

Behavioral Science and Election Participation

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VOTE!



Voter Mobilization Not So Long Ago...

Hello Mrs. Smith...

*It's easy to vote,
the issues at stake are important,
It's going to be close so your vote matters,
and it's your civic responsibility to vote.
Do you intend to vote on Tuesday?*

*Yes, I intend to
vote.*

*Great! Thanks
and have a nice
night.*



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*Hello Mrs. Smith...
It's easy to vote,
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and it's your civic responsibility to vote.
Do you intend to vote on Tuesday?*



~~X~~

~~X~~

~~X~~

~~X~~

Mobilization content does not matter

(Green and Gerber, 2004; Gerber and Green 2000)

Do You Have a Voting Plan?

Control
(*not
called*)

Standard
GOTV

Standard
GOTV


Standard
GOTV

Do you
intend to
vote?

Do you
intend to
vote?

Public
administrative
records

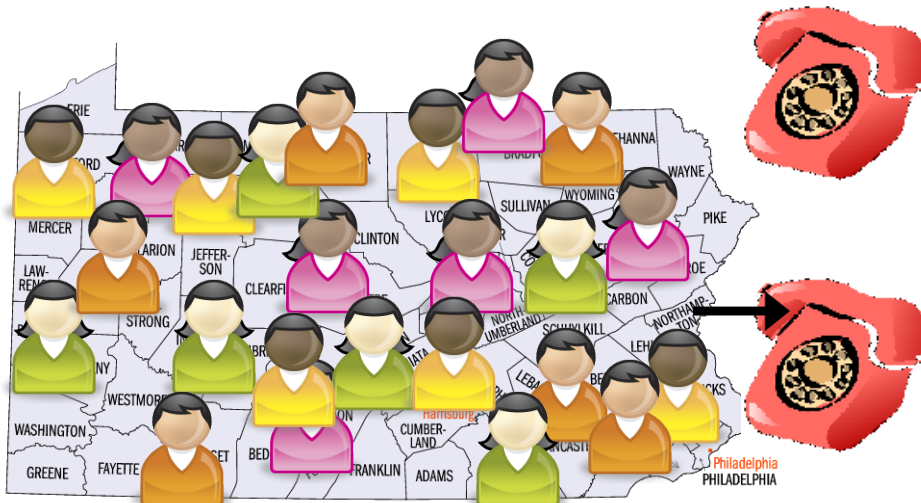
$$\mathcal{R}^n = \bigoplus_{\mathbf{g} \in \{0,1\}^n} \bigotimes_{i=1}^n \left\{ \begin{matrix} N(\mu_i) + k_i + 1 \\ \mathbb{Z}_1, 4, k_i, \infty \end{matrix} \right\}$$

$$f(\mu) \propto \exp\left(-\beta \sum_{i=1}^n \mu_i\right) \prod_{i=1}^n \mu_i^{k_i}$$


When will you vote?

How will you get there?

Where will you be
beforehand?



2008 PA Primary
(N = 287,228)

Overall Turnout Results



$p = .09$; ** $p < .01$

Average Treatment on Treated (Angrist and Rubens, 1996; Gerber and Green, 2000); Intent To Treat effects show same patterns

Nickerson & Rogers (2010)

Participation

Planning failure, not motivation

Make a voting plan

(Nickerson & Rogers, Psych. Science, 2010)



Expectations About Others

High turnout

Last General election...vast majority of eligible citizens voted...Join your fellow citizens!



Low turnout

In last Gov. election turnout was the lowest it had been in 30...Buck the trend!



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Expectations about others

Everybody's voting!

(Gerber & Rogers, JoP, 2009; Cialdini et al, 1990)



“Voter” Identity

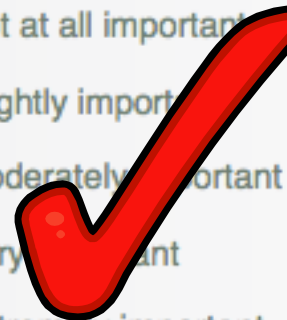
Please take your time and read each question carefully before answering. Thank you, we appreciate it!

How important is it to you to vote in tomorrow's election?

- ☐ Not at all important
- ☐ Slightly important
- ☐ Moderately important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Extremely important

Please take your time and read each question carefully before answering. Thank you, we appreciate it!

How important is it to you to be a voter in tomorrow's election?

- ☐ Not at all important
 - ☐ Slightly important
 - ☐ Moderately important
 - ☐ Very important
 - ☐ Extremely important
- 

How easy do you think it is to be a voter in tomorrow's election?

- ☐ Not at all easy
- ☐ Slightly easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Extremely easy

How convenient do you think it is to be a voter in tomorrow's election?

- ☐ Not at all convenient
- ☐ Slightly convenient
- ☐ Somewhat convenient
- ☐ Very convenient
- ☐ Extremely convenient

How consistent are your thoughts and feelings about being a voter in tomorrow's election?

- ☐ Not at all consistent
- ☐ Slightly consistent
- ☐ Somewhat consistent
- ☐ Very consistent
- ☐ Extremely consistent

How clear are your thoughts and feelings about being a voter in tomorrow's election?

- ☐ Not at all clear
- ☐ Slightly clear
- ☐ Somewhat clear
- ☐ Very clear
- ☐ Extremely clear

To what extent are your thoughts about being a voter in tomorrow's election similar to your feelings about being a voter?

- ☐ Not at all similar
- ☐ Slightly similar
- ☐ Somewhat similar
- ☐ Very similar
- ☐ Extremely similar

How easy do you think it is to vote in tomorrow's election?

- ☐ Not at all easy
- ☐ Slightly easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Extremely easy

How convenient do you think it is to vote in tomorrow's election?

- ☐ Not at all convenient
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How clear are your thoughts and feelings about voting in tomorrow's election?

- ☐ Not at all clear
- ☐ Slightly clear
- ☐ Somewhat clear
- ☐ Very clear
- ☐ Extremely clear

To what extent are your thoughts about voting in tomorrow's election similar to your feelings about voting?

- ☐ Not at all similar
- ☐ Slightly similar
- ☐ Somewhat similar
- ☐ Very similar
- ☐ Extremely similar

Bryan, Walton, Rogers, and Dweck, 2012

Participation

Planning failure, not motivation

Make a voting plan

(Nickerson and Rogers, Psych Science, 2010)

Expectations about others

Everybody's voting!

(Gerber & Rogers, JoP, 2009; Cialdini et al, 1990)

“Voter” identity

As the kind of person who votes...

(Bryan, Walton, Rogers and Dweck, PNAS, 2011; Miller, et al, 1975)



AMERICA ✓OTES

[Date]

Dear [Name],

You're a voter. Thank you for voting in 2008! Public records show that you voted in the most recent election. Again, thank you. It is people like you who decide the future of our country by getting out to the polls on **Election Day, November 2, 2010.**

This year, voters like you will join HUNDREDS of THOUSANDS of other [STATE] and cast a ballot on Election Day.

This election is important, and people like you will choose who represents us in Washington. You were a voter in 2008, you are still a voter.

Voting takes a plan.

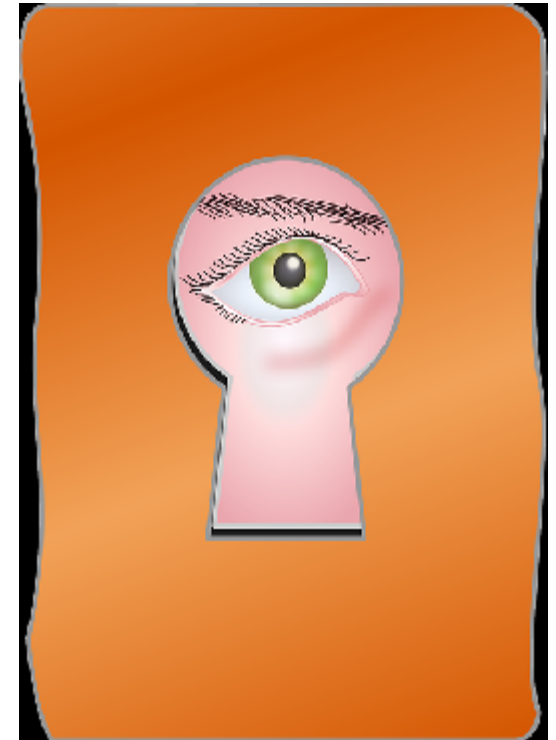
- ☐ Will you vote on Election Day Tuesday November 2nd? _____
- ☐ What time will you vote? _____
- ☐ How you will get to your polling place? _____

We hope the public record shows that you were a voter again this election so we can thank you again.

Remember, when you see people wearing "I Voted" stickers and waving signs on Election Day, it is time to join the millions of Americans who will vote this year.

Sincerely,

Joan Fitz-gerald



Rogers and Ternovski, 2013
(See also "Social Pressure" research:
Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008)

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Prospect of Accountability

We may call you post-Election to discuss your voting experience...

(Rogers and Ternoovski, working paper)



CALL TOOL

National room [See more rooms](#)7am - 7pm
November 6

2 calls made today

**Help build this
Campaign**Connect with Facebook to
share your campaign
activity and tell yourHello, is **BRYAN** available?

Hi! My name is **TODD** and I'm your neighbor from **[CITY/TOWN]**, and a local volunteer for President Obama and New Hampshire Democrats. How are you today?

Great. I'm calling today because official records show that you voted in the 2008 election, and we are reminding voters like you about the election this November 6th. Since you're the kind of person who votes and cares about their community, can President Obama and New Hampshire Democrats count on your vote on November 6th?

[IF DEFINITELY OBAMA/DEMOCRATS] Great, thank you for your support! We've talked to a lot of people in **[VOTER CITY/TOWN]** today who are planning to vote. This election is going to be close and we really need your vote.

I have your polling place listed as **[FIND VOTER'S POLLING PLACE IN THE GREY BOX AT LEFT]**, and that the voting hours here in **[VOTER CITY/TOWN]** are **[SEE BOX AT LEFT]**.

I know everyone is very busy these days, so do you know what time you plan to vote? [PAUSE]

Great, will you be heading there from work or somewhere else? **[IF THEY INDICATE THEY NEED A RIDE, MARK BELOW. OTHERWISE, MARK 'NO']**

Do you need a ride to the polls on November 6th?



Close: Great! I am actually a volunteer calling from the Romney campaign. The Presidential Election is coming up and we need Virginia's help, so please remember to vote for Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan this coming Tuesday, November 6th. We cannot afford four more years of Barack Obama. America needs a real recovery and your vote will make the difference, so please vote for Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan. For more information you can visit RomneyVA.com or call our Virginia campaign team at 757-774-7686. Thank you for your time. This call was paid for by Romney for President, Inc.



Thank you. Now **VOTE.**

To learn more about my research, visit:

http://scholar.harvard.edu/todd_rogers

If you like this work, check out other political scientists who do excellent related work:

- Kevin Arceneaux, Kevin Collins, Ryan Enos, Alan Gerber, Don Green, Jennifer Green, Dan Hopkins, Costas Panagopoulos, Neil Malhotra, Chris Mann, Marc Meredith, Melissa Michelson, Joel Middleton, and David Nickerson
- And collaborators on this work: Bryan Dweck, Gerber, Nickerson, Ternovski, and Walton

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