WHAT CAN COME OF JUST HANGING OUT?
The Power of Politically Oriented Social Groups

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Georgetown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts
in Communication, Culture and Technology

By

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Washington, DC
April 24, 2007
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ABSTRACT

How can groups affect the political activity of their members? Are specific calls to action necessary, or can social connections inspire political engagement simply through exposure to others who engage in activity? This study seeks to answer these questions through the examination of the group Drinking Liberally, a politically focused social group which organizes happy hours through its chapters nationwide. It begins by looking at the role that amateur citizens can play in today’s political environment, and how that role has evolved over time. Next, the social psychological theories which underlie group interaction and psychological change are discussed. The theories indicate that exposure to other group members who are more active should have an effect on the behavior of less active members. Finally, a survey was conducted of the members of Drinking Liberally to determine both their involvement in the group and their level of participation in certain political activities. Statistical analysis was conducted on the results of this survey, and it was found that there is a statistically significant connection between the
length of one's membership in the group and the level of political activity that a member engages in. This supports the notion that simple social interaction with other politically like minded individuals some of whom are more active than others can raise the level of activity of less active members of the group. This is a very good reason to encourage the creation of such groups, in an effort to create a more engaged citizenry.
I would like to thank the National Leaders of Drinking Liberally, for providing information about the organization and allowing me to survey the membership, and the members of Drinking Liberally, who participated in the survey, providing the data for this thesis.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Diana Owen, and my reader, Dr. Hans Noel, who helped guide me through the long process of writing this thesis.

And finally, I would like to thank my family for their support throughout my schooling, especially my grandparents Albert and Ellen Rieser, without whom my schooling would not have been possible.
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Preface

This thesis focuses on the group Drinking Liberally, an active political and social group operating on the liberal side of the American political spectrum. There are several methodological reasons for choosing this group, which are discussed in the body of this work, but there are also some non-methodological ones. I am a member of the group, and for a time was City Leader of one of the Washington, D.C., chapters. This gave me additional access to the group which I may not have had if I were not a member. In addition, my experience with the group allows me to add a participant-observer perspective to my research, which is valuable. I also chose to focus only on the liberal side of the ideological spectrum. Due to my own tendencies, I am more informed about efforts to organize the political left in the United States, and am not aware of the existence of any similar social organizing groups on the right. This may be due to my disconnect from the right-wing grassroots, but it may be that such an organization has not been seen as a necessity by conservatives. There have been media structures in place to communicate talking points and messages, and the Republican presence in conservative religious congregations has provided ready made social groups that are connected to their ideology. However, as this is not the
subject to be addressed here, I will restrict myself to the liberal side of the American ideological spectrum.
Chapter 1. Introduction

The very true, although at this point clichéd, comment regarding American political life is that Americans are an associational people. Alexis DeTocqueville said, “In no country in the world has the principle of association been more successfully used or applied to a greater multitude of objects than in America.”

Americans have always joined groups, on many different levels of society and with many goals. From local to international, from purely social to specifically task oriented, these groups have proliferated throughout society, at all levels of the class and political structure. Over time, however, the general nature of the groups have changed. Parties once had active presences at local levels, now national organizations seem to be the primary focus. This can especially be seen among groups which have supported the Democratic party in the United States. Whereas once unions were the main organized groups supporting that party, now unions have faded in importance and various interest groups, most focused on a narrow range of issues, have taken primacy. Unions still are active in get out the vote drives, but they do not have the influence they once did. Members of groups now mainly provide support.

through donations and fundraising, rather than through more active
interactions with other members. These funds then allow the organization to
undertake lobbying and legislative efforts at higher levels. The overall
membership is asked to participate in isolated ways, through individually
contacting officeholders, or by signing petitions. There are few occasions when
special interest groups encourage their members to congregate or socialize, and
when this does happen, it is generally through large-scale, national events
which often make socializing secondary to fundraising or more explicitly career
oriented networking goals.

Aside from such independent groups, political parties also play an
important role in American politics. However, they too have followed a similar
course to that of the independent interest groups. Whereas once the local
parties played an important role in connecting with the populace, now they
have somewhat faded in importance in the minds of the electorate, even as they
still act to coordinate and nominate candidates for office. There are many
causes behind this, some of which have had beneficial effects for democracy.
The decline of machine politics and the party boss structure opened up
opportunities for many more people and perspectives to become involved in
politics, especially in places, such as Chicago, where the party machine was
entrenched and corrupt. However, with this decline in local presence, people’s
connections to their parties has become more tenuous. Party ID is still important, but based more on tradition, nominative association, and ideology rather than on an actual social connection to members of that party. Fewer individuals have been volunteering for campaigns, attending political meetings, or appearing at campaign rallies.\(^2\) This has led to the connection between party organizations and citizens growing tenuous. The voters have an idea of what parties stand for, and use this as a basis to create their partisan attachments, but have no attachment to the organizations behind them.\(^3\)

There are few opportunities for people to connect with others due solely to their political orientation or ideological leaning. This is hardly an ideal scenario. Should political allegiance be based solely on ideology, rather than some shared sense of community values, a splintering could result. It is arguable that in recent times, this could be behind some of the turmoil currently being seen in the Republican party. Over the past ten years, the Republican party dominated politics by creating an alliance between their traditional libertarian, economic conservative base and a new base made up of cultural and religious conservatives. These two independent groups, with little commonality between them, worked together for a time, acting in coordination

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through their leaders, but had no real bond to sustain this allegiance past specific electoral difficulties. Once they were firmly in power, controlling all three branches of government for a span of time, each group began to insist that its own agenda was more important, and objected when their concerns were ignored in favor of the other. For example, while libertarians desired less government influence, religious conservatives wanted morally based legislation. Once they got in power, there was little to hold them to a common agenda. A bond beyond ideology can be seen as important to connect together members of a party scattered across a wide range of the ideological spectrum, to say nothing of the geographic spread across the country.

Although there has been an effort undertaken by the head of the Democratic National Committee to revitalize the local Democratic parties through Howard Dean’s 50 State Strategy of putting money from the national party into every state’s local party, there has not been much of an attempt to build the social connections based upon those local parties which once existed. There have, however, been changes which have worked to form communities among those on the left end of the ideological liberal-conservative spectrum, among those who usually can be relied upon to be part of the Democratic party. These changes have mainly been based upon new information technologies, and the increasing reach and ease of use of the internet. The first of these are
the blogs, where participants and contributors can build up a dialogue and a rough sort of community, even if they do not ever actually interact in their real life. A second development has been the founding of a group which has used the tools provided by the internet to organize local social gatherings oriented around a general political ideology (“liberal”) rather than around a specific issue or identity. This organization, Drinking Liberally, will be the focus of this investigation. Can a social connection, rather than an intellectual, ideological one, spur and support civic and political engagement? Does ideology need to be tied to specific goals to produce results, or can it passively influence people through social activities? What can be learned from such an approach?

**Thesis Plan**

This thesis will examine the research questions employing a two part approach. One part will examine the historical and theoretical factors behind the groups I am investigating. Chapter two will examine the recent rise of amateur politicians in America. Amateur, in this sense, does not necessarily mean non-professional, but is defined in contrast with old style career politicians. At various times in American history politics has either been a business focused on those who were in it for career and professional goals, or it has been focused more on those with ideological goals. In the early part of the
20th century, entrenched political machines made it so that professional politics dominated most major urban areas of the country. Midway through the century, amateur politicians became the dominant force. This shift set the stage for the need to organize and motivate the electorate to support candidates and issues.

Chapter three will look at some of the social psychological factors that are involved in group membership and civic participation. Once someone joins a group, they form internal ideas of the expectations and roles that members must live up to. Identity theory gives some structure as to how these group influences can change an individual’s behavior and internal conception of self.

The second part of this thesis will be looking at a specific group, to see how these factors play out in a case study. The organization, Drinking Liberally, was created approximately four years ago to provide a space for liberals to gather and talk about politics and socialize. Chapter four will describe the history and structure of the organization, and the activities which happen under its auspices. It will be contrasted with some other well known liberal organizations, to highlight the differences in approach between them.

Chapter five will look at a survey conducted of the membership of Drinking Liberally. A survey was conducted to determine the level of political participation in members of Drinking Liberally, and to see if there is any
change in their engagement due to their membership. Some of the interesting population characteristics of the group will be highlighted, and the level of political activity in the group will be determined. Finally, any relationship between group membership and political activity will be analyzed.

Chapter six will conclude this work and examine what has been learned from combining the survey data in part two with the theoretical basis in part one. Future directions for research will also be considered, including ways of developing more refined tools to measure the effects of such groups on political engagement.
Chapter 2. Historical Background

When considering the importance of organizations such as Drinking Liberally, two things must be understood. First is the place of such groups in the current American political system. Second is the effect that such groups have on the individuals who make up their membership. The latter will be addressed in the next chapter, but to understand the former, we must look at the historical events in American politics which have led to the current situation where the emphasis is placed on so called “Amateur Politicians” rather than career or “Professional Politicians.”

The Decline of Machine Politics

America’s democratic system of government has always been based around party politics. In any democratic system of government, alliances will naturally occur between different portions of the electorate who are attempting to gain power through the legitimate means provided in that system. Those alliances which persist eventually solidify into political parties, one or more factions which dominate the political process. In the United States, elections have been dominated by two major parties, with nearly all candidates running for office being members of the Democratic or Republican parties. These party organizations operate at several different levels, from local parties in
municipalities, to national level organizations running candidates for office at the highest levels of government.

The nature of the politicians who participate in the American system has changed several times through the course of the country’s history. The ease with which an individual can enter the system waxes and wanes, as factors change which favor either the outsider or the entrenched political class. The level of commitment involved, the length of time served, and the restrictions on who could expect to be elected has varied widely. At certain points, the ‘everyday person’ could expect to run campaigns, at least on a local level, on an equal footing with career politicians. At other times, only those connected into the existing power structure could expect to win office. The political landscape has emphasized outsiders and insiders at various times, as groups become entrenched and dislodged. The power of amateurs in American politics likewise ebbs and flows as their ability to communicate with those in power, and win power for themselves, is facilitated or hindered by the structures in place.

In the first half of the twentieth century, a change occurred which opened the door for increased participation by those outside of the political system. Machine politics, which had dominated most major cities and had
greatly shaped the national parties faded, and individuals entered the system who had been outside the established patronage groups.

The decline of the local party machines was part of an extended process of political reform in the United States, which occurred over several decades. As part of Progressive Era reforms, non-secret ballots and party strip ballots were eliminated, allowing voters more choice in their selections.\(^4\) In the 1970s, the McGovern-Fraser Commission significantly opened up the way delegates were selected for nominating conventions to open them up to unrepresented constituencies.\(^5\) And while these reforms were happening, the spread of mass-media served to allow candidates and advocates to communicate directly to the American people. These factors, along with other political and social reforms, served to end the era of machine politics.

These changes drove politicians to engage and concentrate on the ideological concerns of voters, and came to their offices with goals beyond maintaining the status quo desired by the established political machine. Over time, these ‘amateur’ politicians and their concerns have become the more prevalent. This has, in turn, changed the way that voters evaluate the

\(^5\) Ibid. p. 255.
politicians presented to them, as well as the focus and operations of special interest groups which seek to exert influence on those politicians.

The zenith of political party machines is considered to be around the beginning of the twentieth century. Machine politics in the United States was a system of governance based around patronage, behind-the-scenes control, and *quid pro quo* arrangements. These have always existed in politics, and still do, but during this era their prevalence was especially blatant. Power generally rested in local and state political machines, which controlled the operations of the government through contracts and positions awarded to those who had benefited those in power. Control of the political machine often came down to a single ‘boss’ who coordinated the operations of the government. Candidates for office were selected not based on issues, but on favors given and owed to the boss. The national party generally had no objection with letting the local political machines run their own affairs, due to the ability of those machines to mobilize voters for national level elections. Machines thrived in both parties, but the Democrats had more established machines, especially in urban areas, due to their ability to tie the machines into the local immigrant communities. Republicans, who often pushed legislation that was anti-immigrant, had greater difficulty in establishing such urban machines. These ties to the immigrant population let the machines have a base of support built into the
communities in which they existed, as the immigrants looked to the machine for support with employment and assimilation. However, the political machines were not driven by any sort of ideological concern, but rather “to gain control of local government as a source of patronage and money”6 E. E. Schattschneider, identified the local party boss as a weak link in the structure of party politics, who could damage the democratic nature of the party. They occupied a position that depended on the democratic process, but was accountable to no one. They were prone to acting in illegal ways to further their own agenda, and were not called to task due to the fact that they controlled the judicial system. The boss of the local machine, through his ability to generate turnout for and direct the regional results of national contests, was able to hold the national party above him at bay while ignoring protests which may come from those beneath him in the hierarchy, such as the voters. The former depended on him for votes to win national level elections, while the latter were not given much in the way of candidate choice beyond what was approved by the machine.

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Schattschneider saw this situation coming about because of a rigid but distributed party power structure\(^7\), and the party machines of the early twentieth century certainly showed his concerns to be valid. Due to the size of the country, and the state of mass communications technologies at the time, parties could not help but to have autonomous regional organizations to tailor party messages to regional concerns. However, Schattschneider noted that the enemy of the party boss system is a strong centralized party with an effective national party hierarchy.\(^8\) New developments in the demographics of the United States, combined with technological innovations allowed the national parties to develop a strong central organization, and led to the decline of party machines.

The urban party machines often relied on immigrants to supply votes and to support patronage positions. However, this system only worked with a constant stream of new immigrants. As immigrants assimilated into American society and moved from poverty into the middle class, they became more aware of the problems generated by the machine system, and became more likely to oppose it.\(^9\) For a long period of time, this movement to the affluent suburbs

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 186.
was slow enough that new immigrants were moving into the cities faster than assimilated ones were moving into the suburbs. However, after World War II, this balance was disrupted, as the primary populations moving into the cities became African Americans from the south. The white local bosses who controlled the urban machines did not embrace these new residents, instead they attempted to maintain their support in the rapidly declining Irish and Italian populations they had always appealed to. In the process, they took advantage of the new African American urbanites, further alienating them. Eventually, the old party machine fell. African American political machines did rise in some cities, but they never reached the same level of power that the old machines had.¹⁰

In addition to this population change, the newly affluent middle class began to see the disadvantages brought about by the corrupt machine system. They had the financial and temporal resources to pursue reform measures that were designed to further the public good, and reduce the ability of political machines (and their business allies) to take advantage of governmental structures. Along with movements to create labor laws, more fair taxation systems, and food safety and uniformity, movements to reform the civil service

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 42-43
system gained momentum during this period. A number of these measures were begun as part of the Progressive Era and the New Deal response to the Great Depression, and they only gained speed in the time of prosperity that came about after World War II. As a result of these reforms, political machines had more difficulty maintaining their patronage systems. In addition, changes in voting procedures gave people the ability to move away from a party-machine constructed slate of candidates, and anonymously vote for their own combination of people and parties. Over time, this lessening of influence and control led to a reduction of the power of local parties, and to a situation where the national level party organization had more control.

Along with this shift in the nature of local parties, communications changes were enabling voters to make more informed choices regarding the politicians running for office. Mass media, beginning with radio in the early 20th century, rapidly penetrated American society. The rise of television in the 1950s and 1960s transformed the relationship between local and national parties, as well as that between candidates, parties, and the electorate.

Historically, one role of a local party has been to connect those operating on a national level with the local electorate, acting as a “field organization” at

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12 Ibid., p. 40.
the local level. The local party machine drove voter turnout for state or national level candidates who might have been unknown to the local citizenry. In an age where the newspaper was the only form of mass communication, it was difficult for candidates to make themselves known, leading them to rely on the local party machine to get elected. As election reforms moved people away from being forced to vote for party slates, television started to inform them about candidates who were running for office. Not only were they informed about politicians in their own areas, they could also see others, driving the parties to create some internal homogeneity across the entirety of the party organization. The party that an individual identified themselves with still proved to be a good predictor of their vote, but the ways in which the candidates for that party were chosen was changed. Local parties could no longer pursue their own disparate agendas at the expense of the national party’s goals or ideology.

Television based campaigns served to rapidly increase the shift of American party politics from the local level to the national. By their ability to inform and drive voters without the need for locally driven voter mobilization, such campaigns drastically reduced the utility that the local party provided to


the national organization. Candidates could in fact bypass the party mechanisms and communicate directly to the voters. Campaign emphasis was shifted from providing labor and turnout to providing money, and it was not necessary to be in a locality to provide money for television advertisements in that area. New institutions were created to direct money to parties and candidates in order to run the campaigns necessary in this new era. A system of “party-like” non-profits grew up around this need, the most prevalent being Political Action Committees (PACs). A PAC is a private group which is organized to support or defeat a candidate, piece of legislation, or slate of issues. They can be of any size, but there are limitations on the amount of money that can be spent in support of a given candidate. Despite these restrictions, they can exert a large amount of influence beyond their monetary expenditures through their ability to organize voters and supporters. These organizations frequently supplement individual candidates beyond what funding they may have been given by their party, and are able to exert influence over internal party processes such as nominations and through providing input and direction to the party platform. They also serve to link politicians at multiple organizational levels of the party (e.g., local and national) in their

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support for different candidates supporting the same issues. Some have suggested that these new groups are the new form of political parties, but despite the way that they network and provide support for candidates, those candidates are still running under the banner of another organization, independent from any of these non-profit groups. In Schattschneider’s analysis, the distinguishing factor of parties which excludes these non-profits is that although they may support candidates, they do not fully participate in the nominating and election process as parties do. Although they can have a great deal of influence and are active participants in the process of elections, they still do not nominate candidates, nor do they seek to be the organizations who hold power. They simply act to influence those groups that do.

There were several factors which led to the decline of party machines. Two which are notable for this discussion exist at the top and bottom of the party hierarchy. At the base of the party power structure, a prosperous middle-class, combined with the ongoing communications revolution, led to a new activism on the part of informed ordinary citizens. At the top, new organizations stepped in to help fund and guide candidates whose values or agendas they approved of.

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16 Ibid., pp. 44-45.
Amateurs In Politics

The period after World War II saw a rise in the levels of prosperity in the United States, and with it, the rise of a new class of actors in American Politics.\textsuperscript{18} James Q. Wilson, in his study of club politics, \textit{The Amateur Democrat}, contrasted these new amateurs with the professionals who had dominated politics. Professionals, he said, are primarily concerned with politics as a career. They are interested in maintaining their positions, and advancing through the ranks of government to secure more power and influence for themselves. By contrast, amateurs are concerned with commitments to policies and ideals. They seek advancement to further these goals. While professionals would seek to nominate a candidate who could best garner votes, favoring electability over ideology, amateurs would recruit their candidates based on their commitments to the values they share with the amateurs.\textsuperscript{19}

The difference between the two types can be described by what is important to them. Amateurs hold principle above the usual competitions of


politics. The reason for engaging in political action and activity is to uphold these principles and ideologies, so striving to further them is the prime motivator. By contrast, the professionals are motivated by a desire to win. The goal is to address the concrete questions that are presented to them, and to build the largest coalition to secure electoral majorities. The more abstract ideas upheld by the amateurs are less important to the professionals than what needs to be accomplished at the time to complete tasks and win elections. The outcome of this is that the professional politician is more concerned with constructing compromises and coalitions, adapting to changing problems, and maximizing organizational strength and coherency.20

The primary rewards that individuals expect to gain from their political activity vary depending on if their goals fall mainly into the professional or amateur categories. Professional politicians are looking for concrete benefits from their participation, either through actual wealth or through increased influence. The amateur is looking for non-material benefits, a feeling that they are working for a good causes and furthering the principles for which they stand. Members of amateur political organizations may be drawn in by offers connected with membership (i.e., raffles, discounts, etc) or by the opportunity to become more educated and informed (through speakers, classes, or

workshops) but they stay due to the more abstract benefits that come with their participation. The primary rewards for the amateur are ephemeral and hard to quantify, as compared to those sought by the professional. However, they work as hard in the pursuit of these rewards as the professional does for career advancement.\textsuperscript{21}

Wilson’s analysis found two main goals driving the amateur politician, reformism or liberalism.\textsuperscript{22} More precisely, groups across the country might have differing particular goals, but their general goals would fall into one of these two categories. The difference between the two can broadly be summed up as striving for internal versus external change:

“Liberalism refers broadly to a related set of substantive goals which include civil rights, government intervention in the economy for welfare purposes, concern for minority groups, and “internationalism.” Reformism, on the other hand, is concerned with reorganizing the procedures, recruitment, and tactics ... and with replacing its present leadership with leaders acceptable to (i.e., drawn from the ranks of) the reformers.”\textsuperscript{23}

Liberals are concerned with overarching ideals, and how to campaign for them directly. Reformers are concerned with having their party structure reflect their ideals.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 127.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., pp. 127-128.
According to Wilson, reformers are liberals as well, although not all liberals can be called reformers. Reformers wish to change the party mechanisms so that the internal mechanisms of the party can both better execute the goals of the reformers. They wish to reduce or eliminate patronage and favoritism, and to ensure that all party positions are filled by high quality candidates. They want, in essence, to make certain that their party structures are as democratic as possible.\textsuperscript{24}

Pure liberals, by comparison are often advocating their causes outside of any party political structure, and are simply trying their best to have these concerns expressed and addressed. They may work with the party machines when politicians in those organizations will support their causes, or may work with other parties to put pressure on candidates. \textsuperscript{25} This orientation can cause more problems than the reformers. Reformers are often for more concrete goals, such as opening up the party or government by changing the leadership structure or bylaws. These tactics can create coalitions that can work together without compromising any of the individual member’s principles. By comparison, liberals may be campaigning for causes which will only be accomplished slowly, and may only be applicable on a national scale, rather than a more accessible local goal. Wilson’s liberals have more concretely

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 128.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 129.
defined ideologies which they are looking to advance through their political participation.\textsuperscript{26}

Wilson was studying amateurs in Democratic areas of the United States in the 1960s, but they exist in all parties. There are always people who are trying to pursue their ideological ends. His terminology comes from those he was studying, but the same tactics and typology existed on the Republican side at the time he was studying the Democratic amateurs, and continue to exist today. Put in more value neutral language, Wilson’s liberals can be thought of as those who are seeking ideological change, and reformers are those who are primarily working towards structural change in their party.

Although the role of amateurs has become highlighted in modern times, it should be noted that they have always been present in some capacity in American Governance. The founding fathers of the country would certainly be considered amateurs by the above description, and Prohibition was a national movement created and executed primarily by citizens acting on moral concerns. As political structures go through periods of entrenchment, the number and variety of amateurs active in politics change, and the ways they can bring their goals to fruition changes as well.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 137.
The amateur politician has become increasingly prevalent after the fall of machine politics. People who cared about politics and policies for ideological reasons, rather than practical ones, started to organize and network. Their efforts gained traction through the course of the Civil Rights movement and the anti-Vietnam movement. In addition to individuals and protest movements, these amateurs began to organize to be able to direct their money and influence towards the party at higher levels. The non-governmental organizations which took on some party roles after the decline of machine politics provided the sort of mechanism which could accomplish these goals.

Special Interest Groups

Returning to the discussion of Schattschneider’s work *Party Government*, special interest or pressure groups are distinguished from parties due to the fact that they do not seek to actually take the reigns of power in government. They simply seek to exert their influence on the direction of that government in regards to particular issues or policies.\textsuperscript{27} Rather than working to create coalitions to win elections, pressure groups seek to influence opinion and create the appearance that their views are held by enough of the

population to make it so that those in power should listen, otherwise they may experience difficulties in the next election cycle. At their best, pressure groups can advocate effectively for minorities who may not otherwise receive proper representation through the normal party system, at their worst, they bully legislators on behalf of narrowly defined, privileged classes of individuals. Evaluating which strategy a group is using often depends on whether or not the observer supports the group. They often take advantage of the fact that no party can have full control over the discipline of their members. One member can be pressured, and others may follow after.28

Special interest groups have long been a part of American politics. They were influential in shaping the Republican party’s abolitionist stance, and labor unions had a great deal to do with the fortunes of the Democratic party in the 20th century.29 Once political machines were no longer the dominant force in American elections, these interest groups grew and moved into the campaign support roles formerly occupied by the strong local parties. They began to be major forces for voter mobilization and fundraising for candidates.

A significant difference between the local parties and the special interest groups is that while the local parties would focus their efforts on the party as a

28 Ibid., pp. 196-197.
whole (within that region), the special interest groups are more interested in focusing on candidates and campaigns. Being focused on specific issues, they are campaign oriented groups, seeking to promote or defeat certain bills, policies or candidates.

Although we are currently discussing them in the context of amateur politicians, interest groups are by no means restricted to organizations run on behalf of everyday citizens. PAC's and lobbying groups are often connected with professional organizations or corporations. Business interests have as much to gain by influencing policy as the average citizen. Regardless of the backing behind the group, there are common tactics used by interest groups. They seek either to mobilize voters in favor of specific electoral outcomes, or to bring evidence of public opinion to legislators through means such as mailing or telephone campaigns. They drive their campaigns through advertising, using ads to attack or defend policies, making skillful use of mass communications techniques to get their message to the public.

Other than voter activation and mobilization, special interest groups also play a major role in providing money to candidates and party organizations. PACs have been set up for specific candidates, or for specific

\[30\] Ibid., pp. 222-223.
\[31\] Ibid., p. 228.
\[32\] Ibid., p. 223.
\[33\] Ibid., p. 215.
causes. They provide the funding necessary for a modern media campaign, but the money does not come without conditions. There are regulations to attempt to reduce the influence that PACs have on the political process, but the threat of financial consequences to campaigns still gives these organizations a measure of power over candidates for office.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{Modern Era: Professionalized Amateurs}

With new media forms, political non-profit groups, and an atrophied local party, campaigns for office have become more complicated. Candidates and their staff can no longer have all the necessary skills. Running a modern media campaign is a full time job. Those who hold this job are the campaign consultants.

Like special interest groups, political consultants have been around in one form or another since the early days of American politics. However, they tended to only be doing this task part time, and were attached to party organizations or specific candidates. Modern consultants are seen to have grown out of the public relations track in the business community. Skills and tools which were developed for this arena were translated over to politics.

Consultants learned to specialize in the different aspects of the modern campaign, such as campaign commercials, or public appearances. Their specialization meant that their services were not cheap, and they did not want to limit themselves to single campaigns. Where in the past they may have limited themselves to single candidates or local parties, now campaign consultants work for multiple campaigns across the country and internationally, usually within the same party.35

The new age of politics is one where you have a mix of amateurs, those who are invested in the candidate or the issues of the campaign, and the professionals, who are working for the campaign as part of their occupation. The ideological issues are secondary to the job of winning the campaign that they are hired for.36

In these campaigns, “amateur” issues and candidates dominate. However, the campaigns are run by political professionals, who may not have as much attachment to those issues, but are skilled at running the campaign and getting the message out to the electorate. The place for the amateur in this style of campaigning is often only found on the fringes. The large amount of money involved means that the candidate looks to this professional class for

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the strategy of the campaign. This has meant that in recent times amateurs often felt out of the loop, and looking for ways to get involved. However, the internet has changed this by providing ways for amateurs to obtain information faster and in far more detail than in the past, and to organize themselves more cheaply and across greater distance, helping to provide somewhat unified amateur popular movements that can quickly respond to political events, allowing those amateurs to gain more power and influence in the process.

The fall of the entrenched political machines changed the landscape of American politics. Middle class voters were more involved in making their own judgments and evaluations about politicians than they had been before. New technologies increased the level of information available to those voters. And interest groups began to shape political campaigns according to ideological, not partisan criteria. Campaign consultants then moved in to help candidates to craft messages to appeal to the electorate using these new technologies. This was dramatically different from the way that politics had been run under the rule of local party bosses. Over time, these changes have become more and more a part of the way that politics is done. On both sides of the ideological spectrum, grassroots activists are called upon by non-profit groups to protest
for or against policies, and to express their support for certain politicians. The individual, ‘amateur’ activist interacts with the larger group to accomplish more politically than they could on their own.
Chapter 3. Social Psychology and Identity Theory

Increased prosperity and access to information has caused the number of activists participating in American politics to rise over the course of the 20th century. The number of groups active in politics has also risen, as more people involved in the process leads to a wider array of interests and regions seeking representation. Individuals’ involvement in these non-profit and special interest groups is not simply a matter of the exercise of collective power and influence over competing groups, but also of the influence that group membership has on those who belong to it. Once someone identifies themselves with a group, psychological forces are able to shape how they think of themselves, and how they perceive the group and the rest of society.

There are many theories in the field of social psychology that concern inter- and intra-group interaction. The theory which best seems to explain individuals’ actions within groups is identity theory and its extensions. Identity theory sees an individual’s psyche as being made up of several parts. These parts consist of the internal ideas that the person has about themselves based upon their life experience, the roles and responsibilities they have in society, and the way that they identify themselves as being members of groups. The
interaction of all of these components forms an individual’s identity. For each role they take on, there will be a subset of their identity which applies specifically to that component of their life. There will be a ‘parent’ identity, an ‘adult’ identity, and a ‘student’ identity. These identities are formed from the specific experiences of the individual and on the societal definitions of those roles.\textsuperscript{37}

In addition to these role-based identities, an individual will also have an identity based on their social groups. Social groups are both actively chosen groups, such as membership in an organization or being the fan of a sports team, or can be passively assigned, as in a citizen’s nationality, which is usually a factor of birth location. These passive, trait-based group identities can be just as powerful as chosen identities. One’s identity as a member of a group is defined positively in terms of what the expectations of members of that group, and negatively in terms of who is not part of the group. The divisions between those who belong to groups and those who do not, the \textit{in-group} and \textit{out-group} borders, are defined, and the individual will view other groups, and the individuals within them, through those lenses.\textsuperscript{38}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. p. 89.
\end{flushright}
As individuals go through their lives, these multiple identity conceptions form a hierarchy. At any time, there will be competing self-conceptions which will be unconsciously prioritized based on the current situation. The role of ‘lawyer’ will have much more importance in a courtroom than it will at home on the weekend, when the ‘parent’ role may be more prominent. Both roles will, however, always have an impact on each other, and on the other identities constructed by that individual. The degree to which an identity asserts its influence partially depends on the amount of commitment that the individual has to that part of their personality. As an identity is given more positive emotional affect, its salience in different contexts will increase, thus giving it influence over more situations. Ties to others who share that role will also increase the commitment, and the more committed one is to that role or identity, the more one will try to ensure that the behavior exhibited in a given situation corresponds to the standards held by that identity.

Groups serve to create, change, and reinforce aspects of identity. Through the definitions of *in-group* and *out-group* categories, a cognitive prototype is created in members’ heads of attributes and relationships which make up their group in relation to other groups. This collection of perceptions,

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39 Ibid. p. 93.
40 Ibid. p. 94.
41 Ibid. p. 98.
attitudes, feelings, and behaviors lets an individual know what characteristics are expected of a member. As someone’s commitment to the group grows, they will seek to match this prototype in their own behavior. As this identity becomes a better fit for the person (i.e., the differences between the categories encompassed in the identity definition and their actual behavior are minimized) the psychological salience of the identity is increased, and it will be invoked more often.

People’s identity constructs have an impact on their behavior and how they work to accomplish their goals. In our context, the most significant aspect of this phenomenon to note is how these social psychological factors impact people’s political activity. Identity theory has long been used to understand how people make political decisions. Many of the elements of identity described above are used in conceptions of political party identification within the electorate. Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist and Eric Schickler begin their description party identification thusly:

“[voters] see themselves as belonging to partisan groups, Democrats or Republicans. The group in effect is suspended by the psychological image it conjures. It exists as a stereotype in the minds of voters, who in turn harbor a sense of attachment

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43 Ibid. p. 119
toward this group image. Democrats, for example, are people who think of themselves as Democrats.\textsuperscript{44}

Individual Party ID corresponds to certain prototypes in the partisan’s mind. Although Green et al. focus on the definitions that are created around one’s own party, they are also created for the opposing party. Because of this, voters are reluctant to change their party identification, even if the party may diverge sharply from their own values. If Party ID is established early in the life course, then there may be very strong changes between the party ideology of the established internal conception of the party to the individual and the actual positions and policies advanced by the party in elections. This phenomenon was seen in the American south after the Civil Rights movement. That region, which had long been a Democratic stronghold, found its values to be different from the modern Democratic party. However, there was no radical shift in the identifications of voters. Rather, there was a slow change, as individual Republican candidates would garner support, because they were figures who fit closer to the voter’s internal prototype of acceptable candidates. The party as a whole was unable to compete on any larger scale in the south, even if presidential candidates are popular. People will stay with their own internal definitions, based on their psychologically created identity, even when

the reality of the parties change. They view themselves as sticking to the party that they have constructed their identity around, and feel that any conflicts will be short term tensions surrounding the current party leaders, not long term realignments. As new waves of voters enter the electorate, they evaluate how the positions advocated by parties interact with their identity constructions, and thus may choose different parties than the previous cohort, even if the majority of issue positions held by both generations are the same.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, according to Green, Palmquist and Schickler, Party IDs are individualized constructs, based on the societal definition of party at a certain time. Party platforms and ideologies change over time, as new populations enter the electorate and new issues become important to the members of that party. Therefore, the Party ID that an individual holds as their political identity may differ from the positions held by the actual party.

Party identification is not simply a matter of policy preference. It also has a more visceral, emotional effect on voters and their reaction to events.\textsuperscript{46} This may in fact overshadow the practical, vote-deciding effect of Party ID, as an individual may disagree with their party’s platforms, but will rarely feel disappointed when their self-identified party wins office. These emotional reactions to situations which favor (or disadvantage) the in-group are part of

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid. pp. 157-161.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid. pp. 48.
the reinforcement mechanisms for someone’s identity constructions. The more they are able to experience some emotional reward, either through something they agree with occurring or through group commiseration after a setback, the more an identity’s salience is reinforced.47

Beyond Party ID, psychological identification plays a role in the dynamics of special interest groups and other political non-profits. Party ID in the United States is a ephemeral thing. There are no membership roles, no dues, and no requirements that one must perform to declare allegiance to one party over another. Voters occasionally use this to their advantage to vote in the opposing party’s primary. Non-profit and special interest groups often have more requirements. For individuals to join these groups, individuals must take on the identity of being a ‘member.’ They must identify themselves through the social categories constructed and implied by that group, and make evaluations on that basis. They not only need to support the policy positions of the group, but must see this support as going beyond specific policies. The group identity must hold enough salience to be activated in regards to that policy preference.48 These identities often come with more concrete positions

and tasks than simple Party ID requires. The simple fact that many groups require a donation to become full members is a requirement not held by political parties. One can sign up for mailing lists for most groups with no commitment, but actual membership requires more.

Democratic political action revolves around collective action and coalition building. To be successful, a group must not only have people who generally support its goals, but to have people who are willing to go out and take action on behalf of the group’s goals. The group needs to create an environment where the members are informed enough about the issues to take action, and to have the expectation that the action suggested by the group will have a better result than some other form of action. A crucial factor in this is the level of identification that someone has with the group.

Collective action is only one route an individual could take; one could also choose to follow individual action. In this case, collective action is viewed as a fallback route to the desired result. Individual action may be simpler, quicker, and provide more options. One route for individual action to take is to change one’s personal situation so that the target of collective action is no longer an obstacle. If someone does not identify strongly enough with the

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larger group that is being affected, personal action which removes the issue
from one’s own life may be the easier route. If the identification with the
affected group is high in the hierarchy of an individual’s identities, then they
will have an incentive to choose collective action with the group over individual
action. The group will want to maximize in-group identification, have a clear
contrast with the out-group, and have the group norm prototype be one which
encourages collective protest or action. If this happens, individually
disadvantageous situations will be seen as connecting to collective
disadvantages, and members will be more likely to participate in collective
actions surrounding those issues.

What groups need to do, in order to get people engaged and involved on
their behalf, is to have people psychologically identify with their cause, and
consider themselves members of that group. Moreover, they need to be
sufficiently invested in that group to have that group identity take precedence
over other identities in their psyche. Finally, they need to feel that one of the
criteria for being a ‘good’ member of that group is to take action to support the
goals of that group. In the past, major movements have taken advantage of
natural organizing situations to accomplish these goals. Labor unions had a
wide range of people bound by common situations, the civil rights movement

\[^{50}\text{Ibid. p. 200.}\]
\[^{51}\text{Ibid. pp. 204-205.}\]
had a large population with a common characteristic. Many of the groups active in modern politics seek to bind together diverse populations who hold common beliefs, without the concrete pressures and goals which bound social movements in the past. Members of some groups may not even be adversely affected should the group’s goals fail (i.e.: heterosexual members of the Human Rights Campaign, a pro-same-sex marriage group). Moreover, the old social groups are no longer as active, and new technologies are facilitating communication without the face to face contact that was necessary in past decades. There are competing opinions as to whether or not modern society can generate the levels of community and commitment that was seen in social and political groups in the past. Can groups inspire people to collective, rather than individual action? One way to consider this question is how does the group affect people’s concept of what it means to belong to their party group (i.e., Democrat or Republican), or ideological identity (i.e., liberal or conservative). Can group membership an individual to become more active in their expression of other, more basic identities?
Chapter 4. Drinking Liberally

One of the easiest ways to investigate the effects that group membership has on individuals is through a survey. If possible, a general survey with a large enough population could give valid results. The easier route would be to select a group as a case study, and attempt to determine the effects that belonging to the group has on its membership. There are many groups in the liberal political sphere to investigate, but not all of them are good for this study. A group is needed which focuses on socialization, and does not make active demands of its members. The group Drinking Liberally is ideal for this purpose. Drinking Liberally’s purpose is to provide a place for politically like-minded people to gather and socialize. It is a group which does not make specific demands for fundraising, candidate support, or issue support. Founded in 2003, the group welcomed its 200th chapter on April 16th, 2007.
History

Drinking liberally grew out of a gathering held in New York City, organized by Justin Krebs and Matt O’Neill in 2003. They had become frustrated with the political situation of the time, current events, and what they saw as the lack of any reaction to these events on the part the press, the political leaders, or the public. They felt that while there was a large amount of progressive will on the part of their friends, and among New Yorkers in general, there were few ways to harness this creativity or support. People worked in a variety of fields, had diverse talents, but little opportunity to connect with each other, and did not identify those talents as being ‘political.’ Krebs and O’Neill wanted to bring people together both politically and socially, and work towards building a progressive community where people could connect with others and see how their own skills could connect with others’ in productive ways, and to expand the discussion beyond their own group of friends. It was planned as a weekly event, to generate a regular, repeating place for people to gather.

All information regarding the history of Drinking Liberally, as well as all quotes in this section, come from an Email interview conducted with Justin Krebs on 5 March 2007, except where otherwise noted.
After a few months, Krebs and O’Neill settled on the name Drinking Liberally for their group. During this time, the group began to build a reputation among progressives and bloggers in New York City. In addition to the regular meetings, they also hosted some special events, such as debate-watching parties during the run up to the 2004 elections. After about a year, one of the regular attendees moved to San Francisco, and asked if he could start a Drinking Liberally group out there. Seeing the possibilities that the group might expand, David Alpert, who had been working with Krebs on an endeavor called Cosmopolity, created a website for the group. In the center of the front page of this site was a map of the United States, with the New York and San Francisco chapters marked, David knew this idea would take off.

Cosmopolity was an idea started by Krebs and Alpert, to create a calendar of progressive events around New York City, and then eventually to actively organize and convene those events. It acted as “the special event, entertainment, and community-building machine of the progressive movement” in New York City. Over time, the two organizations merged, and Drinking Liberally became the flagship project of Cosmopolity.

Drinking Liberally continued to grow after the second chapter started in San Francisco. New chapters were created mostly through personal connections, but the Republican National Convention held in New York City in
2004 gave Drinking Liberally more exposure. There were several events during the week of the convention sponsored by Cosmopolity and Drinking Liberally at a venue called The Tank. Liberal political bloggers who attended these events discussed the group on their own sites, and it began to expand more rapidly. By the 2004 election there were 16 chapters, in places as diverse as Boise, Idaho, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Raleigh, North Carolina. Katrina Baker, already an active attendee in New York City, took on a role of communicating with, and providing support to the network of new chapters. These chapters, by and large, were not recruited. They have grown through press exposure, word of mouth, and the desire of liberals to join with an expanding political and social network.

Cosmopolity also grew. It continued to schedule events, and eventually created a ‘Liberally’ brand. There was a comedy tour (Laughing Liberally), a book club and tours (Reading Liberally), as well as others, such as Screening Liberally, Blogging Liberally, and Eating Liberally. The name of the organization was changed from Cosmopolity to Living Liberally, to reflect its place as the center of the network of activities.

Both groups, Drinking Liberally and Cosmopolity/Living Liberally (which now encompasses Drinking Liberally), were founded on the principle that social interaction can encourage political action. By providing a space
which is open to all participants, regardless of their level of engagement, a community, rather than just an organization, can be formed. As people build friendships and connections through this community, they are more equipped to engage in political actions. Beyond more concrete networking opportunities, Drinking Liberally is designed to reinforce people’s political identity. As Justin responded when asked what he felt the role of the group was:

To build a community around progressive politics that welcomes in all people, regardless of their level of political engagement, helps them form bonds and friendships that strengthen their political identity and equip them to become more engaged, and to be the social/cultural layer of the emerging progressive movement. Also, to take the word "liberal" back and let people be proud of it again.

There is a consciousness about the power of political identity in the purpose of the group. There is a culture of amateur political activity present in the United States, and the group wishes to make certain that people are able to connect with it, and identify with. This identification can do more to get people to organize and participate than any direct appeal could.
Other Groups: Why Drinking Liberally as a Case Study

Other liberal groups have become major factors in Democratic Politics in the past decade. They have used the internet to coordinate and connect multiple chapters across the country, as has Drinking Liberally, but they differ from Drinking Liberally in several ways. These factors make Drinking Liberally an ideal case study for studying group effects on political activities. First, Drinking Liberally is one of the only ones to have its focus be on the group’s social effects, rather than the political ones. Second, Drinking Liberally’s founding purpose was not directed towards any particular political goal. Finally, Drinking Liberally makes no explicit appeals to its members to direct them towards any specific political cause.

Moveon.org is a major democratic advocacy group, which uses the internet to connect to a wide swath of the electorate. It uses its email list to raise funds and encourage action on the part of its membership. However, aside from the occasional specific event, there is no social element to the group. They ask people to gather for protests in Washington D.C., to encourage them

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53 Emails referred to in this section come from the author’s archive of emails sent to him through his mailing list subscriptions from the mentioned groups from January 2006 through March 2007.

to write to their congressperson, and to take small actions to raise awareness for causes supported by the group. It accomplishes a large amount through its fundraising and issue awareness campaigns, but it does not encourage socialization, except secondarily as it happens around the other events and issues they promote. It certainly works to create a network, and uses that network to create volunteer phone banks and to obtain temporary housing for volunteers and organizers working on campaigns, but that network is based on a shared commitment to issues, not on a social connection. The goal of the organization is to use the power of its mailing list to bring the weight of popular support to selected causes. It started to protest the impeachment proceedings against President Bill Clinton, and then proceeded to support other issues. It fulfills this purpose well, but it does not serve to create any social network.

Another group which has risen in the liberal political sphere recently is Democracy for America. The group originated as Dean for America, the campaign organization for Howard Dean’s 2004 presidential campaign. They

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noticed that there was a group supporting Howard Dean on the website Meetup.com, which is a site which exists to help people discover others in their area who share the same interests.\textsuperscript{60} The site has groups for a wide variety of interests, but the Dean campaign saw that they could use it to coordinate their supporters, creating a social group of people who could gather and get to know one another. This would not only allow them to coordinate with potential volunteers, but also would allow supporters to talk to other people in a social setting, potentially encouraging others to support the candidate.\textsuperscript{61} The social component was very important to the Dean campaign. This has carried onto Democracy for America, the group that formed out of the campaign infrastructure once Dean ended his presidential run. They maintain a sub-organization called DFA-Link, which provides a central place for organizations to list events and gatherings. In this way they are similar to Drinking Liberally. However, Democracy for America does not actually organize the events they facilitate, and the purpose of the organization is still to advocate and fundraise for issues. The emails they send out direct people towards similar actions as Moveon.org’s emails. Social interaction is not the main focus of the organization.

\textsuperscript{60} Meetup Inc. “About Meetup” page on Meetup.com, retrieved from http://www.meetup.com/about/ on March 8\textsuperscript{th}, 2007.

Although there are plenty of other groups which use the internet to organize, and there are groups which encourage others to organize, Drinking Liberally is one of the only major groups to devote itself to encouraging the social aspects of the liberal community, while specifically rejecting any direct appeals. The guidelines for City Leaders (those who run a chapter) forbid any endorsements or appeals for donations. Because of this, Drinking Liberally provides an opportunity to examine the change in people’s level of participation as a result of group membership.

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Chapter 5. **Survey Results and Analysis**

If a group is having an effect on the attitudes and behaviors of its members, then there should be some way to measure this. One approach asks members about their activities, in an attempt to draw out information on their levels of involvement, both politically and as members of the group. By asking about how they engage in political activities, we can get a measure of their political involvement. By asking questions about their length of membership and level of activity in the group, we can use these as factors for comparing subsets of the population against each other.

If Drinking Liberally does have a positive effect on the participation of its members, then we should be able to see an increase in the levels of political activity that corresponds with their membership. If not, then this means of measurement does not seem to support the idea that the socialization approach that Drinking Liberally takes, without any formal calls for participation on the part of the group itself, can serve to raise the levels of participation among its members, and some other approach to investigating the group should be used.
Survey Administration

In order to examine the effects of socialization on political engagement, I designed a survey to be distributed among the members of Drinking Liberally. I contacted the national leaders, and secured their permission to send the survey out through their mailing list. They sent the survey email to all the city leaders, who sent it out to their mailing lists. At the time, there were approximately 155 chapters, with an average of 180 members per mailing list. 29 city leaders reported that sent out the survey invitation email to their lists, for a total of approximately 5220 potential respondents, based on the average members per list.

The survey was conducted using the online survey tool SurveyMonkey. Members who decided to take the survey were able to follow the link and complete the survey, the results were automatically tallied by the program. The survey sample is an anonymous, self-selected subset of the population of the selected group.

There are some important factors about this self-selected group of respondents which must be considered when interpreting the survey results. Those who would join a group such as Drinking Liberally will already be more inclined to participate in political activities than the general population, and are also likely to have stronger ideological and partisan preferences. In
addition to this characteristic of the group members, those who are willing to take the time to fill out a survey are likely to have higher levels of political participation than other members, and also may be more active in the group. This makes it so that, demographic characteristics aside, it would be difficult to make any statement about the absolute level of political activity in the sample, as compared to the general population as polled by Pew or CIRCLE in their studies. Because of this, I will be looking at the relative level of change within the sample, with a discriminating factor based on their membership in the group Drinking Liberally.

I received 620 responses to some section of the survey, with approximately 570 people completing the full survey. This amounts to roughly an 11% response rate.

**Survey Response**

In order to test the hypothesis that membership in Drinking Liberally will increase members’ political engagement and participation, it was necessary to poll the organization. In early December 2006, I sent out a survey to all City Leaders of Drinking Liberally. Twenty-nine passed the survey on to their mailing lists, and a total of 620 members filled out the survey. The survey
asked questions relating to their political views, media usage, activity level in Drinking Liberally, level of civic engagement, and some demographic factors.

**Respondent**

**Demographics**

Demographically, the survey paints an interesting picture of the organization. Respondents were fairly evenly split across gender, with a slight majority being female. (Fig. 5.1) Ages ranged from 19 to 83, with the majority of responses being between 20 and 40. (Fig. 5.2) Income also tended to be high, with 88% of the sample making over $30,000, and 18% making over $100,000. (Fig. 5.3)

The education level was also high, with only around 14% of the sample having less than a college degree. (Fig. 5.4) The sample was not very religiously or racially diverse.
Approximately one third of the survey gave “Atheist,” “Agnostic,” or “None” for their religion, and when those who responded “I don’t know” or “I choose not to answer” are counted, more than half of the survey responses are accounted for as some form of “non-religious.” Mainline Protestants made up another 14% percent of the sample, Catholics 11%, and no other religion had 7% of the responses. (Fig. 5.5) Racially, 87% of the sample was White, with no other racial identifier garnering more than 3% of the responses.

Respondent Political Orientation
Politically, the vast majority of the respondents identified as liberals and as members of the Democratic party. (Fig. 5.6 and 5.7) This is to be expected, given the nature of Drinking Liberally. There were some respondents who identified as conservative or as Republican (7 respondents had some degree of identification with the Republican party, 6 said they were conservative), but not enough to allow for meaningful analysis. There were also 18 respondents who identified as members of the Green Party, and 33 who gave some other party affiliation. An overwhelming number of respondents indicated that they had voted in recent elections. Over 90% had voted in the two most recent national elections (94% in 2006 and 97% in 2004), and 75% had voted in the 2006 party primary elections.
Respondent Drinking Liberally Membership Profile

There was a good distribution of levels of activity and membership in the organization. The plurality of responses were from those with less than 6 months of membership (33%), but the next two categories each had around 30% as well. (6 months to 1 year: 28%, 1 year to 2 years: 29%) There are few responses for two years and up, but only 12% of the chapters are older than 12 years. Approximately 7% of responses came from individuals who had been members of the organization for longer than two years. (Fig. 5.8) Regarding frequency of attendance information, there is a very even distribution across the categories. No category has fewer than 10% of the responses, nor do any have more than 22%. By a slim margin, the most frequently chosen response indicate that they attend every meeting. (Fig. 5.9)
Attendance frequency was combined with information given on the individuals’ level of participation in the organization (City Leader, Co-Host, Attendee, Just Read E-Mails) to create a scale of Drinking Liberally Participation.

**Results**

In order to assess respondent’s political engagement, I chose to ask respondents about their levels of volunteering with various groups, and if they had engaged in a variety of political activities. These groups and activities are listed in Table 5.1. All groups were represented in survey results, some more than others. Only 15% of respondents had volunteered with a religious group in the past 12 months, while 56% indicated that they had volunteered with a political party organization. It should be noted that this survey took place one month after the 2006 elections, which most likely biases the survey towards volunteering with political groups. All political activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Activities</th>
<th>Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contacting Public Official</td>
<td>Religious Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact a Newspaper</td>
<td>Political Party Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called Talk Radio or Television Show</td>
<td>Candidate’s Campaign Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken Part in a Protest</td>
<td>Non-Partisan/Single Issue Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed E-mail Petition</td>
<td>Environmental Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed Written Petition</td>
<td>Health/Social Services Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycotted Product or Service</td>
<td>Youth/Education Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specifically Supported Product or Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercised for a Cause (AIDS Walk, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised Money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvassed for a Candidate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
were also present in the sample. (Table 5.2) Calling into a talk show was the least common, with only 30% of respondents having done that activity, while over 90% had done activities such as signing a petition (online or off), and favoring or boycotting a product.

The items were assembled into two scales, one for groups, one for activities. Changes in these scales were used as my main measure of political engagement. In addition to asking about people’s level of participation, I also asked about change in participation since joining Drinking Liberally. For each group and activity, respondents were asked if their participation had increased,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Volunteer Rate</th>
<th>Increase Rate</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
<th>Increase Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious Group</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Contacting Public Official</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Party Organization</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Contact a Newspaper</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Campaign</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Called Talk Radio or Television Show</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Partisan/Single Issue group</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Taken Part in a Protest</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Group</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Signed E-mail Petition</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Social Services Group</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Signed Written Petition</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth/Education Group</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Boycotted Product or Service</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Specifically Supported Product or Service</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exercised for a cause</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Raised Money</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Canvassed for a Candidate</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
decreased, or remained the same since joining the group. For no category was there a statistically significant number of responses indicating a decrease (2% of responses at most), while in several categories there was a noticeable number of people indicating increases (volunteering for candidate and political party groups showed 16% of respondents indicating an increase; all activities except calling talk shows, exercising for a cause, and fundraising showed 9% or more people indicating an increase).

Several questions also asked about the effects of Drinking Liberally on members in more general terms. People were asked if other members of Drinking Liberally were part of their general social circle (38% yes, 50% no) and if they had ever visited other chapters while traveling (16% yes, 81% no). They were also asked about their political discussions. Approximately half of the sample said that the quality and frequency of their discussions had increased since joining the group (48% said frequency increased, 50% said quality increased), and virtually none stated that these characteristics of their discussions had decreased (less than 0.5% for each).

**Survey Analysis**

My hypothesis says that there is a connection between group membership in Drinking Liberally and political participation. My tests of that
hypothesis investigated if there was a connection between length of membership and the measures of political participation I generated.

**Operational Hypotheses**

The operational hypotheses, with their corresponding null hypotheses, are as follows:

- **H$_1$:** As Membership Length increases, the Group Volunteerism Index increases.

- **H$_{0-1}$:** As Membership Length increases, the Group Volunteerism Index decreases or remains the same, or there is no significant relationship between Membership Length and the Group Volunteerism Index.

- **H$_2$:** As Membership Length increases, the Group Volunteerism Change Index increases.

- **H$_{0-2}$:** As Membership Length increases, the Group Volunteerism Change Index decreases or remains the same, or there is no significant relationship between Membership Length and the Group Volunteerism Change Index.

- **H$_3$:** As Membership Length increases, the Political Activity Index increases.
• \( H_{0-3} \): As Membership Length increases, the Political Activity Index decreases or remains the same, or there is no significant relationship between Membership Length and the Political Activity Index.

• \( H_4 \): As Membership Length increases, the Political Activity Change Index increases.

• \( H_{0-4} \): As Membership Length increases, the Political Activity Change Index decreases or remains the same, or there is no significant relationship between Membership Length and the Political Activity Change Index.

The demographics of the sample, as described above, do not easily map onto any segment of the wider United States population. As such, any attempt to compare the levels of activity of Drinking Liberally members to the overall national population would not be valid. Therefore, the baseline that will be used for evaluating change will be the levels of volunteerism and activity reported by those who were members for less than six months. Change will be looked at from these points onward through their membership in the group.
To begin with, we shall look at the group volunteering statistics. There is a wide variance across all Membership Length categories, with some respondents of all experience with the organization at the high and low ends of the spectrum (Fig. 5.11). It would be very hard to make any statement regarding a relationship between Membership Length and the Group Volunteerism Index. The mean stays roughly the same throughout all categories, and in fact drops slightly in the 2 year+ category. There does seem to be a possible relationship between the Group Volunteerism Change Index and Membership Length (Fig. 5.12). The mean rises as Membership Length increases, and the variation shrinks over time. Looking more closely at the relationship, a regression is conducted of Membership Length, the Drinking Liberally Participation Index, Strength of
Democratic Party Identification (PartyID), and Strength of Liberal Ideology (Ideology) on The Group Volunteerism Index. Details of this can be found in Table 5.3. The first two factors exist as measures of the effects of the DL group membership, and the second two are control factors for the individual’s political attitudes. In this regression, the only factor which has a significant effect is PartyID (Unstandardized Coefficient(UC): 0.305, Significance(Sig): 0.004). The same holds true when demographic control factors are added to the regression. When age, income, and education are added to the regression equation, PartyID is still the only significant factor (UC: 0.282, Sig: 0.018).

Similar findings are seen when The Group Volunteerism Change Index is investigated. A regression done with Membership Length, Drinking Liberally Participation Index, PartyID, and Ideology shows PartyID as the only significant factor (UC: 0.962, Sig: 0.001), and when the demographic factors are added, PartyID remains the strongest factor (UC: 0.828, Sig: 0.011). Membership Length is a factor in this regression (UC: 0.544, Sig: 0.47) and education approaches significance (UC: 0.443, Sig: 0.060). Details of this regression are in Table 5.4. These findings would indicate that H₁ is disproved (there is no relationship between Membership Length and the Group Volunteerism Index), and weak support for H₂ (there is a positive relationship
between Membership Length and the Group Volunteerism Change Index, but it is weak and easily masked by other factors).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.3: Regression Against Index of Volunteerism Grey Cells Represent Coefficients Significant at a Level of 0.05 or Better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without Demographic Controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstandardized Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Liberally Participation Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Democratic Party Identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Liberal Ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.4: Regression Against Index of Volunteering Change Grey Cells Represent Coefficients Significant at a Level of 0.05 or Better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without Demographic Controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstandardized Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Liberally Participation Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Democratic Party Identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Liberal Ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A different picture emerges when looking at political activities. Although there still is a large amount of variance in each membership category, there is more movement of the mean and more contraction of that variance as the membership length increases (Fig. 5.12). Activity change, although having several clusters of data points outside the standard error bars, also shows that there may be a change in values along with increased membership length (Fig. 5.13).

The same regressions run above against the Group Volunteerism Index were run against the Political Activity Index. Details are in Table 5.5. PartyID remained a significant factor (UC: 0.313, Sig: 0.006) and Ideology approached significance (UC: 0.268, Sig: 0.58), but Membership Length was a significant factor in this regression (UC: 0.58).
0.215, Sig: 0.028). When a regression was done with demographic factors added Membership Length (UC: 0.241, Sig: 0.021) and Ideo (UC: 0.370, Sig: 0.016) increased in significance, while the effect of PartyID (UC: 0.305, Sig: 0.013) decreased.

The effects of Membership Length on the regression are even stronger when the Political Activity Change Index is examined. Results from this regression are contained in Table 5.6. With or without demographic controls, Membership Length is the only factor even approaching significance. With only the political controls, PartyID and Ideology, Membership Length has the most influence on the regression equation (UC: 0.632, Sig: 0.005), and its effects are only increased when demographic factors are added (UC: 0.740, Sig: 0.002). In these two equations, neither PartyID nor Ideology approach significance. This would seem to indicate strong support for H₃ and H₄, there is a strong relationship between Membership Length and both the Political Activity Index and the Political Activity Change Index.
Table 5.5: Regression Against Index of Political Activities
Grey Cells Represent Coefficients Significant at a Level of 0.05 or Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Without Demographic Controls</th>
<th>With Demographic Controls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unstandardized Coefficient</td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Length</td>
<td>0.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Liberally Participation Index</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Democratic Party Identification</td>
<td>0.313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Liberal Ideology</td>
<td>0.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6: Regression Against Index of Political Activity Change
Grey Cells Represent Coefficients Significant at a Level of 0.05 or Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Without Demographic Controls</th>
<th>With Demographic Controls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unstandardized Coefficient</td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Length</td>
<td>0.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Liberally Participation Index</td>
<td>-0.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Democratic Party Identification</td>
<td>0.403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Liberal Ideology</td>
<td>0.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

There are two distinct things being examined in the analysis above, volunteerism with groups and political activities. One seems to be strongly related to membership in Drinking Liberally, the other is not. There are several possible explanations for this difference.

One factor has to do with the psychological identity theories described in chapter 3. As soon as other groups are considered, the effects of membership in one particular group becomes diluted. The identity creating effects of another group makes it hard to tie any effects to Drinking Liberally. Especially since there is no way of telling which group the respondent joined first. For certain groups, such as religious groups, other identities become even more prominent.

Party Identification, another psychological identity, proved to be a strong factor in the regression of group volunteering, and may overwhelm whatever small effect Membership Length might have. This could be due to the fact that the top three groups respondents reported having volunteered with were politically oriented (Political Party Organization: 56%, Candidate Running for Office: 52%, Non-Partisan or Single-Issue Group: 45%). As noted above, the PartyID measure used in this analysis is actually a measure of the degree of affiliation with the Democratic party. Stronger partisans would be
more likely to volunteer with groups supporting their party than weaker ones, thus providing the effect seen in the regression.

The effects of adding Drinking Liberally membership to existing group memberships begins to be seen when considering the change in volunteering levels. People are encouraged to find new groups as they are exposed to members of Drinking Liberally who are active in those other groups. PartyID is still the dominating factor, however, as noted above.

When we shift our consideration to political activities, the picture changes. The confounding factors of other group membership identities are removed, and Membership Length becomes a significant factor. PartyID remains a factor, but this is to be expected, as Drinking Liberally is a politically based organization. However, the fact remains that there is a significant relationship between the amount of time an individual has been part of Drinking Liberally and their level of political activity. When change in political activity is considered, Membership Length is the only significant factor.

The factor that is significant is not how active someone is in Drinking Liberally, but their length of membership. One’s activity will change over time, but not in any consistent manner. There may be times when one can attend more often, and times when other things may interfere. However, if one consistently considers themselves a member of a group, then it is having an
effect on their group identity. Drinking Liberally does not make any demands on its members, nor does it make specific suggestions to them as to how to spend their time and money. Despite this, there is a measurable effect that length of membership has on how politically active the members are.

One explanation of this is that as members are exposed to other active Liberals and Democrats, they start to feel that they should participate more. They are changed from relatively passive observers who may have an interest in political subjects to active participants who engage in the opportunities for political action that are presented to them by fellow members. Their internal definition of what it means to be a ‘Democrat’ or a ‘Liberal’ is shifted towards one which demands more participation in politics than simply voting.
Chapter 6. Conclusions

The modern age is one in which the average citizen can take an unprecedented role in politics. New communications technologies make it so that people outside the political system can not only be more informed than ever before, but they also have opportunities to act on that information. Activists must figure out how to get citizens to take those actions. Groups like Drinking Liberally can be seen as an important vector to accomplishing this goal. The historical and psychological reasons for this can be seen in connection with the factors explained in Chapters Two and Three of this work, and limited statistical support for this role can be seen in the survey described in Chapter Five.

Amateurs have access to the American political system in ways that, due to technologies available today and reforms to those systems, have not been available in the past. The barriers to entry for people wishing to enter local politics is lower than it was at the beginning of the 20th century, and there were many so-called ‘Netroots’ candidates in the 2006 election cycle who ran grassroots campaigns by connecting with local and national political blogs to
raise funds and garner support. For those not wishing to enter politics themselves, more opportunities to participate are making it easier for them to be active as well. Through the intersection of database technologies, the internet, and cheaply available cellular phone minutes, groups like MoveOn.org have allowed people nationwide to participate in get-out-the-vote phone banks from their own homes in 2006, rather than having to travel to central locations. In addition, the public is able to participate in the reporting on government investigations, such as the 2007 Congressional investigation of Justice Department U.S. Attorney firings. As documents are made available by investigations, online websites coordinate efforts to systematically comb through those files and make the important details available to the public at large.

Although these options are available, they are also complex, and may seem foreign or removed from the experience of most citizens. They do not see how they can access these opportunities. They know about special interest groups which support their causes, but may not know who else in their community does. Online ways of participation is much more transparent than

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63 For example, see thread “Document Dump Research Thread” created 2:00 AM, March 24th, 2007 on the blog TPMuckraker.com, available at http://www.tpmmuckraker.com/archives/002863.php
Participating in social groups is one of the best ways to do this. Robert Putnam, in *Bowling Alone*, lamented the decline of face-to-face connections, and the effect of this decline on civic participation. He may have been a bit aggressive in dismissing any benefit which may come from mediated connections and efforts to organize, but the effects of direct social groups cannot be denied.

Social psychological identity theory provides a way to understand the functioning of this group effect. As one is exposed to a group of people who share a characteristic, you build a mental picture or prototype of what it means to belong to that group and to possess that characteristic. If you also share this trait, then you will compare your behavior to that mental prototype. If the prototype has positive connotations, you will attempt to have your behavior bring you more in line with your internal mental picture. In this case, what that could mean is that if you are hanging out with other people who identify as ‘Democrats,’ or as ‘Liberals,’ you will form a mental picture, a psychological prototype, based on the combination of your behavior and ideas and theirs. If you are with people who are more active than you are politically, you may modify your ideas to reflect this fact, and update your prototype of a ‘Democrat’
to include more political activity. This will then reflect on your own behavior. If your only exposure is to people who do less than you, or not to other self-identified Democrats at all, then there is less to encourage you to participate. Other psychological components of your personality could certainly cause you to be active, but the ‘Democratic’ or ‘Liberal’ prototype does not contribute.

A social group with an explicitly political focus can create this opportunity for the enhancement of psychological identity prototypes. It will attract people who are inclined to be active, but if the atmosphere is casual enough, it will also attract those who are curious but inactive, who might benefit from the exposure to the more active members. These benefits do not simply operate through the obvious mechanisms, such as exposure to networking connections and resources, but also through allowing individuals to establish a richer idea of what it means to be a member of that group or category.

Drinking Liberally seems to be a group which has the potential to fulfill such a role. Although its name puts its political focus front and center, the lack of any explicit push towards activity by the group’s leadership maintains its accessibility. People are able to come in and participate whatever their background of political activity. Its model seems to have been successful and exportable, having expanded to over 170 chapters in the span of 4 years.
The results of the survey conducted for this thesis indicate that there has been some success in getting members to be more active. Not only to the statistics show that there is both a high and wide ranging level of volunteering and political activity in the membership, but there is a significant relationship between the length of membership and the level of political activity. Respondents also reported increases in many types of political activity after joining the group. This increase also showed a significant relationship with length of membership. These findings support the idea that being a member of a social group with politically active members, even if there is no specific activity advocated by that group, will encourage people to raise their levels of political participation.

**Next Steps**

This is a promising beginning for this study, but there are more steps which can be taken to refine the results. There are multiple approaches to determining how a group effects its members political involvement and activities. Psychological assessments often use ‘feelings meters’ to measure a subject’s level of agreement with statements. Such measures could show abstract levels of attitudes regarding political activity among members. Interviews can reveal similar factors, although they may trade cross-subject
consistency for more in-depth responses. A final approach asks members about their activities, in an attempt to draw out information on their levels of involvement, both politically and as members of the group. The best approach would be a longitudinal approach which incorporates multiple approaches. New members could be approached for a survey which would use psychological assessment of their attitudes about politics and of what it means to be a Democrat and a liberal, and then would be interviewed. Following this, they could be asked to fill out similar surveys at six month intervals. This would give an evolving picture over time of their attitudes and activities. Although this approach would not be able to cast as wide a net as the one time, open approach taken in this survey, it would provide more detailed information that is less subject to problems from self-reporting.

In addition, it is necessary to examine a control group to act as a baseline of comparison for any results which may come from studying Drinking Liberally. Constructing this control group is a difficult proposition. It is not possible to determine who might have joined Drinking Liberally but did not, to survey people who were not interested in the group. One approach would be to create two control groups. One would be made up of members of a non-political group, for example members of a running or sports club, or some hobbyist group. The second would be a group made up of a random sample of
the general population. This would generate results from both a population of people who identified with each other based on a common group membership that was not based on any political factor, and from a sample of completely unconnected people who did not have any group commonality binding them together.

Another important step to take would be to broaden the focus to include more groups. Are there similar groups on the Conservative side of the ideological spectrum? Do the social activities involved in Church membership have the same effects that a group like Drinking Liberally does? By investigating more groups, the factors which inspire political activity could be identified, and encouraged to flourish in order to spur greater activity on the part of citizens in the future.
References And Works Cited

Works Cited


**References**


Methodological Appendix

In order to examine the effects of socialization on political engagement, I designed a survey to be distributed among the members of Drinking Liberally. I contacted the national leaders, and secured their permission to send the survey out through their mailing list. They sent the survey email to all the city leaders, some of whom sent it out to their mailing lists. At the time, there were approximately 155 chapters, with an average of 180 members per mailing list. 29 city leaders sent out the survey invitation email to their lists, for a total of approximately 5220 potential respondents.

The survey was conducted using the online survey tool SurveyMonkey. Members who decided to take the survey were able to follow the link and complete the survey, the results were automatically tallied by the program. The survey sample is an anonymous, self-selected subset of the population of the selected group. I received 620 responses to some section of the survey, with approximately 570 people completing the full survey. This amounts to a 11% response rate.

There were some issues with the survey as it went out into the field. Some were pointed out by respondents, some were noticed by me while
reviewing results. No issues corrupted the results, although one did make it necessary to do some extra recoding of open answers.

- In the question about income, the ranges were not perfectly overlapping. A typo led to the ranges being “$50,000 to just under 64,000” and “$65,000 to just under 80,000.”
- In the question about religion, there was no option for “Atheist” or “Agnostic.” Because of this, many respondents filled these options under the “Other” open answer option.
- When asked about their participation and attendance, several respondents indicated in the “Other” open answer option that they only read the emails.
- Several people indicated that there should have been some option in the marital status question for those who are in a long term relationship but not married.

Also, I had to make some decisions on how to recode the “Other” open answer options.

- In the age question, All those who in the open answer field put 'Over 40" or "30's" were recoded as being in the middle of the specified range. (i.e.: over 40 = 45, 30's = 35) A single entry of 4 was recoded as 40, based on the context of the survey and the responses of that subject to
other questions, that was most likely a typo on the part of the respondent.

- For the religion question, Atheist, agnostic, and none were each given their own categories, any Christian Denomination specified was recoded as Mainline Protestant.
- In the participation question, Recoded open answers of people who just read the emails or have not yet attended.
- For the Party ID question, recoded the Green party as a separate answer category.

Further Adjustments to the data were made during the analysis.

- Due to the small number of cases on the Republican end of my seven point Party ID scale, those cases were dropped, along with the other party cases, to generate a scale of degrees of Democratic Identification.
- Likewise, there were very few who identified as conservative, so those cases were dropped to create a scale of liberal ideology.

Scales were created for the following items:

- Drinking Liberally Participation Level and Drinking Liberally Frequency of Attendance were combined to form a two item scale of Drinking Liberally Participation,
• The binary, yes/no responses for each group were combined to form a single Group Volunteerism Scale,
• The responses for change in volunteerism for each group were combined to form a single Change in Group Volunteerism scale,
• The binary, yes/no responses for each activity were combined to form a single Political Activity Scale,
• The responses for change in participation for each activity were combined to form a single Change in Political Activity scale.

Regressions were then run on each scale, first with political orientation factors (Party ID and Ideology, as noted above) and Drinking Liberally membership factors (the Drinking Liberally Participation Scale and Membership length), then with additional demographic factors (income, age, and education).

Survey Instrument: Please see attached file DLSurveyInstrument2006.pdf
Drinking Liberally History Interview Questionnaire

This is the instrument sent out to the National Leaders of Drinking Liberally in order to obtain information about the history and background of the organization:

Background Interview Consent and Question Document

You are being asked to participate in a research project which will be part of a Masters thesis in the Communications, Culture, and Technology Program at Georgetown University. By entering your name, e-mail address, and the date below, you are giving consent to the researcher to use your name and the statements connected with them. You will be provided copies of any chapters which contain statements you made, and have the opportunity to request that your statements will not be used. Your participation will consist of an interview conducted over e-mail about the history and development of the organization Drinking Liberally.

If you consent to participate, please enter your name, e-mail, and the date below.

Name:

E-mail:

Date:

If you have any questions, please contact me or the Georgetown University Institutional Review Board at the addresses below.
Question 1:
Why did you start Drinking Liberally? Was it a specific event, or something which just happened?

Question 2:
How did it expand beyond the first meeting? Did you play any active role in the expansion? When did the organizational element (email lists, website) fall into place?

Question 3:
What is the relationship between Drinking Liberally, Cosmopolity, and Living Liberally? Did Cosmopolity arise out of Drinking Liberally, or the other way around?

Question 4:
What do you want people to get out of Drinking Liberally? What do you feel its role is, as compared to groups which have more concrete political goals, such as Moveon?