Week 4
Mobilisation and Campaign Effects

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Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America

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Foreword by KEITH REEVES

"Mobilization, in all its forms, causes people to take part in electoral politics. Citizens who are contacted by political parties, exposed to intensely fought electoral campaigns, or inspired by the actions of social movements are more likely to vote, to persuade, to campaign, and to give."
(Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993: 209–210)

Mobilization

An attempt to affect whether or not citizens participate in politics (e.g., the election).

Persuasion

An attempt to change voters' preferences between given alternatives.

Concerns on evidence from observational studies on mobilization:

1. Causal inferences vulnerable to unobserved confounders: Spurious relationships;

2. Selection bias;

3. Measurement errors in surveys (e.g., respondents' recollections).

Experimental Design	**Observational Design**
Random assignments	Non-Random assignments
Highly controlled environment	Low control of the environment
Treatment administered	Observe responses to variables
Determine causation	Causation more difficult

Magalhães, Pedro C., Aldrich, John H., and Gibson, Rachel K. 2020. "New forms of mobilization, new people mobilized? Evidence from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems." *Party Politics* 26(5): 605–618.

Mobilization efforts by parties and candidates during election campaigns:

- ► How? Forms of mobilization.

- ► Who? Types of voters.

- ► Research question: Do the new forms of party contacting reduce the age gap?

- *How?*
  - Traditional: Mail; Face-to-face; Phone;

  - New: Text message; E-mail; Social network (Facebook or Twitter).

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- Who?

  - Those who are more likely to vote;

  - Extensive social ties (e.g., civic, religious, associations, union leaders)

- ► *How?*
  - ► Traditional: Mail; Face-to-face; Phone;

  - ► New: Text message; E-mail; Social network (Facebook or Twitter).

- ► Who?

  - ► Those who are more likely to vote;

  - ► Extensive social ties (e.g., civic, religious, associations, union leaders)

- ► Age gap?

  - ► Young adults less mobilized and vote less often (i.e., *vicious circle of demobilization*)

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Magalhães, Aldrich, and Gibson's results:

- ▶ Party contacting do matter for turnout (i.e., for the share of eligible voters who participated in an election)

- ▶ More educated, married, and with party identification are more likely to report being contact;

- ▶ The relationship between age and being contacted is non-linear;

- ▶ Young adults are less likely to be contacted than most other adults (particularly for contacts by mail or phone)

- ▶ The new forms of contact are not sufficient to overcome the broad age gap in traditional party contacting
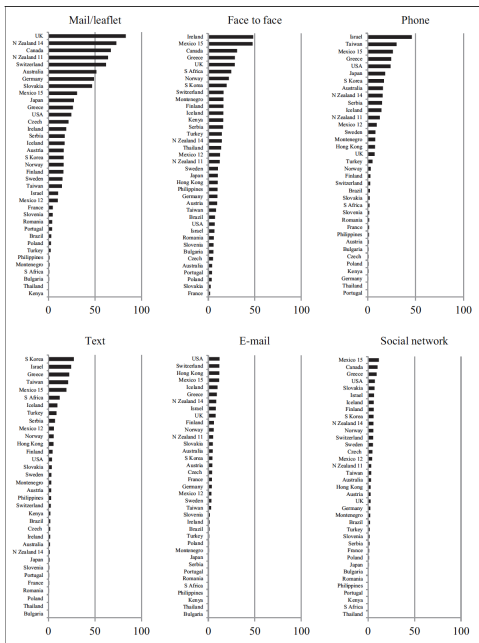
Figure 1. Prevalence of different types of party contacting (%).
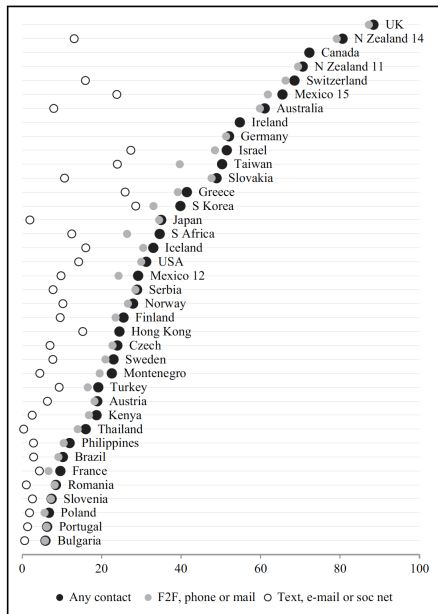
Figure 2. Percentage of respondents contacted by parties or candidates in traditional, new, or any ways.
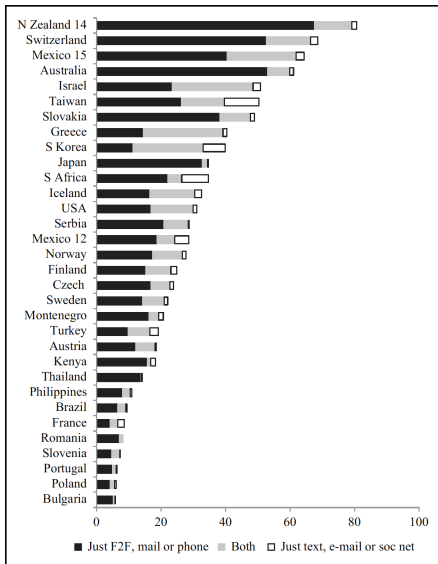
Figure 3. Percentage of respondents reporting different combinations of contacts by parties or candidates.
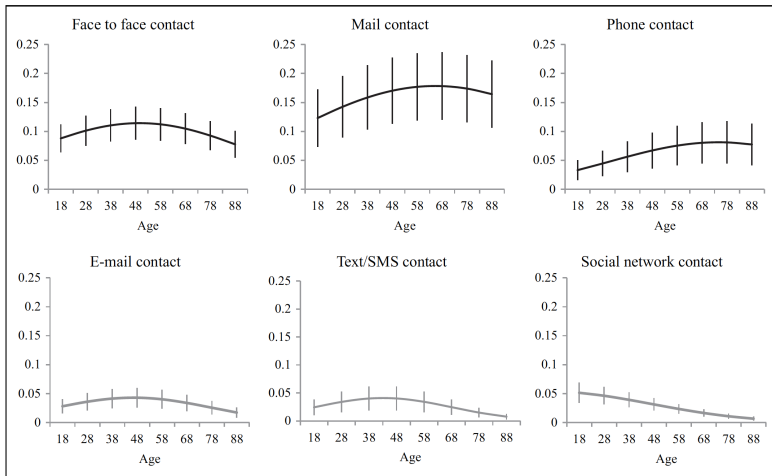
Figure 4. Predicted probability of being contacted in different ways, by age of respondent. Multilevel logistic regression, 32 countries.
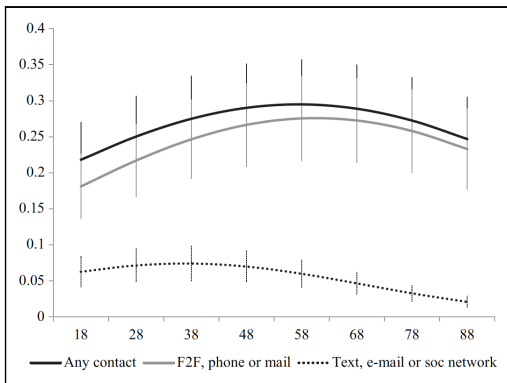
Figure 5. Predicted probability of being contacted in any way, by traditional means or by new means, depending on age of respondent. Multilevel logistic regression, 32 countries.
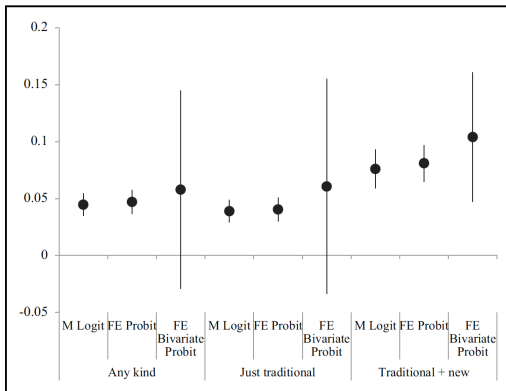
Figure 6. Marginal effects of contact on the probability of turning out to vote (95% CI). CI: confidence interval.

Karp, Jeffrey A., Banducci, Susan A., and Bowler, Shaun. 2008. "Getting out the vote: Party mobilization in a comparative perspective." *British Journal of Political Science* 38(1): 91–112.

Overal levels of party contact are greater in single-member district systems (e.g., USA, lower house in Australia, Canada, UK) than in proportional representation systems (e.g., NZ after 1999, Sweden, Netherlands):
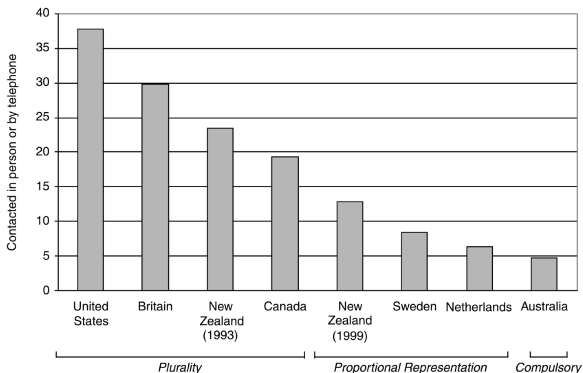
Fig. 1. Party mobilization across electoral systems

But...

Turnout rates are usually higher in PR systems than SMD (or plurality) systems:
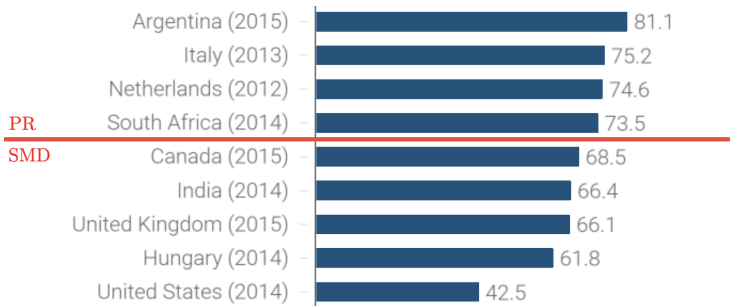
Therefore...

Karp, Banducci, and Bowler (2008):

- ► Party mobilization alone cannot explain the mismatch between mobilization and turnout across countries, and the explanation is probably somewhere else.

- ► Where? Electoral systems;

- ► Research question: How different electoral systems shape the nature and impact of party canvassing and how voters respond to those efforts?

Karp, Banducci, and Bowler's cost-benefit approach:

Parties will expend greater effort on mobilizing voters when the expected benefits of turning out voters are greatest, relative to the costs;

- ▶ Benefits:
    - ▶ More votes
    - ▶ Candidates-voters proximity

- ▶ Costs:
    - ▶ Limited resources
    - ▶ Campaign finance
    - ▶ Mobilization of party members

Karp, Banducci, and Bowler's empirical implications:

H1. Overall levels of party mobilization will be higher under SMD than under PR rules.

Why?

- In SMD systems:

    - Candidates seek to cultivate the "personal vote;"

    - Smaller number of parties (lower dispersion across ideological spectrum);

H1 particularly true for marginal seats (greater competition):
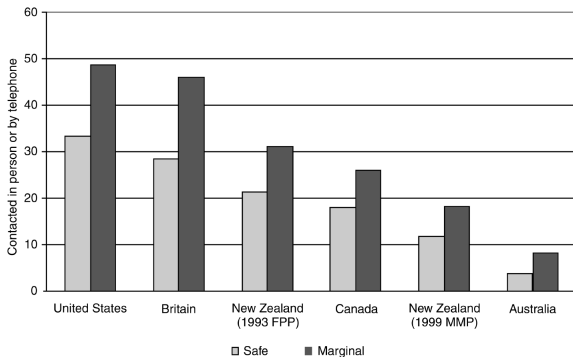
Fig. 2. Reported party contact by safe and marginal seats

H2. Party contacting will be more effective in PR list-based systems than in SMD systems.

Why?

- In PR systems:

  - The greater number of parties and greater ideological dispersion increases the likelihood voters will be ideologically focused with stronger links to social groups (greater social interaction)

  - Non-wasted votes (party contacting will be more effective where a vote is more likely to make a difference).

  - Every extra vote has the potential to translate into seats giving a party useful bargaining and policy powers.

H3. In order to enhance the effectiveness of contacting, parties will concentrate on reaching voters who are more readily identifiable as repeat voters and identifiers by simple demographic traits.

Why?

- ▶ Limited resources

- ▶ Costs

  - ▶ "Preaching to the converted" argument:

  - ▶ Those previously engaged with politics have a greater likelihood of voting

  - ▶ Some characteristics make voters easier to locate (home-owners) and predict more social interaction (e.g., married, religious)

TABLE 3   *Estimated Change in Turnout from Mobilization Efforts*

	If *no one* were contacted	If *everyone* were contacted
United States	− 4.2	8.7
Britain	− 1.8	4.7
New Zealand (FPP)	0.0	0.0
Canada	− 0.6	2.1
New Zealand (MMP)	− 0.5	3.7
Sweden	− 0.3	3.7
Netherlands	− 0.2	2.2
Australia	0.0	0.0

Note: Estimates derived from Table 2. This table shows changes in percentage points in each case.

Kalla, Joshua L. and Broockman, David E. 2018. "The minimal persuasive effects of campaign contact in general elections: Evidence from 49 field experiments." *American Political Science Review* 112(1): 148–166.

► How susceptible are American voters' choices in general elections to influence from political elites in the form of campaign contact and advertising?

► Opposite conclusions:

1. "Campaigns have minimal effects," (Brady, Johnston, and Sides 2006)

2. "Campaigns fundamentally shape voters' decisions" (Druckman 2004).

Kalla and Broockman (2018):

- ▶ Theoretical argument:

  - ▶ When a partisan cue and competing frames are present, campaign contact and advertising are unlikely to influence voters' choices.

- ▶ Evidence:

  - ▶ A systematic meta-analysis of 40 field experiments on campaign contact and advertising;

  - ▶ Nine original field experiments.

▶ The best estimate for the persuasive effects of campaign contact and advertising on Americans' candidate choices in general elections is zero.

▶ When campaigns contact voters long before election day, campaigns often appear to persuade voters. This early persuasion decays before election day and usually cease working close to election day.

FIGURE 1. Meta-analysis Forest Plots: General Elections

(a) General elections: Treatment within 2 months of election day

Arceneaux and Kolodny (2009) – Canvass	−30.00 [−60.38, 0.38]
Arceneaux and Kolodny (2009) – Phone	−22.00 [−51.40, 7.40]
Bailey, Hopkins and Rogers (2016) – Canvass	−9.40 [−19.79, 0.99]
Bailey, Hopkins and Rogers (2016) – Phone	7.50 [−7.00, 22.00]
Bailey, Hopkins and Rogers (2016) – Mail	0.33 [−1.67, 2.33]
Barton, Castillo and Petrie (2014) – Candidate Canvass	20.70 [0.32, 41.08]
Barton, Castillo and Petrie (2014) – Lit Drop	5.10 [−9.60, 19.80]
Broockman and Green (2014) Study 1 – Online Ads	0.00 [−3.92, 3.92]
Broockman and Green (2014) Study 2 – Online Ads	1.10 [−4.78, 6.98]
Cubbison (2015) – Mail	0.01 [−2.77, 2.79]
Doherty and Adler (2014) – Mail	1.07 [−2.81, 4.95]
Gerber (2004) Study 1 – Mail	1.60 [−5.46, 8.66]
Gerber (2004) Study 2 – Mail	−2.20 [−9.45, 5.05]
Gerber (2004) Study 3 – Mail	4.20 [−0.70, 9.10]
Gerber (2004) Study 5 – Mail	0.01 [−0.48, 0.50]
Gerber et al. (2011a) – Mail	13.80 [−21.68, 49.28]
Gerber et al. (2011b) – TV	1.22 [−2.29, 4.72]
Kalla and Sekhon (2017) – TV	−0.39 [−2.15, 1.37]
Nickerson (2005) – Phone	−1.60 [−11.60, 8.40]
Nickerson (2005) – Phone	−4.20 [−14.59, 6.19]
Nickerson (2007) – Canvass	−5.50 [−13.54, 2.54]
Nickerson (2007) – Canvass	−5.30 [−14.12, 3.52]
Potter and Gray (2008) – Mail	3.00 [−17.38, 23.38]
Potter and Gray (2008) – Canvass	24.00 [−64.20, 112.20]
Rogers and Nickerson (2013) – Mail	3.90 [1.16, 6.64]
Sadin (2016) – Mail	0.09 [−1.67, 1.85]
Cunow and Schwenzfeier (2015) Study 2 – Canvass	−1.40 [−9.63, 6.83]
Cunow and Schwenzfeier (2015) Study 2 – Canvass	1.10 [−5.96, 8.16]
Cunow and Schwenzfeier (2015) Study 3 – Canvass	4.40 [−5.20, 14.00]
RE Model	0.13 [−0.29, 0.55]

−20   −10   0   10   20

Estimated Treatment Effect (CACE) in Percentage Points and 95% Confidence Interval
Subset: General Elections – Treatment Within 2 Months of Election Day

(b) General elections: Treatment >2 months prior to election day - Immediate measurement

Doherty and Adler (2014) – Mail   3.04 [1.16 , 4.92]
Gerber et al. (2015c) – TV   5.44 [1.97 , 8.91]
Gerber et al. (2011b) – Radio   4.83 [-6.91 , 16.57]
Strauss (2009), Section S.5.4 – Mail   1.00 [-2.53 , 4.53]
Shaw et al. (2017) – Online Ads   2.97 [-0.49 , 6.44]
Shaw et al. (2017) – Online Video Ads   -2.29 [-5.69 , 1.11]
Shaw et al. (2017) – Facebook Ads   -2.27 [-5.74 , 1.20]
Shaw et al. (2017) – Mail   0.96 [-2.31 , 4.23]
Shaw et al. (2017) – Cable TV   -2.43 [-7.00 , 2.15]
Shaw et al. (2017) – Radio   0.69 [-1.12 , 2.31]
Shaw et al. (2017) – Broadcast TV   -0.24 [-2.13 , 1.64]

RE Model   2.13 [-0.20 , 4.45]

Estimated Treatment Effect (CACE) in Percentage Points and 95% Confidence Interval
Subset: General Elections – Treatment Prior to 2 Months Before Election Day, Measure Immediately

(c) General elections: Treatment >2 months prior to election day - Later measurement

Doherty and Adler (2014) – Mail   -0.66 [-4.70 , 3.38]
Gerber et al. (2011b) – TV   -0.17 [-2.95 , 2.61]
Cunow and Schwenzfeier (2015) Study 1 – Canvass   -2.60 [-12.01 , 6.81]
Cunow and Schwenzfeier (2015) Study 1 – Canvass   -1.00 [-4.92 , 2.92]

RE Model   -0.59 [-2.52 , 1.35]

Estimated Treatment Effect (CACE) in Percentage Points and 95% Confidence Interval
Subset: General Elections – Treatment Prior to 2 Months Before Election Day, Measure Later

FIGURE 4. Effects Within 2 Months of Election Day With Original Studies, By Contact Type

(a) Personal contact

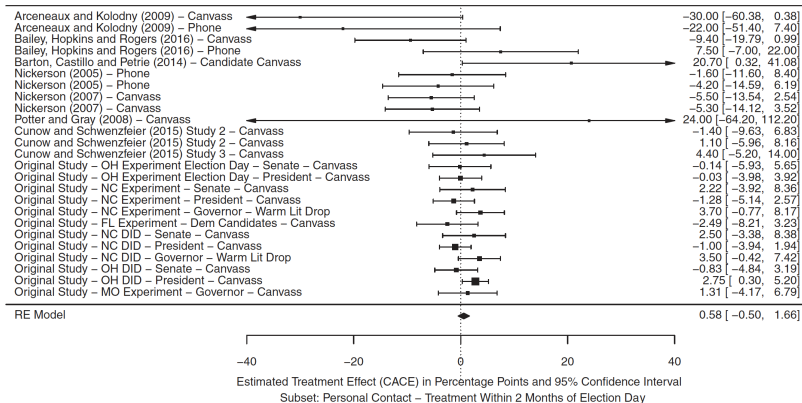|	
Arceneaux and Kolodny (2009) – Canvass	−30.00 [−60.38, 0.38]
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Cunow and Schwenzfeier (2015) Study 2 – Canvass	1.10 [−5.96, 8.16]
Cunow and Schwenzfeier (2015) Study 3 – Canvass	4.40 [−5.20, 14.00]
Original Study – OH Experiment Election Day – Senate – Canvass	−0.14 [−5.93, 5.65]
Original Study – OH Experiment Election Day – President – Canvass	−0.03 [−3.98, 3.92]
Original Study – NC Experiment – Senate – Canvass	2.22 [−3.92, 8.36]
Original Study – NC Experiment – President – Canvass	−1.28 [−5.14, 2.57]
Original Study – NC Experiment – Governor – Warm Lit Drop	3.70 [−0.77, 8.17]
Original Study – FL Experiment – Dem Candidates – Canvass	−2.49 [−8.21, 3.23]
Original Study – NC DID – Senate – Canvass	2.50 [−3.38, 8.38]
Original Study – NC DID – President – Canvass	−1.00 [−3.94, 1.94]
Original Study – NC DID – Governor – Warm Lit Drop	3.50 [−0.42, 7.42]
Original Study – OH DID – Senate – Canvass	−0.83 [−4.84, 3.19]
Original Study – OH DID – President – Canvass	2.75 [0.30, 5.20]
Original Study – MO Experiment – Governor – Canvass	1.31 [−4.17, 6.79]
RE Model	0.58 [−0.50, 1.66]

Estimated Treatment Effect (CACE) in Percentage Points and 95% Confidence Interval

Subset: Personal Contact – Treatment Within 2 Months of Election Day

► **Thursday, 17 March**

Week 5. Political Participation and Voter Turnout

Compulsory readings:

– Blais, André. 2006. "What affects voter turnout?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 9: 111–125.

– Brady, Henry E., Verba, Sidney, and Schlozman, Kay L. 1995. "Beyond SES: A resource model of political participation." *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 271–294.

– Frank, Richard W. and Coma, Ferran Martínez i. 2021. "Correlates of Voter Turnout." *Political Behavior*, 1–27.