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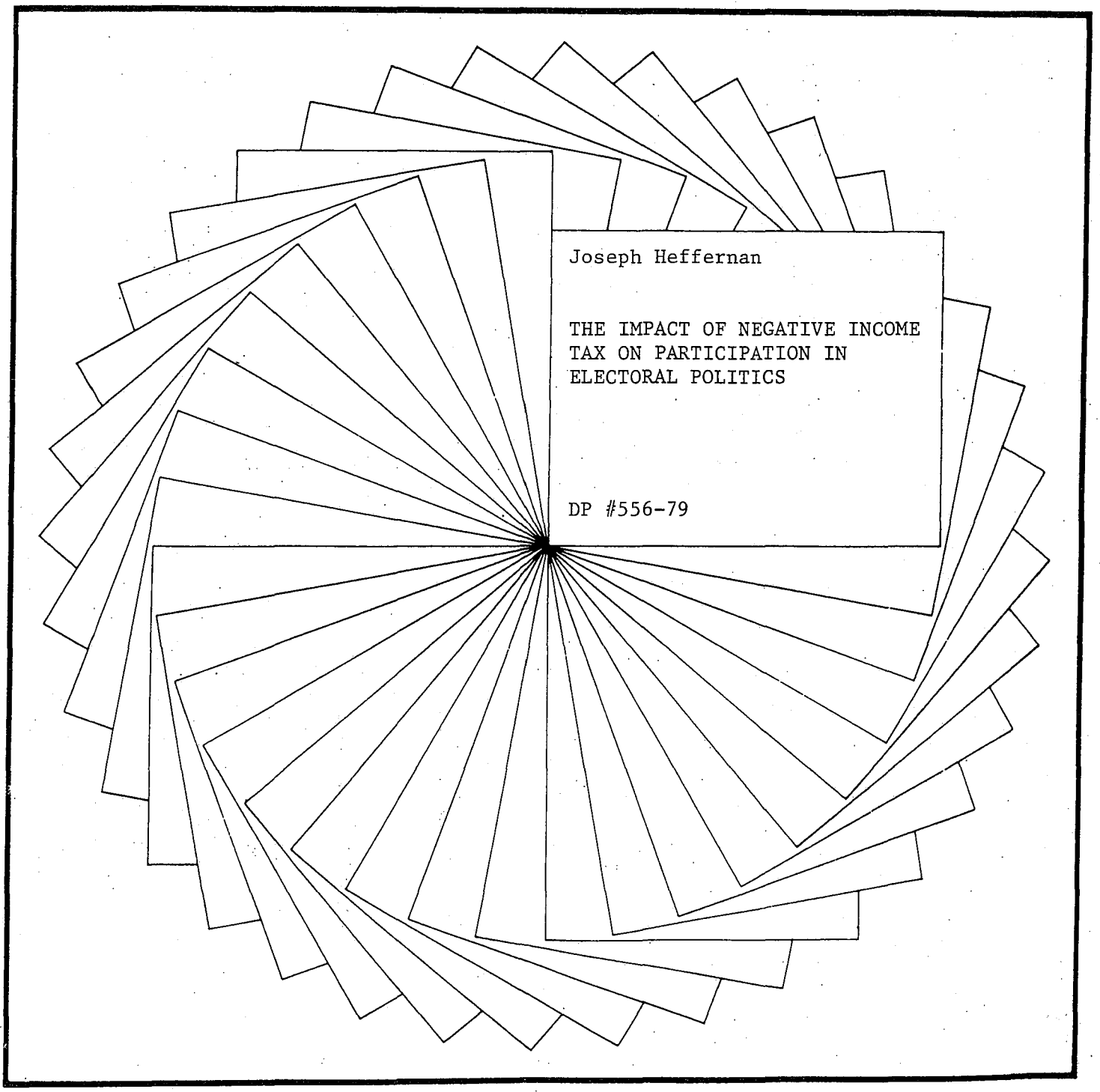

The Impact of Negative Income Tax on Participation in Electoral Politics

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the impact of the Rural Income Maintenance Experiment on participation in the electoral process. Paradigms of the left and of the right predict dramatically different consequences of universal income supplement, the left wing seeing such a program as essential for minimal democratic processes while the right sees in universal income supplements the seed for the destruction of democratic institutions. The empirical data reported here, based on the two statewide elections which took place during the course of the Experiment, show that families receiving negative income tax payments were neither pushed toward nor withdrawn from participation in electoral processes. Race, education, age, and nonpolitical community involvement so dominated the predictors of participation that the income changes induced by the Experiment had little observable impact. Neither the size of the transfer nor the availability of the transfer were found to be significant.

The Impact of Negative Income Tax On Participation in Electoral Politics

This paper is concerned with the impact of the Rural Income Maintenance Experiment, on participation in the electoral process. Few questions are more critical to the survival of democratic institutions than those which inquire into why citizens express (or fail to express) a preference for one set of governors over another. By definition, political democracy requires some minimal level of citizen participation in public decision-making. The mechanism of elected representative government is designed to provide an opportunity for citizens with common concerns to select representatives who, if elected, will bargain in the formal political arena to translate those common preferences into public policies. The mere availability of an election procedure surely does not insure that all citizens will attempt to record their preferences or that their recorded preferences will be given equal weight. Study after study has underscored the contract between the norm of universal participation and the observed practice of very unequal rates of electoral participation between social groups (see Verba and Nie, 1972, for a useful summary). A number of factors influence the decision to participate in the electoral process of government. Some factors seem to impel persons with little or no preferences regarding government to rush to the polling place while other social factors impede the voting of citizens with strongly held preferences (Verba and Nie, 1972).

A particular polity's program of income maintenance goes to the very heart of some of these issues. A priori arguments conform, not sur-

prisingly, to the classical left/right paradigms. Those on the left argue that some minimal level of income equality is prerequisite for democratic processes and that if the economic institutions produce a pattern of highly unequal income distribution, then political institutions must implement a program of income redistribution in order to preserve democratic government (Cutright, 1965). Those on the right reason that if lower income persons are unrestrained from voting themselves a larger and larger share of the polity's wealth, they will not only tyrannize the nation's wealthy, but could bankrupt society itself (Banfield, 1968). Empirically, political scientists have presented evidence which suggests that a polity's income distribution, per se, is not a condition of democratic society but is important as it affects availability of popular education and the rates of industrialization and urbanization which are the critical determiners of a polity's capacity for democratic functioning (Verba and Nie, 1972). Clearly a small-scale income security experiment does not address these global issues. Yet, the centrality of these issues highlights the importance of examining the impact of a new income maintenance system on electoral behavior.

The decision of a citizen to participate in an election is quite complex. At one level of abstraction the potential elector must consider: (1) whether the issues in the campaign are of relevance to him, (2) whether the candidates differ on the issues in any way, and (3) whether the potential elector's vote or other activity in the campaign will have a significant impact on the election or the conduct of office during the interelectoral period. A small-scale experiment localized in

three counties and affecting only a thousand or so voters is most unlikely to provoke any restructuring of campaign issues and/or candidate strategy. There is thus little reason to believe that a small-scale experiment could effectively predict the patterns of electoral participation likely to prevail (or emerge) as a consequence of a new national income maintenance plan.

This is not to say the impact of the experiment on the participation level would be negligible. An income maintenance experiment is likely to stimulate participation simply because it fuses an additional link between the citizen and the state. Just as participation in public institutions is an instrument of political socialization (e.g., school and public health facilities), so too should participation in an income security program stimulate participation. In addition, one would reasonably expect some Hawthorn effects in the direction of at least more highly reported acts of participation in elections. As an anonymous reviewer of an earlier draft of this paper put it:

> In a real sense, the state is enlisting the aid of these members in designing welfare policy. Participation in the experiments is a form of political participation. It is not difficult to imagine that participation in this manner induces increased participation in other forms, e.g., voting.

If the argument is that a small-scale experiment cannot effectively predict patterns of participation likely to emerge in conjunction with a national program and there is intrinsically a Hawthorn effect, there is very little reason for and perhaps even a little danger in reporting on the electoral participation of control and experimental families.

Nonetheless, political histories of proposed negative income tax plans reveal that the uncertain impact of such programs on voting rates among low-income citizens has stood as an impediment to reform (Davis and Jackson, 1974; Burke and Burke, 1974; Moynihan, 1973). None of the imagined fears of conservative and liberal Congressmen about voter and nonvoter reaction has much empirical base (Marmor and Rein, 1973). It is the uncertainty which is the impediment to reform.

Heretofore there has been no readily available data base to assess the impact of a universal transfer mechanism on participation. Persons receiving aid from a categorical program are by definition different from persons in similar economic conditions but ineligible by status. Thus, one cannot unambiguously observe the impact of that transfer plan. The opportunity presented here is to take snapshots of matched populations; one receiving an income guarantee, the other not, and to see if there is an observable impact on participation rates. Of course, in an experiment such as this, there are none of the structural changes in campaign strategies or election issues that one would reasonably expect to be associated with the adoption of a major new income maintenance program. Nonetheless, if the institution of a nonstigmatic universal income guarantee were to have an impact on political participation among program recipients, we could at least expect to observe traces of that impact in a short-term experiment.

DATA BASE

Both control and experimental respondents were asked a series of questions about their involvement in the statewide elections of 1970. These questions were asked in the fifth quarterly interview, which was instituted within thirty days of the election. Respondents were asked to identify the candidate, and to say whether or not they talked about the campaign, if they voted, and if they participated by wearing a button, working for a candidate, or otherwise tried, even minimally, to influence the vote of others. Later, the same set of questions, except candidate recognition, was asked concerning the 1972 presidential election. The last set of questions was asked in interviews held in December and January following the election. The questions were asked of all respondents, but because of other research limitations, analysis was confined to 507 married couples and 153 female heads of families. All had constant marital status during the course of the experiment and all were of voting age in 1970. The reason for restricting the population to persons of constant marital status was an unfortunate consequence of the structuring of this investigator's research file. Other than this, the analyzed population had demographic characteristics essentially similar to those of the total sample.

The results reported here are based on the responses of 507 male household heads and their wives along with 153 female heads of households -- a total sample of 1,167 potential voters.

FINDINGS

An examination of the reported political behavior in the 1970 election reveals that the degree of both groups' involvement was essentially similar to reported involvement from previous studies (Verba and Nie, 1972). In both control and experimental respondents, 38.6% in the experimental group and 43.1% of the control played no role in the 1970 election. That is, they reported that they did not vote or talk about the election, they could not recall the names of the candidates a few weeks after the election, and they made no attempt to influence the electoral decision of other persons by persuasion or by the display of some sort of political banner like a campaign button or a bumper sticker. The precise pattern of participation for two-parent families is shown in Table 1.

When each of the twelve modes of political behavior is treated as a distinct political form there is no statistically significant difference between control and experimental families. If, however, the modes of behavior are collapsed to compare participants in the electoral process with quiescent (i.e., those with no reported political activity) citizens, a sharp difference in the statistical significance occurs (see Table 2).

Finally, in a comparison of voters and nonvoters, a very sharp difference in control and experimental emerges (see Table 3).

The argument was advanced above that the income maintenance experiment would stimulate behaviorally observable participation in elections because of the <u>additional</u> link that is forged between the citizen and his

Table 1

Self-Reported Acts of Political Participation
in 1970 Election by Experimental/Control Status

Activity	Experimental	(Percentage)	Control	(Percentage)	All
None	213	(38.6)	265	(43.1)	478
Vote only	46	(8.3)	49	(8.0)	95
Recall only	30	(5.4)	44	(7.2)	74
Talk only	37	(6.7)	53	(8.6)	90
Vote and recall	43	(7.8)	43	(7.0)	86
Recall and talk	41	(7.4)	34	(5.6)	75
Vote and talk	23	(4.2)	20	(3.2)	43
Talk and influence	9	(1.6)	11	(1.8)	20
Vote, recall and talk	75	(13.6)	54	(8.8)	129
Recall, talk and influence	7	(1.3)	9	(1.5)	16
Talk, vote and influence	6	(1.1)	10	(1.6)	16
Recall, talk, vote and influence	22	(4.0)	23	(3.7)	45
	552	100	615	100	1167

$x^2 = 13.5$
11 d.f. $p < .30 > .20$

Table 2

Quiescent and Politically Expressive
Citizens by Experimental/Control Status

	Experimental	Control	All
Quiescent	213	265	478
Politically Expressive	339	350	689
	552	615	1167

$X^2 = 2.400$
1 d.f. $p < .20 > .10$

Table 3

Voters and Non-Voters in 1970 Election
by Experimental/Control Status

	Experimental	Control	All
Voter	215	199	414
Non-Voter	337	416	753
	552	615	1167

$X^2 = 5.420$
1 d.f. $p < .02 > .01$

government. If this is the case, we would expect it to occur among the working poor but not among female-headed families. Female-headed families in the experiment receive a different income security program but they had been all along potentially eligible for AFDC. The working poor families with both an adult male and an adult female present in the family face a new income security package. It is thus reasonable to expect that a difference would occur for intact families but not for female-headed families. In fact, this is precisely what did occur.

In Table 4, experimental and control families that are headed by females are compared. This cohort group, low income female-headed families, constitutes the potential AFDC population. An examination of this group's changed political status by a negative tax program is, therefore, important. It could be asserted that the mere transformation of the link could impel a new pattern of participation in politics. If this were so, then we would expect some difference in control and experimental families among this subsample. There is no significant difference in control and experimental families when each mode of behavior is considered as a discrete entity. When the behavior modes are collapsed to the act of voting, there is still no significance. This is shown in Table 5. When we compare only participants vs. nonparticipants in the political process among the female-headed families, we again fail to find a statistically significant difference. (See Table 5.)

Table 4

Reported Acts of Political Participation
in Female-Headed Families of Constant Marital Status
by Experimental/Control Status (1970 Election)

Political Participation Reported	Experimental		Control		All Persons	
None	37	(48.7)	36	(46.8)	73	(47.7)
Recall only	3	(4.0)	5	(6.5)	8	(5.2)
Talk only	6	(7.9)	6	(7.8)	12	(7.8)
Vote only	3	(4.0)	9	(11.7)	12	(7.8)
Vote and recall	7	(9.2)	6	(7.8)	13	(8.5)
Vote and talk	1	(1.3)	2	(2.6)	3	(2.0)
Vote, recall and talk	11	(14.5)	3	(3.9)	14	(9.2)
Vote, talk and influence	3	(4.0)	0	(0.0)	3	(2.0)
Vote, recall, talk and influence	0	(0.0)	3	(3.9)	3	(2.0)
Talk, recall and influence	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Recall and talk	4	(5.3)	7	(9.1)	11	(7.2)
Talk and influence	1	(1.3)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.7)
Total	76		77		153	

$x^2 = 15.97745$
11 d.f. < .20 > .10

Table 5

Voting and Participation Status
by Experimental/Control Status
in Female-Headed Families

Status	Persons in Experimental Families	Persons in Control Families	All Persons
Voters	25	23	48
Nonvoters	51	54	105
Total	76	77	153

$x^2 = .16338$
$p\ .70 > p > .50$

Nonparticipants	37	36	73
Participants	39	41	80
Total	76	77	153

$x^2 = .05737$
1 d.f. $.90 > p > .80$

The presence of significant difference in the entire sample but not in female-headed families prompts an examination of a sex-related impact of the experiment. A chi-square test of significant difference among husbands only in the 1970 election is reported in Table 6. This chi-square test of each of the twelve modes of participation shows the experimental variable to be insignificant for husbands. When the categories are collapsed to compare voters with non-voters, the variable remains insignificant. If the categories are collapsed to compare participants with nonparticipants, the variable is also insignificant (see Table 7).

When attention is focused on the wives alone, the chi-square test for significance re-emerges. We first compare wives with all twelve modes of behavior and find no significant difference. But when the behavior modes of the wives are collapsed to the voting status, we do find an experimental impact (see Table 8) When we compare participation alone we find there is still a statistical difference but it is not nearly as strong (see Table 9).

The results of the chi-square tests are summarized in Table 10. From these results, it appears that the experimental program had an impact only on wives in the intact families. This impact was, however, rather strong. To further explore this, we explore the impact of the experiment in a number of ways.

Table 6

Reported Acts of Political Participation of Husbands of Constant Marital Status by Experimental/Control Status (1970 Election)

Political Participation Reported	Experimental		Control		All Persons	
None	77		97		174	
Recall only	13		22		35	
Talk only	15		21		36	
Vote only	17		22		39	
Vote and recall	22		24		46	
Vote and talk	12	100	9	104	21	204
Vote, recall and talk	34		32		66	
Vote, recall, talk and influence	12		12		24	
Vote, talk and influence	3		5		8	
Recall and talk	24		17		41	
Talk and influence	4		3		7	
Recall, talk, and influence	5		5		10	
Total	238		269		507	

$x^2 = 6.74094$
$p < .90 > .80$

Table 7

Voting and Participation Status
in 1970 Election
Among Husbands with Constant Marital Status
by Experimental/Control Status

Participant Status	Persons in Experimental Families	Persons in Control Families	All Persons
Voters	100	104	204
Nonvoters	138	165	303
Total	238	269	507

$x^2 = .74226$
1 d.f. $< .50 > .30$

Nonparticipants	77	97	174
Participants	161	172	333
Total	238	269	507

$x^2 = .76947$
$p < .50 > .30$

Table 8

Reported Acts of Political Participation
for Wives of Constant Marital Status
by Experimental/Control Status (1970 Election)

Political Participation Reported	Experimental	Control	All Persons
None	99	122	231
Recall only	14	17	31
Talk only	16	26	42
Vote only	26	18	44
Vote and recall	14	13	27
Vote and talk	10	9	19
Vote, recall, and talk	30	19	49
Vote, recall, talk, and influence	7	11	18
Vote, talk, and influence	3	2	5
Recall and talk	17	17	34
Talk and influence	1	1	2
Recall, talk, and influence	1	4	5
Total	238	269	507

$x^2 = 13.40402$
11 d.f.
$.30 > p < .20$

Table 9

Voting and Participation Status
in 1970 Election
Among Wives with Constant Marital Status
by Experimental/Control Status

Vote Status	Persons in Experimental Families	Persons in Control Families	All Persons
Voters	90	72	162
Nonvoters	148	197	345
Total	238	269	507

$x^2 = 7.14857$
$.01 > p < .001$ 1 d.f.

Participants	139	137	276
Nonparticipants	99	132	231
Total	238	269	507

$x^2 = 2.84395$
1 d.f.
$.10 > p > .05$

Table 10

Summary of Chi-Square Tests

Cross Tab	d.f.	x^2	p	N
All Persons (not shown in text)				
E/C vs. all forms	11	13.50	.30 > p > .20	1167
E/C vs. vote/no vote	1	5.42	.02 > p > .01	1167
E/C vs. participation/ no participation	1	2.40	.20 > p > .10	1167
Husband-Wife Family				
E/C vs. all forms	11	13.37499	.30 > p > .20	1014
E/C vs. vote/no vote	1	5.69341	.02 > p > .01	1014
E/C vs. participation/ no participation	1	12.72813	p < .001	1014
Female Head				
E/C vs. all forms	11	15.97745	.20 > p > .10	153
E/C vs. vote/no vote	1	.16338	.70 > p > .50	153
E/C vs. participation/ no participation	1	.05737	.90 > p > .80	153
Husbands				
E/C vs. all forms	11	6.74094	.90 > p > .80	507
E/C vs. vote/no vote	1	.74226	.50 > p > .30	507
E/C vs. participation/ no participation	1	.76947	.50 > p > .30	507
Wives				
E/C vs. all forms	11	13.40402	.30 > p > .20	507
E/C vs. vote/no vote	1	7.14857	.01 > p > .001	507
E/C vs. participation/ no participation	1	2.84395	.10 > p > .05	507

PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION

Generally, political scientists have argued that there is a cumulative pattern of participation. That is, citizens who perform the more difficult and less frequent forms of political activity also perform the simpler and more frequently performed political acts (Verba and Nie, 1972, p. 27). Conversely, those who fail to perform the least stringent political acts are most unlikely to have performed the more demanding acts. Lane (1959) has asserted:

(a) If a person electioneers he is almost certain to attend party meetings.

(b) If a person attends meetings he is almost certain to be among those who contact public officers and other political leaders.

(c) If a person contacts public officials and leaders he is almost certain to be a member of a politically oriented association.

(d) If a person is a member of an association he is almost certain to be a voter.

There is, according to one perspective, a latent structure of political activity. If such a latent structure is present, Matthews and Prothro (1966) have argued that the different political acts are not only interrelated, but are interconnected in a precise pattern so as to form a "Guttman-type" scale.

A Guttman scale assumes perfect unidimensionality in electoral behavior; all persons would fall into one of the scale types listed in Table 11, the individual acts extending from the least active to the most active. We would find no person, for example, who voted but could not recall who ran in the elections, but there would be people who

recalled the candidate but did not vote. Unidimensionality of behavioral acts would allow a ranking of persons according to their degree of involvement. A person with a scale type V is clearly more "involved" in the electoral process than a person in scale I, or any of the "lower forms." In the absence of unidimensionality, it is difficult to compare the political involvement of persons with different patterns of participation. If we compare the number of persons who fall into one of the scale types to those with some other pattern of participation we can find out if the unidimensionality exists.

In our experiment we find insufficient evidence to support a contention of unidimensionality, as nearly one-third of the experimental, and one-third of the controls cannot be assigned to one of the suggested scale types. A large proportion of the control families (43.1% to 38.6%) report no political involvement P-J cannot be tested by this device (see Table 12).

The way that our respondents scored in relation to the idealized scale is shown in Table 13. From the data in the table it is possible to calculate the coefficient of reproducibility for the suggested (and other) Guttmann scales. In fact, the suggested scale which ranks political action in the order of recall, talk, vote, and influence did produce the highest coefficient of reproducibility. It was, however, in all cases well below the .95 level that is traditionally demanded for an assertion of unidimensionality. The coefficient of reproducibility and nonzero coefficients of reproducibility are reported in Table 14.

Since unidimensionality clearly does not exist, we must treat our dependent variable, participation, as nominal and not as a continuous variable. In the principal analysis of the 1970 election we have used

Table 11

Political Acts Performed

Scale Type	Recall	Talk	Vote	Influence
I	NO	NO	NO	NO
II	YES	NO	NO	NO
III	YES	YES	NO	NO
IV	YES	YES	YES	NO
V	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table 12

1970 Reported Political Behavior
by Experimental/Control Status

Reported Activity		Experimentals	(%)	Controls	(%)	All	(%)
No political activity	I	213	(38.6)	265	(43.1)	478	(41.0)
Recall only	II	30	(5.4)	44	(7.1)	74	(6.3)
Recall and talk	III	41	(7.4)	34	(6.2)	75	(6.4)
Recall, talk and vote	IV	75	(13.6)	54	(8.8)	129	(11.1)
Recall, talk, vote and influence	V	22	(4.0)	23	(3.7)	45	(3.9)
Non-scale		171	(31.0)	195	(31.7)	366	(31.3)
Total		552		615		1167	

Table 13

Reported Political Activity by Gender, Family Status, and Experimental/Control Status

Activity Reported	Experimental Heads	Control Heads	Experimental Wives	Control Wives	Experimental Female Heads	Control Female Heads	All
No activity	77	97	99	132	37	36	478
Recall only	13	22	14	17	3	5	74
Recall and talk	24	17	17	17	0	0	75
Recall, talk, and vote	34	32	30	19	11	3	129
Recall, talk, vote, and influence	12	12	7	11	3	0	45
Talk only	15	21	16	26	6	6	90
Vote only	17	22	26	18	3	9	95
Recall and vote	22	24	14	13	7	6	86
Talk and vote	12	9	10	9	1	2	43
Talk, vote, and influence	3	5	3	2	0	3	16
Influence and talk	4	3	1	1	4	7	20
Recall, talk, and influence	5	5	1	4	1	0	16
Total	238	269	238	269	76	77	1167

Table 14

Guttmann Scale Coefficients of Reproducibility
by Population Sample

Population	Coefficient of Reproducibility*	Nonzero Coefficient of Reproducibility
Total sample	.89696	.82547
Experimental husbands	.89601	.84627
Control husbands	.89405	.83430
Experimental wives	.89706	.82374
Control wives	.91450	.83212
Experimental female heads	.90461	.81410
Control female heads	.84091	.70122

*$CR = 1 - \frac{\text{errors of locations}}{\text{locations}}$

Note: nonzero = only observations with at least one reported political act are used in this calculation

two dependent variables: (1) voting and not voting and (2) participation and nonparticipation. From the literature on political participation we have selected those variables that have been most strongly associated with the act of voting and participation in politics: education, age, race, income, and membership in other community organizations (Barber, 1969). We have used as the income variable income prior to the receipt of the transfer from the experiment, and thus we are testing the impact of the guarantee itself. Because of the format of the tape and because of the expected differential impact on husbands, wives, and female-headed families, we have run each of the regressions separately. The results of these statistical tests for the 1970 election are summarized in Table 15. As with previous research, educational attainment and organizational affiliations are the social factors most closely tied to participation in politics generally and the act of voting in particular. The experimental variable appears to be very weak for male heads and female family heads but rather robust for female spouses in two-parent families.

THE 1972 ELECTIONS

Given the different political circumstances surrounding each election, it would clearly be inappropriate to attribute difference over time as an experimental consequence. It is simply noted that essentially similar proportions of each group changed their status as voters. Recall of candidates in the presidential election was not asked and because of field interview problems, not all respondents were

asked about the other forms of participation. The changes (or lack thereof) in voting status are shown below. (See Table 16.)

Since participation does not have the same meaning in 1972, because recall of the 1970 candidates was credited as a form of participation, we examine only voting/non-voting as the dependent variable in the 1972 election. For each group the regressions are reported in Tables 17, 18, and 19. Again, we find the experimental variable to be significant for wives only.

Table 15

Summary of Regression Test for 1970 Election

	Male Head		Spouse		Female Head	
	Vote	Participation	Vote	Participation	Vote	Participation
Race (o = Black)	X	X				
Region (o = Iowa)	X					X
Family Size	X	X				X
Income						
Education	X	X	X	X	X	X
Age	X	X	X			
Number of Organizational Memberships	X	X	X	X	X	
Sig. Level EX/C 1 = EX	.3854	.3584	.0131	.1598	.4095	.9045
R^2	.1403	.1976	.1273	.1472	.1032	.1677

(* = significant impact at .10 level)

Table 16

Vote Status

	Exp. Male Heads	(%)	Control Male Heads	(%)	Exp. Spouse	(%)	Control Spouse	(%)	Exp. Female Head	Control Female Head
Voter in both elections	81	(34.0)	85	(31.6)	72	(30.3)	57	(21.2)	45	46
Nonvoter in both elections	109	(45.8)	133	(49.4)	118	(49.6)	153	(56.9)	23	22
Voter in 1972 only	31	(13.0)	31	(11.5)	32	(13.4)	43	(16.0)	4	6
Withdrew from voting in 1972 after voting in 1970	17	(7.2)	20	(7.4)	16	(6.7)	16	(5.9)	2	1
Unknown in 1972	0		0		0		0		2	2
	238		269		238		269		76	77

Table 17

Regression Equation for Voting in 1972 Election
for Husbands in Families with Constant Marital Status

Independent Variable	Coefficient	t value	Sig. Level
Race 0 = black; 1 = white	-.2156	-4.083	.0001
Region 1 = NC; 0 = Iowa	-.0269	-.402	.6875
Family size	.0067	.603	.5469
Family income	<.0001	-.363	.7165
Education	.0294	3.808	.0002
Quick test	-.0005	-.329	.7419
Age	.0031	1.964	.0501
Number of organizations	.0916	4.982	<.0001
Experimental = 1; control = 0	.0473	1.182	.2377

N = 497

r^2 = .2264

Table 18

Regression Equation for Voting in 1972 Election
for Wives in Families with Constant Marital Status

Independent Variable	Coefficient	t Value	Sig. Level
Race 0 = black; 1 = white	-.0510	-.989	.3227
Region 1 = NC; 0 = Iowa	-1.563	-2.497	.0129
Family size	-.0056	-.506	.6131
Family income	<.0001	.047	.9622
Education	.0454	4.904	<.0001
Quick test	.0004	.231	.8177
Age	.0026	1.609	.1083
Number of organizations	.0761	4.179	<.0001
Experimental = 1; control = 0	.0611	1.547	.1224

N = 497

r^2 = .2207

Note: Dependent Variable: 1 = Vote; 0 = No vote

Table 19

Regression Equation for Voting in 1972 Election
for Female Heads

Independent Variable	Coefficient	t Value	Sig. Level
Race 0 = black; 1 = white	.0567	.525	.6003
Region 1 = NC; 0 = Iowa	-.0340	-.296	.7677
Family size	-.0272	-1.166	.2455
Family income	<.0001	.965	.3360
Education	.0465	3.471	.0007
Quick test	-.0014	-.240	.8105
Age	.0016	1.071	.2856
Number of organizations	.0859	1.752	.0819
Experimental = 1; control = 0	.0934	1.180	.2398

N = 149
r^2 = .1514

Note: Dependent Variable: 1 = Vote; 0 = No vote

CONCLUSIONS

The results indicate a clear, persistent, and positive association between experimental status and the stimulation of electoral participation among the wives in experimental families. Participation in electoral politics is low among this group, the lowest of the three groups (husbands, wives, female heads) but the difference between experimental and control is impressive--30.3% of wives in experimental families participated in both elections as compared to voting participation rates among low-income wives in national reporting systems.

We conclude that receipt of the negative income tax guarantee (without regard to its magnitude, or the rate at which the benefit declined in response to other income) did stimulate voting among the wives in intact families while having no impact among others. In a wide range of behavioral modalities tested in the other investigations reported in the Experiment, the experimental variable operated more strongly among wives than it did for either their husbands or among female-headed families. There is, for voting at least, no clear explanation for this result. Both husbands and wives experienced a <u>new</u> program while female-headed families faced only a different program, but the husbands were not stimulated to participation. As a group, wives were the lowest participants in the first observation, and even after the stimulation they were the lowest participants. Thus, in a sense, the wives had the greatest opportunity for change.

What the experiment does do is to show that in an experimental program, at least, there is no great rush toward, or massive withdrawal from, participation in electoral politics as a consequence of an income guarantee

program. Those who fear that a negative income tax plan will dramatically upset the current political balance should have their fears abated by this research. Those who hope that negative income tax programs will usher in a period of participatory democracy will have to look elsewhere. If an income guarantee is in fact going to have an impact, it will be an indirect one. The guarantee might stimulate education and community involvement which in turn would stimulate political involvement. There is no direct evidence, however, to support the notion that the introduction of an income guarantee plan would have an immediate and large impact on the political participation patterns of low-income persons in rural areas.

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