

Felony Disenfranchisement and Neighborhood Turnout

The Case of New York City

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Outline

- Introducing space into the conversation

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- Redefining “lost voters”

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- Identifying neighborhoods with lost voters
- Testing turnout effects

Introducing Space

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- But we *know* that incarceration patterns aren't uniformly distributed throughout a given state (see, for instance, Gelman, Fagan, and Kiss 2007)
- Turnout effects are likely to be socially mediated - and therefore show up in the neighborhoods where disenfranchised individuals live (e.g. Foladare 1968; Huckfeldt 1979; Cho, Gimpel, and Dyck 2006)

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- This undermines our ability to distinguish the causal effects of incarceration / probation from the effects of disenfranchisement
- This is especially likely given the low turnout propensity among the formerly disenfranchised (e.g. Meredith and Morse 2015; Gerber et al. 2017; White 2019)

This Project Addresses Both Problems

- Administrative data from the NYS DOC allows us to conduct individual-level analysis

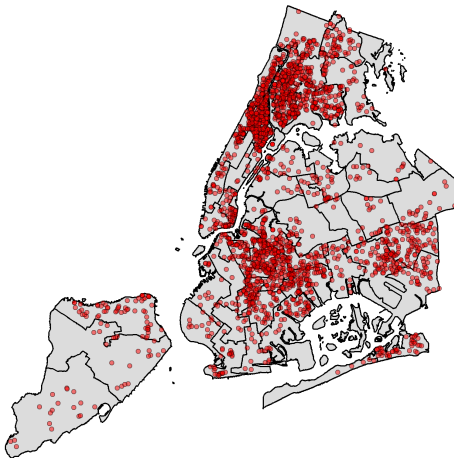
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- Purge records in the NYS voter file allow us to construct vote histories for disenfranchised individuals
- Lost voters are all formally disenfranchised individuals who have voted in the past 10 years

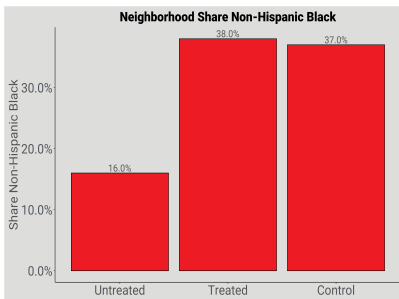
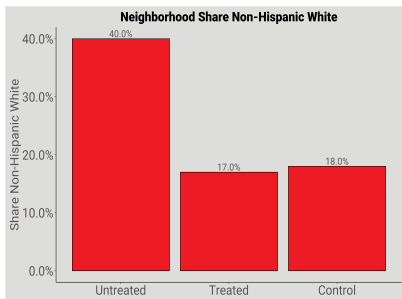
Identifying Neighborhoods with Lost Voters



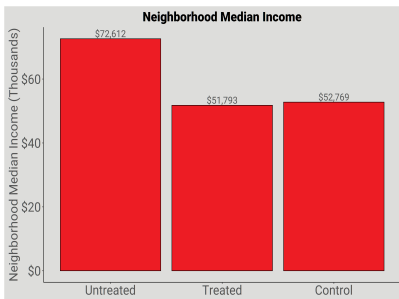
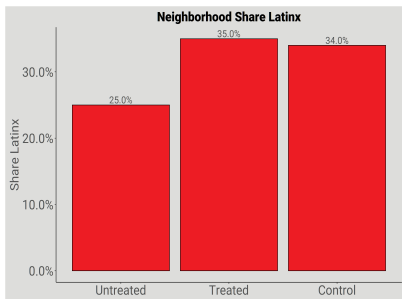
Methodology

- A genetic match algorithm (Sekhon 2011) is used to match treated census block groups to untreated ones.
- Each block group is matched to 30 untreated block groups; matches are done with replacement.

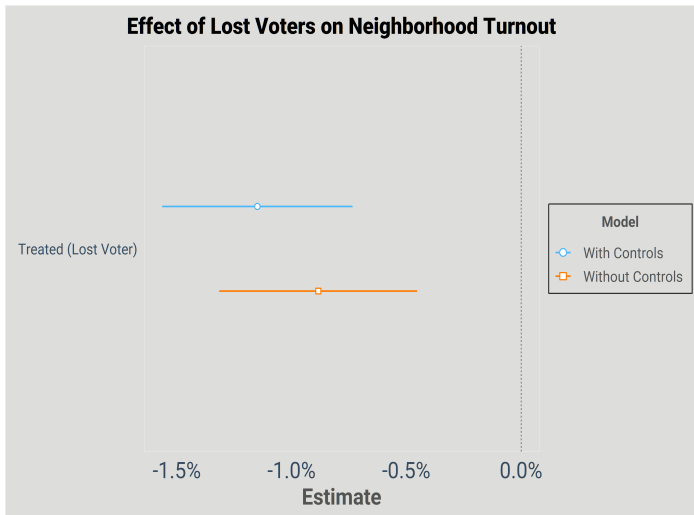
Matching Results



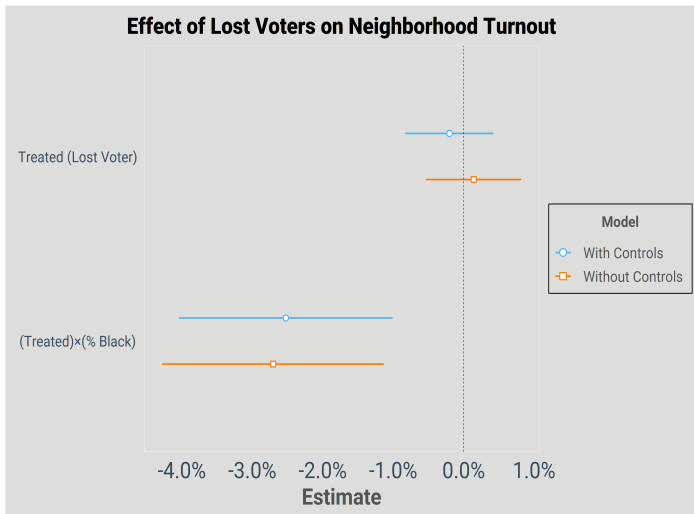
Matching Results



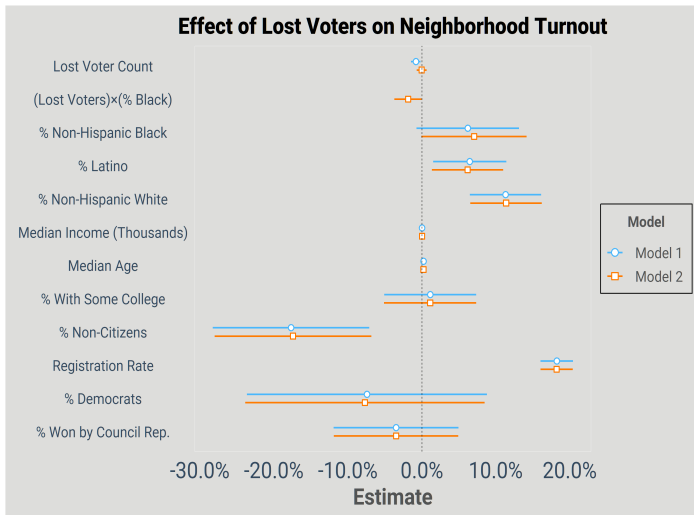
Testing Turnout Effects



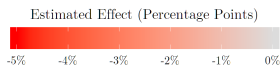
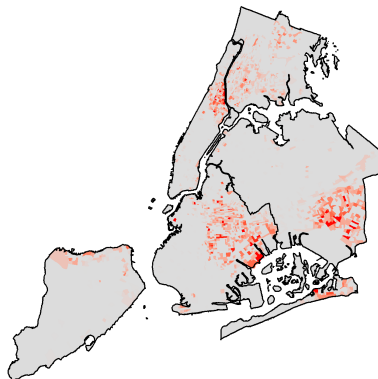
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- The indirect turnout effects identified in past research appear to be geographically concentrated where the lost voters live.
- Hajnal (2009) and others have demonstrated that turnout differentials can have real political implications, especially in low-turnout contests.
- Felony disenfranchisement undermines Black political representation at the local level.

We Made It!

Thanks!

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