0	16	33	21653	5688	27341	35	0
Colorado State University	1	69.1	76.4	7.3	1	17	24	25362	7415	32777	23.2	0
Cornell University	1	47.4	66.1	18.7	1	9	47	15503	10079	25582	64.84	0
Dartmouth College	1	70.4	79.1	8.7	1	7	84	4556	2205	6761	96.75	0
Drake University	1	71.7	80.4	8.7	1	11	59	2902	1973	4875	71.52	0
Drexel University	1	58.2	72	13.8	1	11	20	12834	8850	21684	50	1

Descriptive Statistics:

In 2016, the percentage of citizens who voted in the national election was approximately 63% of the voting-age population (EAC 2017). In 2020, this percentage increased to 67.7% of the voting-age population, which was the highest turnout in a federal general election recorded to date by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC 2021). While turnout increased to new levels, youth voter turnout, meaning turnout of voting-eligible people aged 18-25, stayed fairly low. In 2016, only 44% of those in that age demographic voted (CIRCLE 2020). In 2020, this number increased by over 10%, as 55% of voting-eligible youth voted in this presidential election (CIRCLE 2020). When introducing education level as a variable, those with Bachelor's degrees voted at higher rates compared to high school graduates (Jordan 2021).

When specifically examining those in the college demographic, in 2016, college student turnout was 52%. In 2020, this increased to 66%, showing an increase of 14% from 2016 (IDHE 2021).

Table 2A: Student Voter Turnout by Institution Type



Different kinds of higher education institutions also yielded different levels of voter turnout on average. Within my selected cases, liberal arts institutions had an average voter turnout rate of 59.4% in 2016. National Universities had an average of 55.5% and regional colleges yielded 50.4%⁵. This

trend stayed the same in 2020, with liberal arts colleges yielding 75.2% voter turnout on average. National universities yielded 70.8% on average, and regional colleges had an average turnout rate of 62.2%⁶. In both 2016 and 2020, the difference between liberal arts colleges and national universities was statistically significant. These results as well as the variation present within each variable have been demonstrated in Table 2A. As one can see, in all three institution types, there was an increase in voter turnout from 2016 to 2020. Additionally, one can see that compared to national universities and liberal arts colleges, regional colleges have much lower turnout in both 2016 and 2020. While liberal arts colleges and national universities were closer in their levels, it is evident from the graph that liberal arts colleges had a slight edge in both 2016 and 2020.

This data demonstrates that on average, liberal arts colleges correlate with higher levels of voter turnout and that from 2016 to 2020, the differences in institutions and their voter turnout

⁵ See Appendix 1A

⁶ See Appendix 1B

rates have become more pronounced. Why this phenomenon is occurring may be found in the characteristics that differ between liberal arts institutions and other kinds of institutions.

I measured the following characteristics for each of the schools in my data: presence of specialized/graduate programs, number of faculty per student, percentage of students that live on campus, undergraduate enrollment, and graduate enrollment. I found notable differences in these variables across institution types and therefore included them in several models to explain variation in turnout ⁷.

Data Analysis and Findings

When exploring which characteristics had a significant relationship with voter turnout rates, I found the following:

In both 2016 and 2020, the initial significance of the difference in turnout between liberal arts colleges and national universities disappeared when I controlled for specialized colleges and programs. In 2016, schools with specialized colleges and programs saw 4% less turnout compared to those without. This was significant at the 0.05 level. Similarly, in 2020, schools with specialized colleges and programs saw a 3% lower turnout than schools without, which was also significant at the 0.05 level.

When I controlled for faculty-to-student ratio, the significance of my initial results disappeared in both 2016 and 2020. In 2016, for every faculty person that was added, there was a 0.5 decrease in turnout. In 2020, for every faculty person that was added, there was 0.39 less turnout. In both cases, it was significant at the 0.05 level.

⁷ See Appendix 2A

In the case of the percentage live-on population, the significance of my initial findings disappeared in both 2016 and 2020. In 2016, voter turnout decreased by 1% for every 1% increase in the percentage of students that lived on campus. This was not significant, however. In 2020, per the 1% increase in live-on population, there was an increase of 6%. This was significant at 0.1.

When controlling for undergraduate, graduate, and total population, the significance of my initial results remained in most cases ⁸. Additionally, none of the increases/decreases yielded per one additional student added had a statistically or substantively significant result.

When controlling for percent students out-of-state, the significance of my initial results disappeared in 2016. For every 1 additional percent of out-of-state students, there was a 5% increase in turnout. This was significant at the 0.1 level. In 2020, the significance of my initial results remained. For every 1 additional percent of out-of-state students, there was a 6% increase in turnout. This was significant at the 0.05 level.

Lastly, when I controlled for location in a swing state, the significance of my initial results remained in both 2016 and 2020. As individual variables, schools located in swing states saw an increase of 3.48 in their turnout in 2016. This was significant at the 0.05 level. Similarly, in 2020, schools in swing states saw an increase of 2.44 in their turnout. This was also significant at the 0.05 level.

Discussion and Conclusions

My research found that when I controlled for the presence of specialized colleges and programs, faculty-to-student ratio, percent live-on population, and percent out-of-state, the

⁸ Exceptions: Undergraduate population in 2016, total population in 2016

significance of my initial results disappeared in both 2016 and 2020⁹. This demonstrates that when these things were controlled for, I could no longer say that there was a difference between national universities and liberal arts colleges in their turnout. This may have to do with the way these variables presented variation amongst the different types of higher education. For example, national universities tend to have specialized colleges and programs, higher faculty-to-student ratio, lower percent live-on population, and fewer students from out-of-state compared to liberal arts colleges.

Out of these variables, the result I found most compelling was the change in significance that occurred when the faculty-to-student ratio was controlled for. Initially, liberal arts colleges saw a 3-4% higher turnout in comparison to national universities, which was statistically significant. When the faculty-to-student ratio was controlled for in 2016 however, this significance disappeared as shown in the table below¹⁰ :

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	63.8840	3.9300	16.255	<2e-16 ***
Type_Of_Institution2	1.2682	2.0794	0.610	0.5427
Type_Of_Institution3	-4.9486	2.2684	-2.182	0.0305 *
Number_of_Faculty_Per_Student	-0.5726	0.2570	-2.228	0.0271 *

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.63 on 178 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.1068, Adjusted R-squared: 0.09176

F-statistic: 7.095 on 3 and 178 DF, p-value: 0.0001571

⁹ The one exception being that when I controlled for percentage out-of-state, the significance of my initial results disappeared in 2020 but not in 2016

¹⁰ The same phenomenon presented in 2020 (See Appendix 3B)

This is compelling because it demonstrates the role that faculty play in helping youth overcome the costs of voting. Whether that is through engaging in civic discussion with them or helping or encouraging them to vote and participate in democratic processes, it is evident that the amount of access students have to professors matters. Faculty are going to be more equipped to help students overcome costs such as these when they have fewer students to focus on. Schools with fewer students per faculty member are also more likely to have smaller class sizes. This is also a prominent feature that is touted by liberal arts schools through advertising and when talking about the benefits of liberal arts education. The fewer students per faculty there are at an institution, the smaller one can assume class sizes at that institution will be. It is evident by the fact that the initial significance of my results disappeared that the variation that exists in this variable amongst institution types matters. Hence, the fact that liberal arts choose to highlight this feature of their institution type makes sense when one looks at the benefits this format can yield on civic participation through voting.

When I controlled for the other variables I chose to examine, including location inside/outside of a swing state, undergraduate enrollment, graduate enrollment, total enrollment, and percent out-of-state ¹¹, I found that the significance of my initial results remained, meaning that the ways in which these variables varied across institution type could not serve as an explanation for why their voter turnout rates were different. This was interesting to me especially because enrollment numbers significantly differed between national universities and liberal arts colleges in a way that I anticipated would have an impact on my initial significance as population size can impact things like class size, the ability to disseminate information easily and

¹¹ In 2016

effectively, and funding towards programming that encourages civic participation and education

¹².

When controlling for the aforementioned variables, there are still differences in voter turnout that are not reflected nor explained in my findings. This leads me to believe that there is something else that wasn't measured that contributes to higher rates of turnout in liberal arts colleges. One variable that I didn't measure simply because it was a given for liberal arts colleges was the curriculum, which focuses on liberal arts, the humanities, and critical discourse within the classroom. It is possible that this structure of learning is what impacts turnout due to its focus on civic and critical discussion with other students. Additionally, it is possible that students at liberal arts colleges may place more value and emphasis on majors such as political science, which promote civic engagement through knowledge of politics. It is also possible that rather than higher rates of turnout being contributed to by one of these variables, it is a combination of all these variables working together that correlates with higher turnout. Given my limited number of cases, it wasn't possible to test this theory without high levels of uncertainty and overlap between variables.

Were I to expand my research further, I would include more cases to boost the external validity of my results. Additionally, I would be interested in exploring qualitative data through student interviews at different kinds of institutions to supplement my pre-existing quantitative data. These interviews may help me in identifying differences in school culture between the different kinds of institutions that may not otherwise be measurable through numerical data. It would also be interesting to hear from students themselves how they view/prioritize civic engagement and education, as this would provide more insight into the relationship between high levels of civic engagement/duty and voter turnout. Lastly, one of the drawbacks of exploring data

¹² See Appendix 2A

about voter turnout is that it doesn't reflect demographic factors that may be in play (Fraga and Holbein 2020). Were I to continue on in my research, I would want to further look into the way that demographic variables such as race and socioeconomic status differ between institution types and explore potential relationships between these variables and voter turnout rates.

Overall, this research demonstrates the variance that exists between different kinds of higher education institutions and the impact that this variance can have on civic engagement through voter turnout. While higher education as a whole has been widely acknowledged as boosting turnout rates amongst young adults, exploring what practices and structural characteristics within education contribute more or less to this relationship is vital in understanding how to continue to promote civic engagement amongst the youth demographic. Although schools cannot necessarily change or adjust their structural characteristics such as size, school offerings, and majors in the sole pursuit of higher rates of turnout, it is important for schools to realize the ways in which their characteristics as an institution hinder or help create engaged and informed citizens as lived out through voting. Schools with structural characteristics or a curriculum that doesn't correlate with increases in turnout will need to place special emphasis on ways in which they can promote and encourage such behavior outside of the classroom, whether that be through organizations, events, or academic presentations. As youth begin to play a larger and more pivotal role in both state and federal elections, it is important to continue to prioritize civic education and engagement throughout higher education while also recognizing the variances within higher education that can undermine or promote this goal.

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Appendix:**1A. Voter Turnout by Institution Type in 2016**

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	55.559	1.233	45.054	<2e-16	***
Type_Of_Institution2	3.837	1.750	2.193	0.0296	*
Type_Of_Institution3	-5.175	2.291	-2.259	0.0251	*

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.75 on 179 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.08189, Adjusted R-squared: 0.07164

F-statistic: 7.983 on 2 and 179 DF, p-value: 0.0004774

1B. Voter Turnout by Institution Type in 2020

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	70.819	0.931	76.070	< 2e-16	***
Type_Of_Institution2	4.331	1.312	3.301	0.00117	**
Type_Of_Institution3	-8.606	1.705	-5.047	1.12e-06	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.954 on 175 degrees of freedom

(4 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.2488, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2403

F-statistic: 28.99 on 2 and 175 DF, p-value: 1.339e-11

2A. Differences in Variables Among Institution Types

1=National University, 2=Liberal Arts College, 3= Regional College

Type_Of_Institution **Faculty to Student Ratio**
 <fct> <dbl>
 1 1 14.5
 2 2 10.1
 3 3 14.9

Type_Of_Institution **Percentage Live-On Population**
 <fct> <dbl>
 1 1 38.9
 2 2 82.1
 3 3 36.9

Type_Of_Institution **Undergrad Enrollment**
 <fct> <dbl>
 1 1 14541.
 2 2 1812.
 3 3 5550.

Type_Of_Institution **Graduate Enrollment**
 <fct> <dbl>
 1 1 6019.
 2 2 93.2
 3 3 296.

Type_Of_Institution **Total Enrollment**
 <fct> <dbl>
 1 1 20137.
 2 2 1905.
 3 3 5846.

3A. Voter Turnout 2016 and 2020, Specialized Colleges and Programs, By Institution Type

2016:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	59.9159	2.3803	25.171	< 2e-16	***
Type_Of_Institution2	0.2369	2.4202	0.098	0.92214	
Type_Of_Institution3	-7.4242	2.4806	-2.993	0.00316	**
Specialized_Colleges_And_Programs1	-4.7302	2.2174	-2.133	0.03429	*

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.66 on 177 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.1074, Adjusted R-squared: 0.0923

F-statistic: 7.101 on 3 and 177 DF, p-value: 0.0001563

2020:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	73.804	1.769	41.728	< 2e-16 ***
Type_Of_Institution2	1.874	1.799	1.041	0.2991
Type_Of_Institution3	-10.204	1.844	-5.534	1.14e-07 ***
Specialized_Colleges_And_Programs1	-3.252	1.643	-1.979	0.0495 *

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.892 on 173 degrees of freedom

(4 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.2689, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2562

F-statistic: 21.2 on 3 and 173 DF, p-value: 9.564e-12

3B. Voter Turnout 2016 and 2020, Faculty-To-Student Ratio, By Institution Type

2016:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	63.8840	3.9300	16.255	<2e-16 ***
Type_Of_Institution2	1.2682	2.0794	0.610	0.5427
Type_Of_Institution3	-4.9486	2.2684	-2.182	0.0305 *
Number_of_Faculty_Per_Student	-0.5726	0.2570	-2.228	0.0271 *

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.63 on 178 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.1068, Adjusted R-squared: 0.09176

F-statistic: 7.095 on 3 and 178 DF, p-value: 0.0001571

2020:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	76.5087	3.0222	25.316	< 2e-16 ***
Type_Of_Institution2	2.5607	1.5796	1.621	0.1068
Type_Of_Institution3	-8.4657	1.6927	-5.001	1.38e-06 ***
Number_of_Faculty_Per_Student	-0.3904	0.1974	-1.977	0.0496 *

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.889 on 174 degrees of freedom

(4 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.2653, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2527

F-statistic: 20.95 on 3 and 174 DF, p-value: 1.236e-11

3C. Voter Turnout 2016 and 2020, Percentage Live-On Population, By Institution Type**2016:**

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	54.65130	2.03882	26.805	<2e-16 ***
Type_Of_Institution2	3.32545	2.51085	1.324	0.1871
Type_Of_Institution3	-4.48918	2.44881	-1.833	0.0685 .
Percentage_Live_On_Population	0.01729	0.04157	0.416	0.6779

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.75 on 172 degrees of freedom

(6 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.07425, Adjusted R-squared: 0.05811

F-statistic: 4.599 on 3 and 172 DF, p-value: 0.004014

2020:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	68.40001	1.52027	44.992	< 2e-16 ***
Type_Of_Institution2	1.79993	1.87369	0.961	0.3381
Type_Of_Institution3	-7.95426	1.81455	-4.384	2.05e-05 ***
Percentage_Live_On_Population	0.06039	0.03095	1.951	0.0527 .

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.927 on 168 degrees of freedom

(10 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.2377, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2241

F-statistic: 17.46 on 3 and 168 DF, p-value: 6.481e-10

3D. Voter Turnout 2016 and 2020, Undergrad, Grad, Total Enrollment, By Institution Type**2016 Undergrad:**

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	57.2113306	1.9764929	28.946	<2e-16 ***
Type_Of_Institution2	2.3905108	2.2109979	1.081	0.2811
Type_Of_Institution3	-6.1968839	2.4813904	-2.497	0.0134 *
Undergrad_Enrollment	-0.0001136	0.0001063	-1.069	0.2864

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.75 on 178 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.08775, Adjusted R-squared: 0.07238

F-statistic: 5.708 on 3 and 178 DF, p-value: 0.0009414

2020 Undergrad:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	7.133e+01	1.491e+00	47.838	< 2e-16	***
Type_Of_Institution2	3.884e+00	1.661e+00	2.338	0.0205	*
Type_Of_Institution3	-8.919e+00	1.851e+00	-4.818	3.14e-06	***
Undergrad_Enrollment	-3.585e-05	8.141e-05	-0.440	0.6602	

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.973 on 174 degrees of freedom

(4 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.2497, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2367

F-statistic: 19.3 on 3 and 174 DF, p-value: 7.53e-11

2016 Grad:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	54.8298129	1.9487287	28.136	<2e-16	***
Type_Of_Institution2	4.5548943	2.2968213	1.983	0.0489	*
Type_Of_Institution3	-4.4817813	2.7063096	-1.656	0.0995	.
Graduate_Enrollment	0.0001212	0.0002503	0.484	0.6289	

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.77 on 178 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.0831, Adjusted R-squared: 0.06765

F-statistic: 5.378 on 3 and 178 DF, p-value: 0.001445

2020 Grad:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	69.2368329	1.4499615	47.751	< 2e-16 ***
Type_Of_Institution2	5.8879456	1.7068092	3.450	0.000704 ***
Type_Of_Institution3	-7.1030085	2.0026530	-3.547	0.000501 ***
Graduate_Enrollment	0.0002674	0.0001882	1.421	0.157226

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.931 on 174 degrees of freedom

(4 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.2574, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2446

F-statistic: 20.11 on 3 and 174 DF, p-value: 3.087e-11

2016 Total:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	5.717e+01	2.134e+00	26.792	<2e-16 ***
Type_Of_Institution2	2.378e+00	2.356e+00	1.010	0.3140
Type_Of_Institution3	-6.319e+00	2.604e+00	-2.427	0.0162 *
Total_Enrollment	-7.999e-05	8.646e-05	-0.925	0.3561

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.75 on 178 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.08629, Adjusted R-squared: 0.07089

F-statistic: 5.603 on 3 and 178 DF, p-value: 0.001078

2020 Total:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	7.090e+01	1.593e+00	44.516	< 2e-16	***
Type_Of_Institution2	4.262e+00	1.758e+00	2.425	0.0163	*
Type_Of_Institution3	-8.660e+00	1.936e+00	-4.472	1.39e-05	***
Total_Enrollment	-3.882e-06	6.528e-05	-0.059	0.9527	

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.977 on 174 degrees of freedom

(4 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.2489, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2359

F-statistic: 19.22 on 3 and 174 DF, p-value: 8.268e-11

3E. Voter Turnout 2016 and 2020, Percentage Out-Of-State, By Institution Type

2016:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	53.66844	1.66177	32.296	<2e-16	***
Type_Of_Institution2	2.93467	1.82110	1.611	0.1088	
Type_Of_Institution3	-4.26928	2.34175	-1.823	0.0700	.
Percentage_Out_Of_State	0.05142	0.03048	1.687	0.0934	.

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.7 on 178 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.09634, Adjusted R-squared: 0.08111

F-statistic: 6.326 on 3 and 178 DF, p-value: 0.0004231

2020:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	68.48378	1.22195	56.045	< 2e-16	***
Type_Of_Institution2	3.15412	1.34944	2.337	0.02056	*
Type_Of_Institution3	-7.50436	1.71438	-4.377	2.07e-05	***
Percentage_Out_Of_State	0.06441	0.02242	2.873	0.00458	**

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.794 on 174 degrees of freedom

(4 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.2828, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2705

F-statistic: 22.88 on 3 and 174 DF, p-value: 1.564e-12

3F. Voter Turnout 2016 and 2020, Swing State, By Institution Type

2016:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	54.046	1.407	38.400	<2e-16	***
Type_Of_Institution2	4.002	1.736	2.306	0.0223	*
Type_Of_Institution3	-5.778	2.303	-2.509	0.0130	*
Swing1	3.484	1.608	2.167	0.0316	*

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.65 on 177 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.1082, Adjusted R-squared: 0.09304
 F-statistic: 7.155 on 3 and 177 DF, p-value: 0.000146

2020:

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	69.714	1.071	65.110	< 2e-16	***
Type_Of_Institution2	4.478	1.303	3.437	0.000738	***
Type_Of_Institution3	-9.044	1.713	-5.279	3.85e-07	***
Swing1	2.444	1.200	2.036	0.043231	*

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.887 on 173 degrees of freedom

(4 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.2698, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2571

F-statistic: 21.31 on 3 and 173 DF, p-value: 8.552e-12