POLI 100M: Political Psychology

Lecture 6: Campaigns
Taylor N. Carlson
tfeenstr@ucsd.edu
Announcements

• Short Assignment 2 is due today—any questions?
• Midterm is on Tuesday
  – 11am-12:15pm exam, 15 min break, class resumes at 12:30pm
  – Multiple choice (35), matching (15), short answer (3 of 4)
  – See study guide on TritonEd
• Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-4:30 in SSB 341, or by appointment
Last Time

• Why do individuals choose information sources?
  – General trends—trust and convenience are key
  – Perceptions of bias, hostile media effect

• What role does the media play in shaping public opinion?
  – Framing
  – Priming

• How do individuals process information from the media?
  – Subject to cognitive biases (e.g. motivated reasoning)
What questions do you have?
Today: Driving Questions

• How do campaigns use psychology to win elections?
• Is social pressure an effective technique to boost turnout? For whom?
• Are campaign ads effective? When, for whom, which type, and why?
Today: Learning Outcomes

• Define the following key terms: persuasion, turnout, social pressure, field experiment
• Describe how social pressure can be used to increase turnout and when it might be less effective
• Explain whether (and when) campaign ads are effective
• Evaluate the effectiveness of common campaign strategies from a psychological perspective
Introduction to Campaigns
Campaigns

• What do campaigns do?
• With which campaign activities do you come into contact the most?
Campaign Spending in 2016

• Presidential candidates:
  – Republican: $638 million
  – Democrats: $794 million

• House candidates:
  – Republican: $542 million
  – Democrat: $422 million

• Senate candidates:
  – Republican: $322 million
  – Democrat: $350 million

• $8.3 million spent on CA CD 49 alone

Source: Center for Responsive Politics
Total Cost of Election (1998-2016)
(Adjusted for Inflation)

Source: Center for Responsive Politics
Where does all the money go?
ROMNEY’S JUNE SPENDING
$27 Million

Consulting: 35%
Media Buys: 39%
Travel: 6%
Payroll: 5%
Telemarketing/Data Management: 4%
Campaign Promotions: 2%
Other: 1%
Media/Production: 3%
Rent/Utilities: 1%
Mail/Printing/Photo: 1%
Office Supplies & Equipment: 1%
Events/Setup: 2%
Campaigns: 2 Key Functions

1. Mobilize—changing behavior
2. Persuade—changing attitudes
Mobilization
How do campaigns mobilize?

• Informational appeals
• Consistency theory
• Social pressure
How do we *know* whether campaigns successfully mobilized?

- Field experiments!
- Mobilization dependent variable (DV): turnout
  - Public record
  - Directly observable—no self-report bias
- Randomly assign individuals to various mobilization treatments (the independent variable) and observe whether they turn out to vote
Informational Appeals

• Reminding voters that there is an election coming up
• Provide information of how to register, when and where to vote, etc.
• Field experiments suggest that this can have a marginal effect on turnout
Consistency Theory

• Remind me what this is.
• How might this apply to campaigns?
• Commitment mechanisms!
I pledge to vote in the upcoming election because I care about:

- Worker Rights
- LGBTQ Rights
- Women's Rights
- Immigration
- Racial Justice
- Healthcare
- Climate Change
- Student Debt
- Other ________________
- Other ________________

Name: ________________ Address: __________________
Cell phone: ________________ E-mail: ________________
Signature: __________________ Date: __________________

I want to volunteer with the studentsVOTE! campaign on my campus.

United States Student Association Foundation
1211 Connecticut Ave., NW Suite 406, Washington, DC 20036
phone: (202) 637-3924 e-mail: vote@usstudents.org
website: http://www.usstudents.org
VOTE PLEDGE CARD. ROCK THE VOTE!

- I pledge to vote in the NJ General Election on Tues, Nov. 5 2013.
- I know I CAN VOTE MYSELF A RAISE by voting YES to Ballot Question # 2 to raise New Jersey’s minimum wage in to $8.25/hour ($2000/year).

NAME ____________________________________________

MOBILE ______________________ CARRIER ______________________

EMAIL ______________________ CITY ______________________

THIS IS MY PERSONAL VOTING & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

_____ I will Apply to Vote BY MAIL (form can be filed until Tues, Oct 29)
_____ I will vote at County Clerk’s office until 3pm election day (Tues, Nov 5)
_____ I will vote at the polls on Nov 5 AND _____ I know my polling location

OR _____ I need to know what my polling location is

_____ I NEED a ride to vote at County Clerk’s Office or polls (circle one)

I will make sure _______ other people vote.

_____ YES! I want to volunteer for GOTV (Get Out The Vote) efforts.
_____ I can drive people to vote at County Clerk or polls (circle one/both)
Common Consistency Technique

• “Foot in the Door” – ask for a small favor, then follow up with a bigger favor
  – Pledge cards
  – Campaign donations
  – Volunteering
Social Pressure

“Do as most do, and people will speak well of thee” – Thomas Fuller
Social Pressure

• Conformity: a change in one’s behavior due to real or imagined influence of others
• Compliance: changing one’s behavior in response to a direct request
Conformity

• Not necessarily a bad thing
• Two types:
  – Informational
  – Normative
Conformity

**Informational**
- Behavior of others provides information
- Leads to private and public acceptance
- Likely when:
  - Ambiguous situation
  - Crisis situation
  - Others are experts

**Normative**
- Desire for approval from others
- Leads to public compliance, but not private acceptance
- Likely when:
  - Unanimity
  - Group is important to you
  - Collectivistic culture
Normative Conformity Example

• Asch (1952) Experiments
• In politics: Carlson & Settle (2016)
Compliance

- Changing one’s behavior in response to a direct request
- Often relies on social norms (e.g. reciprocity)
- Common techniques used to induce compliance:
  - Door in the face
  - Free gift
  - Bait and switch
  - Even a penny would help
  - Social validation
How do campaigns use social pressure?

• Combination of conformity and compliance
• Make voting a social norm, such that social pressure *enforces* norm-compliance
How can we boost turnout?

- Gerber & Green (2000)
- Modes of contact
  - Mailers
  - Phone calls
  - Canvassing
- Message
  - Civic duty
  - Close election
  - Neighborhood Solidarity
Civic Duty Treatment

**FIGURE 1. Text Side**

**DON'T LET THEIR SACRIFICE GO TO WASTE.**

The whole point of democracy is that citizens are active participants in government, that we have a voice in government. Your voice starts with your vote.

ON NOVEMBER 3RD REMEMBER YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A CITIZEN.

Remember to Vote. VOTE on November 3rd.

**FIGURE 2. Picture Side**

**They fought...**

...so we could have something to vote for.
Neighborhood Solidarity

“There is strength in numbers. Stand up and be counted. When people from our neighborhood don’t vote we give politicians the right to ignore us and concentrate their energies elsewhere. But you can make sure that doesn’t happen. By joining your neighbors and voting on election day, you’ll send a message to our elected leaders: that you care and that they should care about your concerns. On November 3d Vote to ensure that we are not ignored. Remember to vote.”
Election is Close

Their future starts with one vote. Yours. In an election, anything can happen. This year many elections will be decided by only a handful of votes —will yours be the deciding vote? Don’t miss your opportunity to make a difference, don’t miss your chance to make an impact in our elections. On November 3d make sure your vote is included, because no election is ever a certainty and every vote counts. On November 3d don’t miss your opportunity to make a difference. Remember to vote.”
Results

- Phone calls: No impact on turnout
- Mailers: 0.6 percentage point increase in turnout per mailing
- Canvassing: 9.8 percentage point increase in turnout
- Message did not have a substantial impact on turnout
Adding [more] Social Pressure

• Gerber, Green, & Larimer (2008)
• Treatment Groups:
  – Control (no mailer)
  – Civic Duty
  – Hawthorne (you are being studied)
  – Self
  – Neighbors
Dear Registered Voter:

DO YOUR CIVIC DUTY AND VOTE!

Why do so many people fail to vote? We've been talking about this problem for years, but it only seems to get worse.

The whole point of democracy is that citizens are active participants in government; that we have a voice in government. Your voice starts with your vote. On August 8, remember your rights and responsibilities as a citizen. Remember to vote.

DO YOUR CIVIC DUTY — VOTE!
Dear Registered Voter:

YOU ARE BEING STUDIED!

Why do so many people fail to vote? We’ve been talking about this problem for years, but it only seems to get worse.

This year, we’re trying to figure out why people do or do not vote. We’ll be studying voter turnout in the August 8 primary election.

Our analysis will be based on public records, so you will not be contacted again or disturbed in any way. Anything we learn about your voting or not voting will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone else.

DO YOUR CIVIC DUTY — VOTE!
Dear Registered Voter:

WHO VOTES IS PUBLIC INFORMATION!

Why do so many people fail to vote? We’ve been talking about the problem for years, but it only seems to get worse.

This year, we’re taking a different approach. We are reminding people that who votes is a matter of public record.

The chart shows your name from the list of registered voters, showing past votes, as well as an empty box which we will fill in to show whether you vote in the August 8 primary election. We intend to mail you an updated chart when we have that information.

We will leave the box blank if you do not vote.

DO YOUR CIVIC DUTY — VOTE!

------------------------------------------

Oak St
9999 Robert Wayne
Aug 04 Voted Aug 06
9999 Laura Wayne
Voted Voted
Dear Registered Voter:

WHAT IF YOUR NEIGHBORS KNEW WHETHER YOU VOTED?

Why do so many people fail to vote? We've been talking about the problem for years, but it only seems to get worse. This year, we're taking a new approach. We're sending this mailing to you and your neighbors to publicize who does and does not vote.

The chart shows the names of some of your neighbors, showing which have voted in the past. After the August 8 election, we intend to mail an updated chart. You and your neighbors will all know who voted and who did not.

DO YOUR CIVIC DUTY — VOTE!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Aug 04</th>
<th>Nov 04</th>
<th>Aug 06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAPLE DR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9995 JOSEPH JAMES SMITH</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9995 JENNIFER KAY SMITH</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9997 RICHARD B JACKSON</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9999 KATHY MARIE JACKSON</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9999 BRIAN JOSEPH JACKSON</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9991 JENNIFER KAY THOMPSON</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9991 BOB R THOMPSON</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9993 BILL S SMITH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9989 WILLIAM LUKE CASPER</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9989 JENNIFER SUE CASPER</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9987 MARIA S JOHNSON</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9987 TOM JACK JOHNSON</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9987 RICHARD TOM JOHNSON</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9985 ROSEMARY S SUE</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9985 KATHRYN L SUE</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9985 HOWARD BEN SUE</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9983 NATHAN CHAD BERG</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9983 CARRIE ANN BERG</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9981 EARL JOEL SMITH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9979 DEBORAH KAY WAYNE</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9979 JOEL R WAYNE</td>
<td>Voted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

• Control: 29.7%
• Civic Duty: 31.5%, 1.8 percentage point boost
• Hawthorne: 32.2%, 2.5 percentage point boost
• Self: 34.5%, 4.9 percentage point boost
• Neighbors: 37.8%, 8.1 percentage point boost
Social Pressure Mailers in Real Campaigns

• MoveOn.org Civic Action (liberal group) sent vote history mailers to 12 million registered voters in all swing states and in most competitive congressional elections in 2012

• Americans for Limited Government (conservative group) sent vote history mailers to 2 million registered voters
RECIPIENT COPY. OFFICIAL PUBLIC RECORD.

VOTING VIOLATION

DATE: FEBRUARY 2016

POL. PARTY: R D I

You are receiving this election notice because of low expected voter turnout in your area. Your individual voting history as well as your neighbors' are public record. Their scores are published below, and many of them will see your score as well. CAUCUS ON MONDAY TO IMPROVE YOUR SCORE and please encourage your neighbors to caucus as well. A follow-up notice may be issued following Monday's caucuses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DAVID PETERSON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Voting registration and voter history records are public records distributed by the Iowa Secretary of State and/or county election clerks. This data is not available for use for commercial purposes - use is limited by law. Scores reflect participation in recent elections.
NOTICE

<first name>, 7 of your neighbors are voting in the Iowa Caucus on Monday, February 1ST. Are you?
Dear [Name],

This report provides you with a helpful summary of how often you vote and how your voting participation compares with other voters in your state.

You know that being a voter is important.

If you vote often, please take pride in doing your part. If not, we hope this information will encourage you to vote and, hopefully, go to the polls this Tuesday, November 5th in Virginia’s statewide election for Governor.

Voting record for

2009 General Election: No
2010 General Election: No
2011 General Election: No
2012 General Election: Yes

Comparison

Your voting score is:
BELOW AVERAGE

No one can know how you vote, but whether or not you vote is a matter of public record. Thank you for participating in the election process, and we hope to see you at the polls on November 5th.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Page Gardner
President
The Voter Participation Center

P.S. To better understand why people do or do not vote, we may call you after the election to discuss your experience at the polls. Thank you, we appreciate your help.

*Data obtained from publicly available state voter files. This mailing has been paid for by the Voter Participation Center (VPC). VPC is a non-government, nonprofit, and nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization. www.voterparticipation.org. VPC attempts to use the most up-to-date voter information. To check your registration status go to www.sos.virginia.gov. VPC_008_930
Is Voting Contagious?

• Yes (Nickerson 2008)
• Bond et al. (2012) find that social pressure on Facebook can also increase turnout!
• Slides borrowed/adapted from James Fowler
No Message
N = 613,096
Message
Only
N = 611,044
Today is Election Day

Find your polling place on the U.S. Politics Page and click the "I Voted" button to tell your friends you voted.

N = 60,055,176

Social Message

People on Facebook Voted

01155376

friends have voted.
Message about user voting appears in news feed
The bar chart shows the direct effect of treatment on own behavior (%) for different conditions.

- Social Message vs Control
- Social Message vs Informational Message

The chart includes categories:
- Self-Reported Voting
- Search for Polling Place
- Validated Voting

The highest effect is observed for Social Message vs Control, with a value close to 2.1. The other effects are smaller and less distinct, with values around 0.3 and 0.6 for Informational Message and Search for Polling Place, respectively.
Mobilization and Campaigns Summary

- Campaigns use many psychological techniques from informational appeals, consistency theory, and social psychology (conformity and compliance) to mobilize voters.
- The more social campaign contact is, the bigger the effect on turnout.
- Explicit social pressure, even from less social modes (e.g. mailers), has large effects on turnout, but these methods can be controversial.
Questions?
Persuasion
Persuasion

• Attitude Change
• Three main components:
  – Communicator: person trying to persuade
  – Communication: content of the message
  – Target: person communicator tries to persuade
Elaboration Likelihood Model

• Two Routes to Persuasion:
  – Central
  – Peripheral

• Attitude change varies depending on mental effort, conditional on:
  – Motivation
  – Ability
Persuasion in the ELM

Message

Audience factors

High Motivation

Processing Approach

Central Route

Persuasion Outcome

Lasting Change

Low Motivation

Peripheral Route

Temporary Change
Persuasion: Cognition and Emotion

- If the attitude is cognitively based, try to change it with rational arguments
- If the attitude is affectively based, try to appeal to emotions
- What’s the problem with trying to change political attitudes?
Campaigns and Persuasion

• Most common mode: Ads!
• Largest portion of campaign budgets
• Three main types:
  – Positive
  – Negative
  – Contrast
Processing Negative Ads

• People pay more attention to negative information than positive information
  – “pleasure is less urgent than pain”

• Process negative information using peripheral route: quick, automatic, effortless, etc.
  – What does this mean for persuasion?
Can campaign ads persuade?

• Very little evidence that they do
• Minor, short-lived changes in lab experiments
• Why?
  – Attention, noise, peripheral route processing
  – Minds already made up
  – Heuristics and other cognitive biases make it hard to affect vote choice
• Maybe ads actually mobilize instead of persuade?
  – Focus attention
  – Information seeking
  – Interest
What’s the deal with negative ads?

- Demobilization Hypothesis
- Mobilization Hypothesis
  - republican duty
  - Candidate threat
  - Perceived closeness of the election
Social Pressure and Persuasion

• **Broockman & Kalla (2016)**

• Builds on techniques used by the Los Angeles Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Center
  – Analogic Perspective Taking
  – Engages central route processing

• Deeply held beliefs, strong emotions
Broockman & Kalla Procedure

- Unrelated baseline survey
- Knocked on the door, identified the organization they were with
- Informed voters they might face a decision about whether to repeal the ordinance protecting transgender people
- Asked voters to explain their views
- Showed a video that presented arguments on both sides
- Defined transgender
- Asked if they were transgender
- Encouraged analogic perspective taking
- Asked voters to describe if and how this changed their opinions
- Unrelated follow up surveys
Broockman & Kalla Results

• Those in the treatment group were significantly more supportive of laws protecting transgender people
  – Compared to baseline
  – Compared to those who got the placebo treatment

• Opinion changes lasted up to 3 months
Questions?