

Mobilization Effects Using Mail: Social Pressure, Descriptive Norms, and Timing

Gregg R. Murray  
Department of Political Science  
Texas Tech University  
Box 41015  
Lubbock, TX 79409  
g.murray@ttu.edu

Richard E. Matland  
Department of Political Science  
Loyola University Chicago  
337 Coffey Hall 1032 W. Sheridan Road  
Chicago, IL 60626  
rmatlan@luc.edu

This research contributes to the voter mobilization and voter turnout literatures. We use field experiments in Texas and Wisconsin to evaluate the effectiveness of non-partisan get-out-the-vote (GOTV) messages delivered via mail during 2010 gubernatorial campaigns. We manipulate three factors associated with our GOTV messages: social pressure, the consistency of descriptive and injunctive voting norms, and the timing of message reception. We find GOTV mobilization efforts increase turnout, but the effects vary across states, citizens (based on voting propensity), and messages. We present an initial field-based confirmation of the hypothesis that norm-consistent messages are effective at increasing turnout. We demonstrate significant timing effects, which are mediated by state election rules. Finally, we find social pressure's effectiveness varies significantly more than indicated by previously published tests. These results indicate considerable variation in impact and suggest researchers place a greater emphasis on context when running experiments and evaluating the effects of mobilization messages.

## Mobilization Effects Using Mail: Social Pressure, Descriptive Norms, and Timing

We use a field experiment to test the effects of non-partisan get-out-the-vote (GOTV) mailings in order to contribute to two separate literatures.<sup>1</sup> First, we add to the mobilization literature on the effectiveness of GOTV techniques. In recent years there has been a surge in field experiments testing various mobilization methods (Abrajano and Panagopoulos 2011; Garcia Bedolla and Michelson 2012; Gerber and Green 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008; Green and Gerber 2008; Green, Gerber, and Nickerson 2003a, 2003b; Michelson 2003, 2006; Michelson et al. 2009; Nickerson 2008; Panagopoulos 2010, 2011, forthcoming). While these studies provide evidence that GOTV tools can increase turnout, our knowledge remains incomplete concerning the conditions under which these mechanisms have an impact. In this article, we provide the first field test of Gerber and Rogers' (2009) argument that GOTV messages using consistent injunctive and descriptive norms (i.e., both emphasizing high turnout) increase turnout more than messages where the two norms are inconsistent. Furthermore, we take a careful look at the effectiveness of social pressure in raising turnout. Previously published field experiments on social pressure have been conducted primarily during low-salience elections and in a limited geographical area. We test for effects in the context of competitive gubernatorial elections with substantially higher base turnout. Further, we test for these effects in two very different settings with distinct politics and political cultures: Texas and Wisconsin.

The second literature we contribute to is the voter turnout literature. We retest our model of voter turnout (author cite), which adapts Zaller's (1992) Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model to the decision to vote. We found previously that voters' response to GOTV messaging varies by voters' propensity to vote. We retest the model in a new context. Furthermore, motivated by

expectations derived from the RAS model, we provide a first test of whether timing impacts mailing's effectiveness.

We start by discussing previous scholars' results, pointing to a number of unresolved questions. Next, we present our study design and empirical results. We conclude with a discussion of implications for voter mobilization and voter turnout as well as with an admonishment that the context in which a mobilization message is being used can dramatically influence its effectiveness.

### *Mobilization Experiments Testing Social Pressure and Norm Consistency*

In a recent review, Green, McGrath, and Aronow (2013) find that direct mail effects on turnout are generally very small, but the effects are larger for mailings that invoke social pressure. Their meta-analysis shows the 79 "conventional" non-partisan mailings they survey produced an average increase in turnout of 0.19 percentage points (c.i.=.11 to .28), while the 29 social pressure treatments generated an average increase of 2.85 percentage points (CI = 2.69 to 3.01).

The impact of social pressure mailings varies depending upon the sample used for the study, the political context in which it was tested, and the form of social pressure exerted. On the high end, Gerber, Green, and Larimer (2008) used a single mailing to a sample of registered voters that emphasized the civic duty to vote, provided citizens with their own voting history and those of their neighbors, and promised to mail updated voting records for the neighborhood after the election. In the context of the August 2006 statewide primary in Michigan, where control turnout was 29.7%, this led to an impressive 8.1 percentage-point jump in turnout. They also tested a "self" mailer, in which individuals were urged to vote, made aware they were being monitored by giving them copies of the voting history of household members, and promised an updated voting record after the election, but with no explicit threat of public shaming. This "self" message raised turnout by 4.9 percentage points. Using historic voting data, Gerber, Green, and Larimer (2010) selected a sample of potential voters for local elections in Michigan in November 2007 who had

voted in only one of two previous elections. They then randomly treated half of the sample with mailers describing the individual as a voter and the other half with mailers describing the individual as a non-voter. They found that messages indicating an individual had voted in a recent election increased turnout by 4.1 percentage points, while messages indicating an individual had failed to vote increased turnout by 6.4 percentage points. Larimer (2009), running a separate experiment using the self-mailer during the same local elections, found a small difference between low- and high-turnout election histories with effects of 5.1 and 4.6 percentage points, respectively. Sinclair, McConnell, and Green (2012) replicated the results for the “self” mailer in a Congressional special election held in Chicago in 2009 and got an estimated effect of 4.2 percentage points.

There are studies that show more modest impacts. Mann (2010) tested three versions of the self-mailer that varied the amount of social pressure and did not include a promise to send a follow-up mailer with the voter’s updated record. Running his experiments in conjunction with the Kentucky governor’s race in 2007, he found effects of 3.1, 2.6, and 2.5 percentage points. His sample, however, was exclusively single females who were historically less likely to vote.<sup>2</sup> Abrajano and Panagopoulos (2011) tested the impact of a postcard on Latino voters that noted the voter failed to vote in the previous municipal election and urged them to vote in a special election for a New York City council district seat in February 2009. Interestingly they find an English language mailer had a stronger impact than a Spanish language mailer despite the target audience being Latino. The impacts, however, were quite small with 3.9 percent turnout in the control sample compared to 4.2 percent among those who received the Spanish-language mailer and 5.1 percent among those receiving the English-language mailer.<sup>3</sup> Panagopoulos, Larimer, and Condon (forthcoming) report the effects of three different forms of the self-mailer tested in conjunction with a mayoral race in a small California municipality. With a control sample turnout of 10.6

percent, they found the self-mailers increased turnout by 1.4, 2.0 and 3.1 percentage points respectively. Finally, Green, Larimer, and Paris (2010) report an unpublished experiment conducted just prior to the 2008 presidential election where individuals contacted for the 2006 study were sent a new mailer once again showing them their voting history. In a very high-salience election environment,<sup>4</sup> this second application of social pressure to the same population failed to have any effect.

While these results show social pressure mailings have an impact greater than typical mailings, there are still a number of unanswered questions. First, these studies have been conducted primarily in low-salience elections, particularly special elections, primaries, or strictly local elections. These messages may get people who are habitual voters to the polls for a low-salience election, but they may be less effective with citizens who vote less regularly. Of the published work, only the Mann (2010) study in Kentucky, which selected a sample of voters who were less likely to go to the polls, was conducted during a statewide general election. In addition, many of the studies have been fielded in Michigan. While social pressure effects certainly have been demonstrated, the robustness of these effects is still up for debate. These findings should be replicated in different electoral contexts and state political cultures. In an effort to do just that, we test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1A: *Subjects receiving a social pressure mobilization message will turn out to vote at higher rates than subjects receiving no mobilization message.*

Hypothesis 1B: *Subjects receiving a social pressure mobilization message will turn out to vote at higher rates than subjects receiving a general civic duty mobilization message.*

We also desire to test norm consistency in GOTV mailers. Gerber and Rogers (2009) distinguish between two types of social norms: injunctive norms (what people ought to do) and descriptive norms (what people actually do). An injunctive norm is that people should not walk

against the light at a crosswalk. A descriptive norm, at least in most college towns, is that almost everyone walks against the light. Virtually all GOTV messages emphasize the injunctive norm that one should vote, but implicit in many GOTV messages is a descriptive norm bemoaning the fact that many do not vote. Gerber and Rogers suggest this inconsistency may encourage abstention. They argue that a message saying “everyone is voting and you should too” presents a descriptive norm concerning voting behavior that is consistent with and reinforces the injunctive norm. They hypothesize this message should be more effective than an appeal that suggests “few people take advantage of the chance to vote and you should help reverse the trend.” The latter statement presents a descriptive norm that is inconsistent with the injunctive norm. It also provides evidence that other citizens shirk their civic duty. A voter may reason that if others are shirking, then it is not a serious problem if I shirk too. Perhaps most intriguing is Gerber and Rogers’ assertion that the impact of consistent norms is likely to be strongest among those least likely to turnout. Their findings, however, are based on a telephone survey experiment employing as their dependent variable people’s self-reported likelihood of voting, which respondents indicated immediately after hearing the appeal. To the best of our knowledge, there is no published research testing this hypothesis using a field experiment with validated voting records, although two unpublished research papers report null effects for norm-consistent messaging.<sup>5</sup> As such, we offer the following hypotheses for confirmation:

*Hypothesis 2A: Subjects receiving a consistent descriptive-injunctive norm mobilization message will turn out to vote at higher rates than subjects not receiving a mobilization message.*

*Hypothesis 2B: Subjects receiving a consistent descriptive-injunctive norm mobilization message will turn out to vote at higher rates than subjects receiving a general civic duty mobilization message.*

Hypothesis 2C: *Subjects receiving a consistent descriptive-injunctive norm mobilization message will turn out to vote at higher rates than subjects receiving an inconsistent descriptive-injunctive norm mobilization message.*

RAS Model of Voter Turnout: Message Timing and Effects Across Voter Types

In earlier work we found Zaller's (1992) Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model of public opinion a useful construct on which to build a model of voter turnout (author cite). Applying Zaller's model to voting, the probability a person votes is defined as  $Prob(vote) = V/(V+A)$ , where  $V$  is the number of considerations that induce the individual to vote and  $A$  is the number of considerations that induce the individual to abstain.

Zaller's model emphasizes the sampling of *currently* salient factors. In applying this to the decision whether to vote, it suggests the timing of GOTV mobilization messages is crucial. A message received well before an election may be a positive consideration pushing an individual in the direction of voting, but it is likely to fade and be overtaken by newer information in the pool of considerations as the election approaches. The RAS turnout model posits that messages closer to an election are likely to have a larger impact than those received earlier, because they will be more accessible. On the other hand, the online model (Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh 1989; Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau 1995) predicts message timing is much less important. If the message is received and processed, voters should update their assessment of whether they are likely to vote, regardless of when the message is received.

A critical question for mobilization studies is whether mobilization tools only work immediately prior to an election or whether they can be implemented well before. Both Green et al. (2003b) and Nickerson (2007) found the effectiveness of even high-quality telephone banks was distinctly time bound, showing no effect when conducted more than one or two weeks before an election. Michelson et al. (2009) find that follow-up telephone calls the day before or the day of

an election significantly augment the effectiveness of previous GOTV contacts. These studies indicate the impact of mobilization messages delivered via telephone is quite ephemeral and only effective just before an election. Similar results have been found for political advertising, where the effects are strong but do not last (Gerber et al. 2011). There is, however, one study suggesting calls may be just as effective early as they are late. Panagopoulos (2011) finds small overall effects regardless of the time phone calls are made. He does suggest early calls are effective with high-propensity voters, while late calls are effective primarily with low-propensity voters. Although a number of studies have looked at the impact of timing on telephone bank canvassing, we know of no studies that have dealt systematically with timing of GOTV mailers. As such, we propose the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 3: Subjects who receive a mobilization message the weekend before an election will turn out to vote at higher rates than subjects who receive a mobilization message a week or more before an election.*

In addition to predicting timing effects, the RAS voter mobilization model also projects distinct differences in mobilization success across different voter types. We expect GOTV mailings to have a weak effect on habitual voters. If they receive a GOTV message, it becomes an additional positive consideration. The effect on turnout, however, is modest because for most habitual voters the existing pool of considerations is overwhelmingly positive and large. Adding one more positive factor moves the overall ratio only marginally. Habitual voters are analogous to Zaller's attentive public. They have a deep pool of political information, so their evaluations of candidates or policies, or in our case the likelihood of voting, are affected only marginally by new information.

GOTV mail should have its strongest effect on episodic voters. Episodic voters are similar to the semi-attentive public in Zaller's model. These people are engaged somewhat with politics,



but have limited previous information. Zaller notes this group shows the greatest change in opinion when new information becomes available *and processed*. The RAS model emphasizes the costs of decision making, noting individuals are unlikely to make a complete survey of all considerations when deciding. They sample salient information near the top of their memory to make up their minds. Episodic voters have relatively balanced voting considerations. Mobilization efforts add a new positive consideration and make existing positive factors more accessible when individuals go through their limited decision calculus. It also is likely to be true for a significant portion of episodic voters that the count of previous considerations is smaller than for habitual voters. Adding a new (positive) consideration to both the numerator and denominator has a relatively larger impact than it does for habitual voters.

We expect a small effect among registered non-voters. Registered non-voters are predisposed to abstain. We expect them to receive the message only partially or not at all due to their limited cognitive engagement with politics and the limited salience of the election. The GOTV mailer is likely to end up in the trash before it is even read. Even if they receive the message, we expect registered non-voters to resist (or not accept) the GOTV message. A message not received or accepted exerts no influence on the balance of considerations retrieved when deciding to vote or abstain. For a politically unengaged person, neither the numerator nor denominator is moved by the GOTV appeal. Registered non-voters mirror Zaller's inattentive public. They do not process available political information, so new information does not change their evaluations. As a result, we expect a GOTV message to increase only marginally the probability a registered non-voter votes. To summarize, the RAS model of turnout predicts an inverted-U or parabolic relationship between voting tendencies and GOTV efforts. We predict:

*Hypothesis 4: Subjects with an episodic voting history will be more strongly influenced by a mobilization treatment than subjects who habitually vote or abstain.*

## Research Design

### *The Experimental Settings*

To provide a robust assessment of these hypotheses, we test the effectiveness of our messages in two very different contexts: Wisconsin and Texas. Wisconsin has consistently one of the highest turnout rates in the country; presidential turnout in 2008 was 72.1 percent among the Voting Eligible Population (VEP). Texas turnout, on the other hand, was considerably lower with a VEP turnout in 2008 of 54.4 percent (McDonald 2012). In 2008 Wisconsin had the second highest turnout rate in the country, while Texas came in at 48<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states.

The two states differ markedly in political culture. Wisconsin has a progressive tradition with a participatory culture and moralist roots, while Texas is a mix of traditionalist and individualist culture (Conant 2006, Elazar 1966, Jillson 2011). A central part of the progressive tradition in Wisconsin was using broad public participation as an effective tool to beat back more narrow interests that tried to dominate state politics. The idea that public involvement in politics helped insure politicians worked for the people was central to both the progressive movement and to the politics of Wisconsin. On the other hand, as Jillson (2011: 7) notes “The Texan political culture highlights individualism, entrepreneurship, and personal responsibility... But throughout, political participation has been limited, citizens have been disengaged, the lobby has dominated Austin [i.e. the Capitol], and taxes have rested lightly on the state’s social and economic elite.” Traditionalist and individualist cultures do not see politics as a collective activity in which as many people as possible should participate. In contrast, a moralistic political culture emphasizes the common good, where broad participation is valued for its own sake, and government is seen as a steward of the public interest and as a positive force in citizens’ lives.

There is extensive work in social psychology showing that as a norm becomes more salient, norm-consistent behavior increases (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004). In this context, citizens

in Wisconsin may be especially likely to respond to messages emphasizing the importance of voting and the importance of participating in a collective enterprise with one's neighbors. Texans, shaped by a traditionalist and individualist culture, are less likely to value and to be moved by references to participation.

Our field experiments were conducted in Kenosha County, Wisconsin, and Lubbock County, Texas. Kenosha County is in Southeastern Wisconsin on the Illinois border. It has just over 160,000 residents. Lubbock County is in West Texas and has approximately 250,000 residents. Both states had reasonably competitive gubernatorial elections in November 2010. In Wisconsin, Scott Walker (Republican) defeated Tom Barrett (Democrat) 52 to 47 percent, while in Texas, Rick Perry (Republican) defeated Bill White (Democrat) 55 to 42 percent. At the time, Tom Barrett was serving as mayor of the largest city in Wisconsin (Milwaukee), while Bill White had served as mayor of the largest city in Texas (Houston). White was also a successful businessman who poured much of his own fortune into the race. Both campaigns included substantial spending on the air waves. We did not, however, detect any door-to-door canvassing in the communities where we ran our experiments.

### *Design of the Experiments*

In Kenosha, we used a  $2 \times 3 \times 2$  design. The factors varied were social pressure, norm consistency, and timing. With respect to social pressure, voters were either presented with their voting history (social pressure) or not (no social pressure). In terms of norm consistency, all messages included an injunctive statement emphasizing voting as an important civic duty, but there were three different descriptive norm conditions.<sup>6</sup> For the norm-inconsistent message, the mailer notes the 2010 spring primary election turnout of 15 percent is among the lowest turnouts in the past 20 years. For the neutral condition the mailer does not report or describe previous turnout, while for the norm-consistent message the mailer indicates the 2008 presidential election

turnout of 85 percent is among the highest turnouts in the past 20 years. Finally in regards to timing a first-class mailer was sent out eight days or four days prior to the election (See Online Appendix A for copies of the six mailers).

The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board provided a list of all registered voters in Kenosha County one month before the November 2010 General Election. We selected our sample at the household level to insure no household had residents in more than one condition. Within each household one voter was selected randomly. We then stratified based on voting propensity and randomly assigned subjects to 13 separate groups, 12 groups of 400, which were the experimental groups, and the remainder forming the control group. After the election the Government Accountability Board provided validated voter turnout information.

We expect randomization to provide samples that are equivalent statistically. We tested for equivalency across the Kenosha subsamples by comparing turnout rates for earlier elections and found nothing close to statistically significant differences. We continued by running a multinomial logistic regression utilizing the independent variables presented later to estimate the likelihood of being in the 13 different samples. A test of the joint significance of the covariates has a p-value of .98 making us confident in the equivalency of the Wisconsin subsamples.

The research design for Lubbock, Texas, was the same except we used three time periods (15, 11, and four days) rather than two time periods, resulting in a  $3 \times 3 \times 2$  design with 18 experimental groups. The Lubbock County Elections Department provided the pre-election list of registered voters and the post-election validated voter turnout data. We again tested for subsample equivalency and found nothing approaching statistical significance when comparing differences in turnout in previous elections across the 19 different samples in Texas. The multinomial logit test of the joint significance of the covariates resulted in a p-value of .67. In short, the Texas subsamples are equivalent on observable characteristics.

### Bivariate Results

In Table 1 we aggregate the subsamples to look at the bivariate relationship between each of our three experimentally manipulated variables and turnout. Each of the treatment groups (12 in Kenosha and 18 in Lubbock) represents a unique combination of the three factors we manipulated.<sup>7</sup> If we had not randomized each of the factors so they are independent, or if our hypotheses were based on the assumption that effects would only show up in interactions between several manipulated variables, it would be problematic to merge the treatment groups. That is not the case, however. Our expectation is that each of the factors we manipulate should have an effect independent of the values of the other manipulated variables and therefore merging treatment groups is reasonable. Furthermore, we tested for interactions and found no statistically significant interaction effects between the three manipulated variables. Therefore, we are confident the results of Table 1 provide a reasonable initial assessment of the impact of these variables.

<TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>

Table 1 shows how the treatments affected turnout relative to the control group that received no mailer. The table shows marked differences across the two states. For Wisconsin, there are seven comparisons between the control group and some form of GOTV mailer; three show a significant impact. Social pressure increases turnout to a level distinguishable from control group turnout, but the effect is small and the statistical test very liberal. Including consistent norms and receiving a mailer the final weekend each significantly increases turnout and at fairly robust levels. In Wisconsin, mailers work if they include social pressure, consistent norms, or are timed for the final weekend. In Texas, all eight tests show the GOTV mailers have a statistically significant impact on turnout compared to the control group that received no mailer, but the effects are all modest and quite similar. The maximum change in turnout was a 2.1 percentage point increase, while the smallest impact was a 1.5 percentage point increase.

Table 2 reports the results of bivariate tests for our first three hypotheses. For those independent variables that have been randomly manipulated (social pressure, norm consistency, and time) the bivariate estimates provide an unbiased estimate of their impact, as randomization assures the treatments are uncorrelated with any missing variables.

<TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE>

Table 2 shows support for Hypothesis 1A that a social pressure mailer increases turnout relative to no mailer at all; however, there is no support for Hypothesis 1B that a social pressure mailer is *more* effective than a generic mailer. Wisconsin voters receiving a social pressure cue have a trivially higher likelihood of voting (0.2) than those who received a mailer with no social pressure. In Texas all the mailers show similar effects and the tests comparing the effects of one mailer to another all were insignificant by large margins. Surprisingly the social pressure mailer produced a lower turnout level than the generic mailer. We see the effect drops a statistically insignificant 0.6 percentage points (from 2.1 to 1.5 percentage points) when social pressure is included in the mailer. Therefore we reject Hypothesis 1B in both Wisconsin and Texas.

We predicted the GOTV mailer with consistent norms would have a stronger effect than no GOTV mailer (H2A), a generic mailer that is neutral and does not include a reference to descriptive norms (H2B), or a mailer containing descriptive norms inconsistent with the injunctive norms (H2C). In Wisconsin, all these hypotheses are confirmed as a norm-consistent message has a substantially stronger impact than the other messages. The mailer with consistent norms is not only superior to no mailer at all (3.4,  $p < .01$ , one-tailed test), but it also outperforms the mailer that is norm neutral (3.1,  $p < .04$ , one-tailed test) and the mailer with inconsistent norms (2.9,  $p < .05$ , one-tailed test). Hypotheses 2A, 2B, and 2C are supported by the bivariate evidence in Wisconsin. In Texas, on the other hand, a message with a consistent norm increases turnout relative to receiving no message (1.9,  $p < .04$ , one-tailed test), but it did no better with respect to turnout over

a message that was neutral or inconsistent with respect to norms. We conclude the Texas field experiment supports Hypothesis 2A but, unlike in Wisconsin, it provides no support for Hypotheses 2B and 2C regarding the superiority of norm-consistent messages.

Hypothesis 3 suggests mobilization messages delivered just prior to the election will have a greater impact than messages delivered at earlier times. In Wisconsin, the 2.6 percentage point difference in effect between the mailing four days and eight days prior to the election is statistically significant ( $p < .01$ , one-tailed test). In Texas, the mailings had similar impacts across the three time periods; there is no increase in impact as we move closer to the election. Hypothesis 3 is supported by the bivariate evidence in Wisconsin but not in Texas.

### Multivariate Analyses

Multivariate analyses provide more precise estimates of the effects of mailings and test the robustness of the bivariate results. Also, by including a measure of people's propensity to vote and interaction terms we can see if the effect of the treatment varies across types of voters, which is central to the test of the RAS turnout model.

The GOTV message is expected to have its greatest impact for those who are episodic in their voting. To test this we categorized voters by their propensity to vote. Using turnout behavior for the past eight years in the last four statewide general elections and four primaries or local elections, we identify five separate voting patterns, in order of decreasing voting frequency: habitual, regular, occasional, rare, and registered non-voters (see Online Appendix D for a detailed description).<sup>8</sup>

In Wisconsin, 39 percent of the sample is identified as habitual voters; 43 percent are episodic voters. We further divided episodic voters into "regular" voters (17 percent), who voted in approximately 40-60 percent of the pertinent elections; "occasional" voters (19 percent), who showed up for about 25-40 percent of the elections; and "rare" voters (7 percent), who showed up

for only one or at most two of the eight elections. Six percent of the sample is registered voters who have not voted in any of the past four primary or general elections. We identify these citizens as “registered non-voters.” Finally 12 percent are “new voters” who registered at the polls on Election Day, November 4, 2008, or at some time up to the closing of the registration rolls for the 2010 general election. These voters have an insufficient record on which to be categorized. New voters historically have low turnout rates, but we do not make a prediction as to whether this group is highly influenced by GOTV contact.

In Texas, habitual voters make up 33 percent of the voter sample. Approximately 43 percent voted episodically, showing up for some elections and not for others. The episodic voters were further divided into “regular” voters (17 percent), “occasional” voters (16 percent), and “rare” voters (10 percent). At the bottom, 14 percent of the sample is registered voters who have not voted in any of the past four primary or general elections. Finally, 7 percent of the sample registered in the two years prior to the gubernatorial election of 2010; these are “new voters.”

*Multivariate Results: Kenosha County, Wisconsin*

Table 3 presents probit models including characteristics of the GOTV mailers, voter type, interaction terms between voter type and mailer characteristics, and control variables. We include as controls dummy variables for whether the individual is registered in the city of Kenosha, respondent sex, and our five voter types (occasional voters are the base). Kenosha City contains more urban, poor, and transient residents than the rest of the County and as such turnout rates are lower. Our female registrants vote at lower rates than male registrants. More pertinently, the voter types work as expected. Habitual and regular voters turn out at higher rates than occasional voters, and rare and registered non-voters turn out at lower rates than occasional voters.

Postcard is a dummy variable coded 1 if the participant received any GOTV mailer. Social pressure and consistent norms are dummy variables coded 1 if that condition was used for the



GOTV mailer. Mailing Wave is coded 0 for postcards sent out eight days before the election and 1 for postcards sent out four days before the elections. The Base Model (1) in Table 3 reports the likelihood an individual votes without estimating interactions between treatments and voter type.

<TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE>

The bivariate test supported Hypothesis 1A as the social pressure mailer showed a positive effect on turnout, but at a very low level of statistical significance. In the multivariate version, the effect slips to non-significance and we no longer find the social pressure mailer increases turnout in Wisconsin.<sup>9</sup> The coefficient for social pressure provides a direct test of Hypothesis 1B that the social pressure message is superior to a generic mailer. As the coefficient is extremely weak ( $p=.38$ , one-tailed test), Hypothesis 1B is rejected.

The multivariate test of Hypothesis 2A finds a GOTV postcard that includes a norm-consistent message has a strong statistically significant effect compared with no mobilization message. Further testing finds the effect for consistent norms is considerably stronger in the final time period.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, as predicted by Hypothesis 2B, the norm-consistent message is found to be superior to a generic mailer. These results suggest a norm-consistent message is effective at raising turnout and is superior to a generic message. The bivariate and multivariate results are consistent with respect to the impact of norm-consistent messages.

Hypothesis 2C asserts the coefficients for consistent and inconsistent norms significantly differ. To test Hypothesis 2C we ran separate probits where we broke the base category into its two parts, the generic mailer and the inconsistent message mailer. Using a dummy for the inconsistent message, we tested the difference between consistent and inconsistent norms. The Wald test indicates they differ but not strongly ( $p=.07$ , one-tailed test), providing modest support for Hypothesis 2C.

Finally, the third hypothesis considered the impact of timing. We see in the multivariate analyses in Table 3 the direct effect of mailing wave is statistically significant and positive, supporting our prediction in Hypothesis 3 that the timing of messages matters ( $p < .08$ , one-tailed test). As such a timing effect appears in both the bivariate and multivariate analyses.

While the Base Model [equation (1)] provides a useful picture of the impact of the messages, built into that Model is the assumption that a mailer has the same effect on all voters. It is easy to imagine, and the RAS model predicts, considerable heterogeneity across voters. Therefore we ran two additional models in which we include interactions. The message type is interacted with our voter types: habitual, regular, occasional (omitted category), rare, and registered non-voter. Model (2) presents the social pressure interactions, and Model (3) the norm-consistent interactions.

The effects of these interactions are complex and, while they can be calculated by adding the various elements together, the results are not linear and have to be located on the normal curve. Further calculations also are required to estimate the standard errors. To present a more transparent picture, Table 4 uses the equations from Models 2 and 3 to present the estimated impact on turnout of a mailing received the final weekend, by voter type and treatment.<sup>11</sup>

The top panel of Table 4 shows the impact of the social pressure message across voter types. The results provide a possible explanation for the overall weak results found in the initial analyses. The social pressure message has almost no impact among habitual voters and registered non-voters, but it has some bite among episodic voters. Summed together as they are in Model 1, these lead to the non-significant result overall, but split apart as in Model 2, we can see social pressure has an impact among the episodic voters. The effect is weak, but we believe the evidence can be correctly described as partially supporting Hypothesis 1A. The norm-consistent message, on the other hand, has a powerful effect and is statistically significant for habitual, regular,

occasional, and rare voters. Only for registered non-voters does the norm-consistent message fail to have a statistically significant impact. Hypothesis 2A, regarding the advantage of consistently normed messages, not only holds in the aggregate, but holds broadly across various types of voters.

<TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE>

To test Hypothesis 4 we need to evaluate the impact of the mailers across voter types. As the RAS model predicts, the strongest impacts for both messages are among episodic voters. The social pressure message goes from a 0.4 percentage-point increase for habitual voters to a 1.8 percentage-point positive effect across all of the episodic voters and then down to no effect (0.0) for registered non-voters. The norm-consistent message has a quite large effect among episodic voters, increasing turnout in the group as a whole by 4.0 percentage points, with an especially strong effect among rare voters (9.2 percentage points). The mobilization effects, as predicted, are smaller among the habitual voters and abstainers (2.2 and 2.4 percentage points, respectively).

When dividing the sample into three types of voters – habitual, episodic, and registered non-voters – the impact of the messages across types of voters shows the inverted U-pattern consistent with the RAS model. The effects could be more marked for the social pressure messages, but it is hardly surprising that it is difficult to find a strong pattern when the overall impact of the variable is indistinguishable from zero. When we look at the five categories of voters, the pattern generally holds up, but we do find a surprising drop in effect among the occasional voters. Overall, we find the Wisconsin results broadly consistent with Hypothesis 4 and the prediction of the RAS model.

*Multivariate Results: Lubbock County, Texas*

In addition to the treatments, voter-types, and interaction variables, these probits include as controls whether the individual is registered in the city of Lubbock, the voter's sex, and voter's

age and age-squared.<sup>12</sup> Table 5 presents the coefficients for the characteristics of the GOTV mailers, the interaction terms, the voter types, and the controls.

<TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE>

In the Base Model (1) the impact of the generic GOTV mailer (postcard) is positive and significant. We find the social pressure mailer fails to meet even a weak test of statistical significance.<sup>13</sup> The norm-consistent message has a positive and statistically significant effect but at a very modest level ( $p = .09$ , one-tailed test). These results provide no support for Hypothesis 1A and very weak support for Hypothesis 2A. Both hypotheses predicting a superior impact for mailers including social pressure or consistent norms over the generic mailer (H1B and H2B) can be assessed directly from the probit coefficients. Neither approaches significance. When we separately tested H2C, we found nothing approaching significance. The timing effect also is small and statistically insignificant. Whether the mailer is sent 15, 11, or four days before an election has virtually no effect on the mailer's impact. Consistent with the bivariate analyses, Hypotheses 1A, 1B, 2B, 2C and 3 all are rejected soundly in the multivariate analysis in Texas.

As in Wisconsin we test separately for interaction effects between each voter classification and message. In Model (2) we see the differences across voter types are small, and when we tested the various categories we found the social pressure message reached significance only for regular voters ( $p=.07$ , one-tailed test). For the norm-consistent message, the effect was strong enough to have a statistically significant but weak impact on habitual voters ( $p=.09$ , one-tailed test) but not on the other four categories of voters.

< TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE>

Table 6 provides estimates of the change in turnout for the types of voters based on models 2 and 3 in Table 5. We see the social pressure mailer increased turnout by 0.4 percentage points for habitual voters, 1.5 percentage points for episodic voters, and 0.9 percentage points for

registered non-voters. The norm-consistent message, however, does not manifest the inverted-U shape one would expect based on the RAS model. Furthermore, the expected pattern does not emerge when we divide the sample into the five separate categories we described. While it is problematic to evaluate a hypothesis as to which subgroup will reveal the greatest effects when there are virtually no effects, there is little support for Hypothesis 4 in the Texas data.

### *Discussion*

Table 7 summarizes the multivariate test results for our four hypotheses across the two sites. One notices immediately the divergence between the two states. In Wisconsin five of the seven hypotheses are supported and an additional hypothesis is partially supported, while in Texas none is fully supported and only one is partially supported. We review the findings and then turn to possible explanations for the distinct differences across the two research sites and between these results and those of previous studies.

<TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE>

In Wisconsin the social pressure stimuli led to an increase of 1.5 percentage points. The social pressure treatment in Texas also increases turnout 1.5 percentage points above control group turnout. These results are significant at low levels in the bivariate analysis but once we place them in a multivariate context the effect disappears in Texas and weakens in Wisconsin. More importantly, adding social pressure to a mailer in Wisconsin produces absolutely no increase in turnout over that expected for a generic mailer, while in Texas the social pressure mailer performs worse than a generic mailer, albeit not to a statistically significant degree. Our effects are considerably smaller than previous social pressure studies using the self-mailer, which report increased turnout between 4.1 and 6.4 percentage points (Green et al. 2008, 2010; Larimer 2009; McConnell et al. 2010).

On the other hand, our field test of norm consistency, while showing positive but weak effects in Texas, showed strong effects in Wisconsin as the norm-consistent mailer outperformed the other GOTV mailers. Gerber and Rogers speculated that having consistent norms is likely to be especially important for those who are harder to get to the polls. It is therefore striking to see rare voters, those least likely to vote among our episodic voters, were most strongly affected by consistent norms. In both Wisconsin and in Texas the largest increases in participation were precisely for this group.

While primarily framed as a test of the RAS turnout model, the timing results are directly relevant to mobilization campaigns in general. In Wisconsin timing was significant and there were noticeable differences between the mailing sent just prior to the election and the mailing sent more than a week before the election. In Texas, on the other hand, mail timing was irrelevant.

We presented the RAS turnout model and described the resulting expectations regarding varying impacts across voter types. The pattern in Wisconsin is consistent with the theory in that episodic voters show the greatest effect. As expected, mobilization effects were smallest among those who habitually vote or habitually abstain. We did not, however, find such a pattern in Texas. The timing results also represent a split decision regarding the RAS model and voter turnout. The model's predictions were confirmed in the Wisconsin case, but not in the Texas case.

These findings suggest a great deal of variation in the effects of mobilization techniques and provide stark implications for political campaigns. If consistent norms are just as effective as, or perhaps even more effective than, social pressure they could quickly become the preferred tool of campaigns. First, switching from the social pressure of presenting people with their voting records to using messages with consistent norms would dramatically simplify the distribution process as there would be no need to collect voting records for every individual you wish to contact. Second, using social pressure entails the danger of psychological reactance or backlash, in

which message targets express aggression or hostility toward the source of a message (Mann 2010; Matland and Murray 2013, forthcoming). There is little danger of reactance with a consistent-norms message. Therefore, if further research finds consistent norms just as effective it could become the preferred tool. Our findings, however, represent the results of only one study, and other field experiments have failed to find an effect for similar techniques (Nickerson and White 2013; Panagopoulos, Larimer, Condon forthcoming). Clearly, this is an area for further research.

Our two sites present strikingly different results. In Wisconsin, the results are largely, but not entirely, consistent with the proposed theoretical relationships. Timing matters. A norm-consistent message is significantly more effective than an inconsistent or neutral message. In Texas, on the other hand, the time at which mobilization postcards are sent is irrelevant, as is the content of the postcards. What matters is receiving a GOTV mailer, not what that mailer says. The only hypothesis on which the two states are entirely in agreement is on the lack of superiority of the social pressure mailers (H1B). There is no evidence that a social pressure message is more effective than a generic civic duty message.

How might one explain these substantial differences from previous findings and the cross-state divergences? To be clear, most of this discussion is an attempt to find plausible explanations that are consistent with the data and to generate hypotheses to be tested more formally in future experiments. We start by considering social pressure, which other studies have consistently found has a significantly greater impact than generic messages. Despite this, we find only a weak positive effect in Wisconsin and no effect at all in Texas. We believe both cultural and institutional explanations help account for the differences at our research sites and between our findings and those of previous scholars.

While the messages used in Texas and Wisconsin are precisely the same, they can still generate very different reactions among voters. The social pressure message can differ both in terms of the amount of pressure it generates and in terms of the danger of reactance (i.e., backlash; Mann 2010; Matland and Murray 2013, forthcoming) to the message. Both may vary across states based on state political culture. If voting is more highly valued in Wisconsin, then the admonishment to get out and vote, especially when the admonishment includes the individuals' voting record showing you have failed to vote previously, may represent greater social pressure in Wisconsin and the previous states (mostly upper Midwestern) used to study social pressure than it would in Texas.

It may also be that social pressure messages generate a greater negative reaction in Texas than at previous research sites. There is an extensive literature in social psychology finding that in Southern regions, such as West Texas, there is a "culture of honor." This culture is associated with societies with a tradition of limited state infrastructure in which individuals have historically had to rely on themselves to protect their property. As a result of this self-reliance, individuals in these societies react more strongly and negatively to challenges to their personal honor (Nisbett and Cohen 1996). We suspect part of the distinction between the Texas and previous results may be tied to differing levels of reactance.

While Texas may be quite different than the states where previous experiments were run, we would expect Wisconsin to produce results similar to those found in Michigan if state culture is central. From an institutional perspective we believe the electoral context is likely to matter. Unlike previously published scholarship, we use statewide gubernatorial elections and include the full range of voters rather than low-turnout local elections or a subsample of low-propensity voters. The turnout in our control samples was 40.5 percent (Texas) and 49.0 percent (Wisconsin). The Michigan studies (Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008, 2010) have modest turnout rates of



29.7% and 22.5%, but for several of the studies discussed in the literature review turnout is in the single digits (Abrajano and Panagopoulos (2011) or barely into double digits (Mann 2010; Panagopoulos, Larimer, and Condon forthcoming). Our turnout rates are well above those in previous social pressure field experiments. The failure of social pressure to outperform a generic mailer in both Texas and Wisconsin may be a function of our election contests having higher salience. There may be fewer voters who were likely to sit out the election who can be moved easily to the polls. It may be previous studies have largely managed to move habitual voters to the poll, while habitual voters are already motivated to vote in the major election contests we are considering.<sup>14</sup> Adding plausibility to this argument is the fact that Gerber, Green, and Larimer failed to produce any impact in Michigan when using the self-mailer in conjunction with the 2008 presidential election where statewide turnout was 65 percent (Green, Larimer and Paris 2010).

Another plausible explanation for the lack of impact of our social pressure mailers has to do with the form of social pressure. The self-mailer traditionally includes information on all members of the household plus a promise of a follow-up report which will include information on whether the individual has voted. Our social pressure mailers included an individual's voting history, but did not include the voting records of other individuals in the household nor the promise of a follow-up mailer. That said, Green and Gerber conclude "monitoring of compliance" and "calling attention to past nonvoting" (2010, 334) are key to the effects of social pressure. We conclude the social pressure treatments we use do imply to subjects their voting records are being monitored and do call attention to abstention when it is the case. In an online mobilization experiment, Matland and Murray (2013) show even attributing a hypothetical voting record to a subject invokes greater feelings of being monitored and of violated privacy. Furthermore, Mann (2010) tested two variations of the self-mailer which included softer language to point out the failure to vote than the initial self-mailer and dropped the threat/promise of a follow up mailing.

We adopted both of these strategies, softening the language and dropping the promise of a follow-up mailing. Since Mann found these changes did not significantly lower the impact of his mailers, we believe it is possible, but unlikely that the lack of a threat of follow-up accounts for the differences in social pressure effect between our and previous social pressure research. Knowing your records are public and your actions are being watched appear to be sufficient.

Just how light the surveillance can be is strikingly shown by Panagopoulos (forthcoming). In this study, he does not provide voters with their voting history but merely provides a civic duty message plus an implicit cue that the subjects are being monitored by including a set of eyes on the front of the mailers. The placebo versions include a picture of the American flag or a picture of a palm tree (the study was done in Key West, Florida). He finds a small, but statistically significant, impact for civic mailers that included the pair of eyes “monitoring” the voter.

What about the differences in the impact of norm consistency? We believe state political culture may explain variations in message impact between our sites. We go back to our initial suggestion based on work regarding state political cultures (Conant 2006; Elazar 1966; Jillson 2011). Our results provide initial support for the idea that a positive message emphasizing a descriptive norm of high turnout and the injunctive norm emphasizing the need for individuals to participate is more effective in a polity where civic culture emphasizes broad participation in politics such as Wisconsin. Social psychology shows conclusively that messages with greater salience produce more norm compliance. We noted previously Wisconsin has among the very highest rates of voting in the country and a moralistic culture, while Texas has one of the very lowest and an individualist/traditionalist culture. When the mailer language aligns so that not only is there the standard injunctive norm but also a descriptive norm indicating people are following through and complying with the injunctive norm, it is plausible such a message may resonate less in an individualist/traditionalist culture like Texas.

Finally, we consider time. We believe an explanation for the difference in the impact of mail timing in Texas and Wisconsin lies in how early voting is structured. Officially both states have early voting, but the implementation is radically different. In Wisconsin, early voting occurs only at the municipal clerk's office. If you wish to vote early in Kenosha County you must go to your City or Village Clerk's office, request a ballot, and fill it out on site. Compare this with Texas where there are a large number of conveniently located early voting sites all over town intended to make voting as easy as possible.

Not surprisingly, these differences in the organization of early voting influence behavior. In the 2006 Wisconsin gubernatorial election 92.3 percent of the total votes cast in Kenosha County were cast on Election Day. Our estimate for 2010 is 91.3 percent. For Wisconsinites, whose GOTV postcard we sent eight days before the election, the postcard's effect has to last a full week until Election Day. Juxtapose this with Texas where only 32.2 percent of the votes cast in the 2010 gubernatorial election were actually cast on Election Day.<sup>15</sup> In Lubbock County a reminder to vote can be translated immediately into a vote the next time the citizen goes to the library, grocery store, or the local public school. There is no need to wait a week or more to act on the decision to vote. So while in Lubbock only 13 percent of the registered citizenry were going to the polls on Election Day (32 percent of votes cast  $\times$  41 percent turnout), in Kenosha 46 percent of the registered citizenry were voting (91 percent of votes cast  $\times$  49 percent turnout).

While the significant impact of the mailing date suggests a recency effect in Wisconsin, there is also a recency effect in Texas when looking at turnout by mailing wave. Turnout in Texas is sensitive to when mailings were received. Turnout, among those receiving a postcard, in the four days after the first postcard was received was 9.0 percent, while turnout among those who had not received a postcard was 8.3 percent. Turnout among mailer recipients the five days following the second mailing was 13.5 percent, while it was 12.5 percent among those not receiving a

postcard. Finally, turnout was higher on Election Day among those who received a postcard the final weekend. For this group 19.5 percent of the eligible respondents voted on Election Day, compared to only 18.0 percent of those who never received a postcard. In comparing across the subsamples (control, 15, 11, and four days), the highest turnout always occurs in the sample that just received a mailing.<sup>16</sup> The difference of proportions tests comparing turnout among those that had just received a mailing to a group composed of subjects yet to receive a mailing produced significance levels of .14, .10, and .06 (one-tailed test), respectively. While not statistically significant these findings are suggestive. This is precisely the pattern we would expect if mobilization postcards have their greatest impact immediately after they are received, as the RAS model predicts.

### Conclusions

Our field experiment has produced some answers and raised new questions. There is great variation in the effects of these voter mobilization techniques. What we found was surprising at times as it is substantially at odds with much previous research: Social pressure has been identified almost uniformly as an effective tool that leads to a greater increase in turnout than generic mailers. That assertion was handily rejected in both Wisconsin and Texas. Norm-consistent messages were much more effective in Wisconsin than in Texas, despite previous experimental evidence suggesting they should be effective generally. Quite unexpectedly we also found distinct differences across the two states in the impact of timing.

In evaluating explanations for these divergences we believe a fuller consideration of the formal electoral institutions and political culture should be built into future studies. We saw in Wisconsin timing matters quite a bit, and our results suggest campaigns should hold their mail until the very last week. In Texas, campaigns need not strategize about timing as mailers can have an immediate impact and one need not wait until the final week. If it is the manner in which early

voting is organized that leads to mailers having an impact in all time periods in Texas, as we suggest, that should be true in other states. Furthermore, it should be true of other mobilization tools. Do GOTV telephone banks in states with extensive early voting exhibit a similar pattern?

We also suspect differences in political culture may provide explanatory leverage for mobilization results. In moralistic Michigan (where the Gerber et al. tests were conducted) and Wisconsin, voters may be more attuned to messages emphasizing the importance of voting and their failure to have done so in the past. While in individualistic/traditionalistic Texas, the social pressure may be less and the backlash against being commanded to act in a socially approved manner may be greater.

Overall, these mobilization results emphasize the need to consider the local context when trying to understand the effectiveness of mobilization campaigns. This not only calls upon us to test these theories in different contexts, but also to develop more sophisticated research designs, perhaps with post-election interviews to see if there are perceived differences in a civic duty to vote, message salience, or backlash.

In terms of turnout theory, the results are sufficiently supportive of the RAS model that it is worth further testing. The RAS model provides an explanation that is consistent with existing knowledge of turnout, based on a vision of individual decision making that is increasingly supported by research in the cognitive sciences and with a theoretical explanation for the empirical evidence we and others have found of variations in mobilization effects across individuals. The RAS model predicts GOTV efforts are most effective when they occur just before an election, so the message is highly accessible. We found this effect in Wisconsin. While the popularity of early voting in Texas complicates the analysis, further investigation suggested that timing functions in Texas in a manner consistent with recency effects expected by the RAS model. For episodic voters, the RAS model suggests highlighting voting benefits shortly before the decision to vote

makes other positive considerations more salient and accessible. The mail message appears to have been salient for these voters and to have impacted the considerations sampled when deciding to vote. For voters with a relative balance of both positive and negative views on voting, mailings are effective.

We end on a methodological note. There are dramatic differences in results between our two sites and between our results and those of previous researchers. This suggests there is considerable nuance in the effects of these techniques. We have provided a number of suggestions to explain our results. Some are theory driven, while others are admittedly post-hoc. In both cases, however, what they represent is an explanation of exactly one case (or two if we are generous). Experiments allow us to explore causal relationships in a powerful manner, but an essential part of developing external validity within the experimental paradigm is replication. We hope our findings provide interesting and useful information, but in no way do we believe they provide definitive answers. Central to political science learning from experiments is the need to replicate and adjust experiments to see if results can be confirmed. That was an essential part of why we started this project, and we hope political scientists will replicate these experiments opening up new lines of inquiry to pursue further knowledge.

---

<sup>1</sup> We wish to thank David Doherty, participants at the 2011 APSA panel on mobilization experiments, and the University of Wisconsin Political Behavior group for their comments, along with the Texas Tech University Department of Political Science and the Rigali Chair Fund at Loyola University Chicago for economic support. Furthermore, we would like to thank the Lubbock County Elections Department for their friendly, professional, and timely assistance. Wisconsin data were provided by the Government Accountability Board.

<sup>2</sup> Mann's control group turnout was only 13.2 percent, while the overall turnout for the Kentucky gubernatorial election reported by the Kentucky Secretary of State was 37.8 percent (<http://elect.ky.gov/SiteCollectionDocuments/Election%20Statistics/turnout/2006-2010/07gen.pdf>). Mann's results accurately estimated the impact of the "self" mailer for this group of less likely voters, but they are not an estimate of the potential effect on the general voting population of Kentucky. Green, Larimer, and Paris (2010) note the percentage increase in turnout in Mann's study, between 19.0 and 23.5 percent, is quite close to that of the studies using a complete sample of registered voters.

---

<sup>3</sup> Further analysis indicates these mobilization messages had fairly strong impacts on citizens with a strong voting record. The authors find the mobilization message increased turnout by 6.6 percentage points for those who voted consistently.

<sup>4</sup> The voter eligible population (VEP) turnout rate was 65 percent in 2008 (McDonald 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Panagopoulos, Larimer, and Condon (forthcoming) tested the effects of consistent and inconsistent norms in the context of their study in a local mayoral election in California. They tested norm consistency both with mailers that included vote history information (the self-mailer) and with mailers that only included descriptive- and injunctive- norm information. They found the form of the descriptive information (high turnout/low turnout) made no difference in the effect of the mailers. Nickerson and White (2013) report the results of an experiment among black voters in North Carolina conducted in conjunction with the 2008 Democratic Presidential Primary campaign between Obama and Clinton. Their results show that contacting black voters via a letter from the North Carolina Association of Black Elected Officials did lead to a modest increase in voter participation. They found, however, varying the information black voters received about previous black turnout, which was described as either high, medium, or low, did not significantly affect black turnout in the presidential primary.

<sup>6</sup> An anonymous reviewer correctly pointed out a complete test of norm-consistency messaging would include the use of a negative injunctive norm, that is, a stimulus suggesting the social norm is that people should *not* vote. We did not include this stimulus in the experiment. As such it is theoretically difficult to untangle whether it is norm consistency or the high-turnout message that is driving the impact. Our design only addresses the effect of manipulating the descriptive norm (i.e., estimated high versus low turnout) and not the effect of manipulating the injunctive norm (i.e., people should vote versus should not vote). In practical terms, we believe the expectation that voting is good is so pervasive that a do-not-vote message would not be credible to subjects or plausible for campaigns. We agree it would be interesting to see the results, but unfortunately we did not incorporate this element into our design.

<sup>7</sup> Among the 12 subsamples in Wisconsin, nine manifest a positive turnout effect, three of which are statistically significant (.05 level, one-tailed tests, see Online Appendix B). Sixteen of the 18 separate treatment groups in Texas exhibit increased turnout, of these two manifest increased turnout by a statistically significant amount (.05 level, one-tailed tests, see Online Appendix C).

<sup>8</sup> In Texas, the four non-general elections we used were the statewide primaries for 2010, 2008, and 2006 along with the constitutional amendment election in the fall 2005. In Wisconsin we used the presidential primary in February 2008, the party primaries for state and national offices held in September 2008 and September 2010, and local elections in April 2007.

<sup>9</sup> We tested this by calculating a coefficient for the social pressure mailing by adding the coefficients from Table 1, equation 1 for postcard, social pressure, and mailing wave together. The effect is positive, but not significant ( $b=.034$   $se=.040$ ).

<sup>10</sup> The mailer has a weak positive effect eight days prior to the election ( $b=.069$ ,  $se=.046$ ,  $p=.07$ , one-tailed test) and a strong positive effect four days prior to the election ( $b=.123$ ,  $se=.048$ ,  $p < .01$ , one-tailed test).

<sup>11</sup> Model 2 and 3 probit equations in Table 3 are the basis for the estimates for habitual, regular, occasional, rare, and registered non-voters reported in Table 4. We estimate the effects by setting voter type and message to the appropriate categories and the following variables to 1: week2, postcard, and the interaction between the voter type and the GOTV message type. All other variables are set to 0. In addition to running the probit equations shown in Table 3, we ran additional probits where the episodic voters (regular, occasional, and rare) were merged into a single group. The probit with only three voter types, as opposed to

---

five, is not shown but is used to estimate the turnout reported for episodic voters in Table 4. There are very minor differences in the two probit equations, but there are no differences in significance or substantial divergences in magnitude.

<sup>12</sup> Texas provides age and sex with registration information, but Wisconsin does not. We used data from a professional political marketing firm for the sex code in Wisconsin. There might be some concern that specifying a different set of control variables (adding age and age-squared in Texas) may affect our estimates of the treatment variables. We have run separate probits dropping the age variables in Texas so the controls are the same in both states and there is no difference from the results reported in this paper on our variables of interest.

<sup>13</sup> To calculate the impact for social pressure we add together the postcard treatment and the social pressure treatment dummies and assume the postcard was sent the final weekend when  $time=3$  (+.072-.025-.009). This produces an impact of .038 (se=.035).

<sup>14</sup> Turnout in Wisconsin among our sample in the spring 2008 local elections was 23.5 percent, very close to the 22.5 percent Gerber, Green, and Larimer (2010) report in their experiment showing impacts in the 4.1 to 6.4 percentage point range. In those spring 2008 local elections in Wisconsin, 46 percent of those we identified as habitual voters went to the polls. It seems plausible some of the 54 percent of habitual voters who did not vote might have been pushed to the polls had they received a social pressure mailer. Note that in the fall 2010 statewide elections, control turnout among habitual voters was 89.3 percent in Wisconsin. Taking into consideration the baseline turnout among the habitual voters, it seems plausible social pressure may have a smaller impact in highly salient elections.

<sup>15</sup> Because there were such a large number of early voters, one may worry this might impact our results. It should not, as randomization should insure early voters who vote prior to receiving a mailer are randomly allocated across the various experimental groups and the control group. In further analyses, we reran our probits, dropping all cases of voters having voted before the date when a postcard was received. The probit results were the same, as expected.

<sup>16</sup> Our first Texas mailing went out on Monday, October 18 and was received on October 19. We expect the greatest effect from October 20 to 23 when only the first group had received a mailing. The second mailing was sent on Friday, October 22 and received on October 23. We expect the greatest effect for this mailing from October 24 to 28. The last mailing was sent on Friday, October 29 and received on October 30. Early voting had closed by that point, so this message can only have an impact on Election Day, November 2.



## REFERENCES

- Abrajano, Marisa, and Costas Panagopoulos. (2011). "Does Language Matter? The Impact of Spanish Versus English-Language GOTV Efforts on Latino Turnout." *American Politics Research* 39(4): 643-663.
- Arceneaux, Kevin and David W. Nickerson. (2009). "Who is Mobilized to Vote? A Re-Analysis of 11 Field Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science*. 53(1):1-16.
- Burgoon, Michael, Eusebio Alvaro, Joseph Grandpre, and Michael Voulodakis. (2002). "Revisiting the Theory of Psychological Reactance: Communicating Threats to Attitudinal Freedom." In James Price Dillard and Michael Pfau (Eds.), *The Persuasion Handbook: Developments in Theory and Practice* (p. 213-32) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Conant, James (2006) *Wisconsin Politics and Government: America's Laboratory of Democracy*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Cialdini, Robert B. and Noah J. Goldstein (2004). "Social Influence: Compliance and Conformity." *Annual Review of Psychology* 55:591-621.
- Elazar, Daniel J. (1966). *American Federalism: A View from the States*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.
- Garcia Bedolla, Lisa, and Melissa R. Michelson. (2012). *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gerber, Alan S., James G. Gimpel, Donald P. Green, and Daron R. Shaw (2011). "How Large and Long-lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment" *American Political Science Review* 105(1): 135-150.
- Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green (2000a). "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment" *American Political Science Review* 94(3): 653-663.
- Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green (2000b). "The Effect of a Nonpartisan Get-Out-the-Vote Drive: An Experimental Study of Leafletting" *Journal of Politics* 62(3): 846-857.
- Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green (2001). "Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout? A Field Experiment" *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 65(1): 75-85.
- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer (2008). "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment" *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 33-48.
- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer (2010). "An Experiment Testing the Relative Effectiveness of Encouraging Voter Participation by Inducing Feelings of Pride or Shame" *Political Behavior* 32:409-422.
- Gerber, Alan S., and Todd Rogers. (2009). "Descriptive Social Norms and Motivation to Vote: Everybody's Voting and so Should You." *Journal of Politics* 71(1): 178-191.
- Green Donald P., and Alan S. Gerber. (2008). *Get Out the Vote! How to Increase Voter Turnout*, 2nd Edition. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Green, Donald P., Alan S. Gerber, and David W. Nickerson. (2003a). "Getting Out the Vote in Local Elections: Results from Six Door-to-Door Canvassing Experiments" *Journal of Politics* 65(4): 1083-1096.

- Green, Donald P., Alan S. Gerber, and David W. Nickerson. (2003b). "The Challenge of Bringing Voter Mobilization 'To Scale': An Evaluation of Youth Vote's 2002 Phone Banking Campaigns," unpublished manuscript, Yale University, Institution for Social and Policy Studies, 2003.
- Green, Donald P., Mary C. McGrath, and Peter M. Aronow (2013). "Field Experiments and The Study of Voter Turnout" *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 23(1): 27-48.
- Jillson, Cal. (2011). *Texas Politics: Governing the Lone Star State*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Larimer, Christopher W. (2009). "Analyzing the Effectiveness of Social Pressure Direct Mail in Competitive and Uncompetitive Elections: Evidence from a Field Experiment." Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Meetings, Chicago, IL, 2009.
- Lodge, Milton, Kathleen M. McGraw, and Patrick Stroh. (1989). "An Impression-driven Model of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 83(2): 399-420.
- Lodge, Milton, Marco Steenbergen, and Shawn Brau. (1995). "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 309-326.
- Mann, Christopher B. (2010). "Is There Backlash to Social Pressure? A Large-scale Field Experiment on Voter Mobilization" *Political Behavior* 32:387-407.
- Matland, Richard E., and Gregg R. Murray. (2013). "An Experimental Test for 'Backlash' Against Social Pressure Techniques Used to Mobilize Voters." *American Politics Research*. Vol. 41(3): 358 - 385.
- Matland, Richard E., and Gregg R. Murray. (Forthcoming). "'You've Gone Too Far': Social Pressure Mobilization, Reactance, and Individual Differences." *Journal of Political Marketing*.
- McDermott, Rose. (2002). "Experimental Methodology in Political Science." *Political Analysis* 10(4): 325-342.
- McDonald, Michael P. (2012). "2008 General Election Turnout Rates" [http://elections.gmu.edu/Turnout\\_2008G.html](http://elections.gmu.edu/Turnout_2008G.html), (accessed July 20, 2012 & May 17, 2013).
- Michelson, Melissa R. (2003). "Getting Out the Latino Vote: How Door-to-Door Canvassing Influences Voter Turnout in Rural Central California." *Political Behavior* 25(3): 247-65.
- Michelson, Melissa R. (2006). "Mobilizing the Latino Youth Vote: Some Experimental Results." *Social Science Quarterly* 87(5): 1188-1206.
- Michelson, Melissa R., Lisa Garcia Bedolla, and Margaret A. McConnell. (2009). "Heeding the Call: The Effect of Targeted Two-Round Phone Banks on Voter Turnout" *Journal of Politics* 71(4): 1549-1563.
- Nickerson, David W. (2007). "Quality is Job One: Volunteer and Professional Phone Calls" *American Journal of Political Science* 51(2): 269-282.
- Nickerson, David W. (2008). "Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments" *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 49-58.

- Nickerson, David W., and Ismail White. (2009). "The Turnout Consequences of Hope and Disillusionment: The Effect of Racialized Get-Out-the-Vote Messages on Black Voter Turnout." Paper presented at the American Political Science Association Meetings, Toronto, Canada, 2009.
- Nisbett, Richard E., and Dov Cohen. (1996). *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South*. New Directions in Social Psychology Westview Press: Boulder, Co.
- Panagopoulos, Costas. (2010). "Affect, Social Pressure and Prosocial Motivation: Field Experimental Evidence of the Mobilizing Effects of Pride, Shame and Publicizing Voting Behavior" *Political Behavior* 32(3): 369-386.
- Panagopoulos, Costas. (2011). "Timing is Everything? Primacy and Recency Effects in Voter Mobilization Campaigns" *Political Behavior* 33(1): 79-93.
- Panagopoulos, Costas (forthcoming) "I've Got My Eyes on You: Implicit Social Pressure Cues and Prosocial Behavior" *Political Psychology*.
- Panagopoulos, Costas, Christopher W. Larimer, and Meghan R. Condon. (forthcoming). "Social Pressure, Descriptive Norms, and Voter Mobilization." *Political Behavior*.
- Sinclair, Betsy, Margaret McConnell, and Donald P. Green. (2012). "Detecting Spillover Effects: Design and Analysis of Multilevel Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(4): 1055-1069.
- Zaller, John R. (1992). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

**Table 1: Turnout Rates by Treatment for Kenosha, Wisconsin, and Lubbock, Texas**

(1) Factor	(2) Condition	Treatment Effects in Kenosha, WI			Treatment Effects in Lubbock, TX		
		(3) N	(4) Turnout %	(5) Turnout Difference (Treatment - Control)	(3) N	(4) Turnout %	(5) Turnout Difference (Treatment - Control)
Control	--	43320	48.98 (.24)	--	63500	40.48 (.19)	--
Social Pressure (H1)							
	No	2417	50.21 (1.02)	1.23 (1.04)	<b>3600</b>	<b>42.58</b> (.82)	<b>2.11***</b> (.84)
	Yes	<b>2391</b>	<b>50.44</b> (1.02)	<b>1.46*</b> (1.05)	<b>3600</b>	<b>41.97</b> (.82)	<b>1.50**</b> (.84)
Descriptive Norm (H2)							
	Inconsistent	1601	49.41 (1.25)	0.43 (1.27)	<b>2400</b>	<b>42.17</b> (1.01)	<b>1.69**</b> (1.02)
	None	1604	49.25 (1.25)	0.27 (1.27)	<b>2400</b>	<b>42.33</b> (1.01)	<b>1.86**</b> (1.02)
	Consistent	<b>1603</b>	<b>52.34</b> (1.25)	<b>3.36***</b> (1.27)	<b>2400</b>	<b>42.33</b> (1.01)	<b>1.86**</b> (1.02)
Mailer Timing (H3)							
	Wave 1	na	na	Na	<b>2400</b>	<b>42.46</b> (1.01)	<b>1.98***</b> (1.02)
	Wave 2	2406	49.04 (1.02)	0.06 (1.05)	<b>2400</b>	<b>42.0</b> (1.01)	<b>1.52*</b> (1.02)
	Wave 3	<b>2402</b>	<b>51.62</b> (1.02)	<b>2.64***</b> (1.05)	<b>2400</b>	<b>42.38</b> (1.01)	<b>1.90**</b> (1.02)

\*=sig. at .10 level (one-tailed test) \*\*= sig at .05 level (one-tailed test) \*\*\*= sig. at the .01 level (one-tailed test)

Standard errors appear in parentheses.

**Table 2: Bivariate Hypothesis Tests:  
Treatment Effects (Percentage-point Change in Turnout), by Hypothesis and State**

<u>Hypothesis</u>	<u>Wisconsin</u>		<u>Texas</u>	
	<u>Change</u>	<u>Supported/ Not Supported</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Supported/ Not Supported</u>
H1: Social Pressure				
1A (v. control)	<b>1.46*</b> <b>(1.05)</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>1.50**</b> <b>(.84)</b>	<b>Supported</b>
1B (v. generic mailer)	0.23 (1.44)	Not Supported	-0.61 (1.16)	Not Supported
H2: Consistent Norm				
2A (v. control)	<b>3.36***</b> <b>(1.27)</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>1.86**</b> <b>(1.02)</b>	<b>Supported</b>
2B (v. generic mailer)	<b>3.09**</b> <b>(1.77)</b>	<b>Supported</b>	0.00 (1.43)	Not Supported
2C (v. inconsistent)	<b>2.93**</b> <b>(1.77)</b>	<b>Supported</b>	0.17 (1.43)	Not Supported
H3: RAS/Mailer Timing				
Wave 3 – Wave 2	<b>2.58**</b> <b>(1.44)</b>	<b>Supported</b>	0.38 (1.43)	Not Supported
Wave 3 – Wave 1	na	na	-0.08 (1.43)	Not Supported

Note: Percentage-point changes in turnout derived from Table 1.

**Table 3: Multivariate Probits: Estimated Treatment Effects on Voter Turnout, Wisconsin**

	Base + Voter Type/Treatment Interactions		
	(1) <u>Base</u>	(2) <u>Social Pressure</u>	(3) <u>Norm Consistent</u>
<b>Treatment</b>			
Postcard	-.034 (.040)	-.043 (.056)	-.035 (.040)
Social Pressure	.013 (.042)	.018 (.046)	.014 (.042)
Consistent Norms	<b>.103***</b> <b>(.044)</b>	<b>.103***</b> <b>(.044)</b>	<b>.055</b> <b>(.066)</b>
Mailing Wave (1 or 2)	<b>.055*</b> <b>(.042)</b>	<b>.056*</b> <b>(.042)</b>	<b>.055*</b> <b>(.042)</b>
<b>Interactions</b> (Voter Type x Treatment Message)			
Habitual X Social Pressure		-.008 (.033)	
Regular X Social Pressure		.020 (.038)	
Rare X Social Pressure		.047 (.061)	
Reg. NV X Social Pressure		-.032 (.105)	
Habitual X Norm Consistent			.053 (.089)
Regular X Norm Consistent			.055 (.066)
Rare X Norm Consistent			<b>.239*</b> <b>(.154)</b>
Reg. NV X Norm Consistent			.145 (.247)
<b>Voter Type</b>			
Habitual	1.64*** (.02)	1.64*** (.02)	1.64*** (.02)
Regular	.34*** (.02)	.34*** (.02)	.34*** (.02)
Rare	-.54*** (.03)	-.54*** (.03)	-.54*** (.04)
Registered Non-voter	-1.31*** (.05)	-1.30*** (.05)	-1.31*** (.04)
New Voter	-.33*** (.02)	-.33*** (.02)	-.33*** (.04)

**Control Variables**

Sex (Female)	-.14*** (.01)	-.14*** (.01)	-.14*** (.01)
City (Kenosha)	-.18*** (.01)	-.18*** (.01)	-.18*** (.01)
Constant	-.40*** (.02)	-.40*** (.02)	-.40*** (.03)
<hr/>			
N	48605	48604	48604
Wald $\chi^2$	20783	148883	185415
Prob	<.001	<.001	<.001
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.31	.31	.31

Note: Standard errors appear in parentheses.

**Table 4: Treatment Effect (Final Weekend) in Wisconsin, by Voter Type**

**A. Impact of Social Pressure in GOTV Messaging**

<u>Voter Type</u>	<u>Ctrl Turnout (%)</u>	<u>Mail Turnout (%)</u>	<u>Turnout Difference (Trmt - Ctrl)</u>	<u>p*</u>
Habitual	89.26	89.67	.41 (.46)	.19
Episodic	36.69	38.44	1.75 (1.12)	.03
Regular	47.41	49.41	2.06 (1.08)	.03
Occasional	34.35	35.47	1.12 (.93)	.12
Rare	17.22	19.26	2.03 (1.45)	.08
Registered Non Voter	4.39	4.37	-0.02 (0.45)	.49

**B. Impact of Norm-Consistent Message in GOTV Messaging**

<u>Voter Type</u>	<u>Ctrl Turnout (%)</u>	<u>Mail Turnout (%)</u>	<u>Turnout Difference (Trmt - Ctrl)</u>	<u>p*</u>
Habitual	<b>89.03</b>	<b>91.27</b>	<b>2.24</b> <b>(.82)</b>	<b>.00</b>
Episodic	<b>36.75</b>	<b>40.83</b>	<b>4.08</b> <b>(1.48)</b>	<b>.00</b>
Regular	<b>47.49</b>	<b>52.66</b>	<b>5.17</b> <b>(1.95)</b>	<b>.00</b>
Occasional	<b>34.39</b>	<b>37.19</b>	<b>2.80</b> <b>(1.02)</b>	<b>.03</b>
Rare	<b>17.21</b>	<b>26.37</b>	<b>9.16</b> <b>(3.80)</b>	<b>.01</b>
Registered Non Voter	4.24	6.64	2.40 (2.33)	.15

\* one-tailed test.



**Table 5: Multivariate Probits: Estimated Treatment Effects on Voter Turnout, Texas**

	Base + Voter Type/Treatment Interactions		
	(1) <u>Base</u>	(2) <u>Social Pressure</u>	(3) <u>Norm Consistent</u>
<b>Treatment</b>			
Postcard	.072* (.052)	.072* (.051)	.072* (.052)
Social Pressure	-.025 (.035)	-.029 (.054)	-.026 (.035)
Consistent Norms	-.010 (.037)	-.009 (.037)	-.063 (.064)
Mailing Wave (1, 2, or 3)	-.003 (.021)	-.003 (.021)	-.003 (.021)
<b>Interactions</b> (Voter Type x Treatment Message)			
Habitual X Social Pressure		-.019 (.065)	
Regular X Social Pressure		.051 (.072)	
Rare X Social Pressure		-.055 (.100)	
Reg. NV X Social Pressure		.074 (.122)	
Habitual X Norm Consistent			.080 (.079)
Regular X Norm Consistent			.043 (.088)
Rare X Norm Consistent			.127 (.122)
Reg. NV X Norm Consistent			.066 (.148)
<b>Voter Type</b>			
Habitual	1.52*** (.02)	1.53*** (.02)	1.52*** (.02)
Regular	.61*** (.02)	.61*** (.02)	.61*** (.02)
Rare	-.36*** (.02)	-.36*** (.02)	-.36*** (.02)
Registered Non-voter	-1.13*** (.03)	-1.13*** (.03)	-1.13*** (.03)
New Voter	.11*** (.02)	.11*** (.02)	.11*** (.02)

**Control Variables**

Age	.057*** (.002)	.057*** (.002)	.057*** (.002)
Age-squared	-.00047*** (.00002)	-.00047*** (.00002)	-.00047*** (.00002)
Sex (Female)	-.130*** (.011)	-.130*** (.011)	-.130*** (.011)
City (Lubbock)	.083*** (.019)	.083*** (.019)	.083*** (.019)
Constant	-2.27*** (.047)	-2.27*** (.047)	-2.27*** (.047)
<hr/>			
N	70730	70730	70730
Wald $\chi^2$	30582	30584	30584
Prob	<.001	<.001	<.001
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.32	.32	.32

Note: Standard errors appear in parentheses.

**Table 6: Treatment Effect (Final Weekend) in Texas, by Voter Type**

**A. Impact of Social Pressure in GOTV Messaging**

<u>Voter Type</u>	<u>Ctrl Turnout (%)</u>	<u>Mail Turnout (%)</u>	<u>Turnout Difference (Trmt - Ctrl)</u>	<u>p*</u>
Habitual	81.33	81.72	0.40 (1.03)	.38
Episodic	33.36	34.52	1.16 (1.87)	.27
Regular	48.83	52.22	3.39 (2.26)	.07
Occasional	26.25	27.38	1.13 (1.73)	.27
Rare	16.03	15.53	-0.50 (2.68)	.41
Registered Non Voter	3.86	4.85	0.99 (1.05)	.18

**B. Impact of Norm-Consistent Message in GOTV Messaging**

<u>Voter Type</u>	<u>Ctrl Turnout (%)</u>	<u>Mail Turnout (%)</u>	<u>Turnout Difference (Trmt - Ctrl)</u>	<u>p*</u>
Habitual	81.28	83.37	2.10 (1.73)	.12
Episodic	33.39	34.81	1.42 (1.99)	.26
Regular	48.95	50.69	1.74 (2.76)	.27
Occasional	26.31	26.34	0.03 (3.14)	.49
Rare	15.90	19.20	3.30 (2.60)	.11
Registered Non Voter	3.89	4.49	0.59 (1.06)	.29

\* one-tailed test.

---

**Table 7: Multivariate Hypothesis Test Results, by Hypothesis and State**

---

<u>Hypothesis</u>	<u>Wisconsin</u>	<u>Texas</u>
H1: Social Pressure		
1A (v. control)	<b><i>Partially Supported</i></b>	Not Supported
1B (v. generic mailer)	Not Supported	Not Supported
H2: Consistent Norm		
2A (v. control)	<b><i>Supported</i></b>	<b><i>Partially Supported</i></b>
2B (v. generic mailer)	<b><i>Supported</i></b>	Not Supported
2C (v. inconsistent)	<b><i>Supported</i></b>	Not Supported
H3: RAS/ Mailer Timing	<b><i>Supported</i></b>	Not Supported
H4: RAS/ Voter Types	<b><i>Supported</i></b>	Not Supported

---

## ONLINE APPENDIX A: SCRIPTS FOR MAILERS

There are six different postcards. The front of each postcard is the mailing information: addressee and postage indicia. The back side of each postcard is one of the messages below. For the Kenosha postcards, we replaced “Lubbock Get Out The Vote” with “Wisconsin Get Out The Vote,” “Lubbock elections” with “Kenosha elections,” the Lubbock telephone number with a Kenosha telephone number, the Lubbock-referenced email address with a Kenosha-referenced email address, and the low and high turnout predictions with predictions based on Kenosha results (i.e., 15% and 85%).

### (1) BASELINE POSTCARD: No Social Pressure/No Norm

We at *Lubbock Get Out The Vote* would like to remind you the General Election to elect state and federal representatives is occurring Tuesday, November 2nd. We don't care who you vote for, we would just like to see you at the polls on Election Day. Voting is an important civic duty. Democracy is strongest when citizens are active participants in government and when we have a voice in government. You can find your voice by voting on November 2nd.

Exercise your Constitutional right. VOTE November 2nd!  
Thank you for voting.

Lubbock Get Out The Vote: GOTVLubbock@gmail.com 806-416-XXXX

(2) Social Pressure/No Norm

We at **Lubbock Get Out The Vote** would like to remind you the General Election to elect state and federal representatives is occurring Tuesday, November 2nd. We don't care who you vote for, we would just like to see you at the polls on Election Day. Voting is an important civic duty. Democracy is strongest when citizens are active participants in government and when we have a voice in government. You can find your voice by voting on November 2nd.

Official Voter Records indicate you voted ("Yes"), did not vote ("No"), or were not registered to vote (---) in the following elections:

	Primary <u>2006</u>	General <u>2006</u>	Primary <u>2008</u>	General <u>2008</u>	Primary <u>2010</u>	General <u>2010</u>
Homer Simpson	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	???

This information was taken directly from state voter rolls, which are available for public inspection. If our records are not accurate, please contact us at the email address or telephone number below, and we will correct our records.

Exercise your Constitutional right. VOTE November 2nd!  
Thank you for voting.

Lubbock Get Out The Vote: GOTVLubbock@gmail.com 806-416-XXXX

(3) No Social Pressure/Inconsistent Norm (Low Turnout Expected)

We at **Lubbock Get Out The Vote** would like to remind you the General Election to elect state and federal representatives is occurring Tuesday, November 2nd. We don't care who you vote for, we would just like to see you at the polls on Election Day. Voting is an important civic duty. Democracy is strongest when citizens are active participants in government and when we have a voice in government. You can find your voice by voting on November 2nd.

In the Lubbock city elections earlier this year, voter turnout was around 10%, among the lowest levels recorded in the past twenty years. While there are many opportunities to participate, millions of people in Texas never take advantage of these opportunities. Many experts are discouraged by how few voters they expect for the upcoming election. We encourage you to buck this trend among your fellow Lubbock citizens and vote on Tuesday, November 2nd.

Exercise your Constitutional right. VOTE November 2nd!  
Thank you for voting.

Lubbock Get Out The Vote: GOTVLubbock@gmail.com 806-416-XXXX

(4) Social Pressure/Inconsistent Norm (Low Turnout Expected)

We at **Lubbock Get Out The Vote** would like to remind you the General Election to elect state and federal representatives is occurring Tuesday, November 2nd. We don't care who you vote for, we would just like to see you at the polls on Election Day. Voting is an important civic duty. Democracy is strongest when citizens are active participants in government and when we have a voice in government. You can find your voice by voting on November 2nd.

In the Lubbock city elections earlier this year, voter turnout was around 10%, among the lowest levels recorded in the past twenty years. While there are many opportunities to participate, millions of people in Texas never take advantage of these opportunities. Many experts are discouraged by how few voters they expect for the upcoming election. We encourage you to buck this trend among your fellow Lubbock citizens and vote on Tuesday, November 2nd.

Official Voter Records indicate you voted ("Yes"), did not vote ("No"), or were not registered to vote (---) in the following elections:

	Primary <u>2006</u>	General <u>2006</u>	Primary <u>2008</u>	General <u>2008</u>	Primary <u>2010</u>	General <u>2010</u>
Homer Simpson	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	???

This information was taken directly from state voter rolls, which are available for public inspection. If our records are not accurate, please contact us at the email address or telephone number below, and we will correct our records.

Exercise your Constitutional right. VOTE November 2nd!  
Thank you for voting.

Lubbock Get Out The Vote: GOTVLubbock@gmail.com 806-416-XXXX

(5) No Social Pressure/Consistent Norm (High Turnout Expected)

We at **Lubbock Get Out The Vote** would like to remind you the General Election to elect state and federal representatives is occurring Tuesday, November 2nd. We don't care who you vote for, we would just like to see you at the polls on Election Day. Voting is an important civic duty. Democracy is strongest when citizens are active participants in government and when we have a voice in government. You can find your voice by voting on November 2nd.

In the General Election in Lubbock in 2008, voter turnout was over 70% of registered voters and among the highest levels recorded in the past twenty years. Throughout the country there has been a surge in voter participation. Many experts are encouraged by this trend and are expecting another large turnout in the upcoming election. We encourage you to join your fellow Lubbock citizens and vote on Tuesday, November 2nd.

Exercise your Constitutional right. VOTE November 2nd!  
Thank you for voting.

Lubbock Get Out The Vote: GOTVLubbock@gmail.com 806-416-XXXX

(6) Social Pressure/Consistent Norm (High Turnout Expected)

We at **Lubbock Get Out The Vote** would like to remind you the General Election to elect state and federal representatives is occurring Tuesday, November 2nd. We don't care who you vote for, we would just like to see you at the polls on Election Day. Voting is an important civic duty. Democracy is strongest when citizens are active participants in government and when we have a voice in government. You can find your voice by voting on November 2nd.

In the General Election in Lubbock in 2008, voter turnout was over 70% of registered voters and among the highest levels recorded in the past twenty years. Throughout the country there has been a surge in voter participation. Many experts are encouraged by this trend and are expecting another large turnout in the upcoming election. We encourage you to join your fellow Lubbock citizens and vote on Tuesday, November 2nd.

Official Voter Records indicate you voted ("Yes"), did not vote ("No"), or were not registered to vote (---) in the following elections:

	Primary <u>2006</u>	General <u>2006</u>	Primary <u>2008</u>	General <u>2008</u>	Primary <u>2010</u>	General <u>2010</u>
Homer Simpson	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	Yes/No/--	???

This information was taken directly from state voter rolls, which are available for public inspection. If our records are not accurate, please contact us at the email address or telephone number below, and we will correct our records.

Exercise your Constitutional right. VOTE November 2nd!

Thank you for voting.

Lubbock Get Out The Vote: GOTVLubbock@gmail.com 806-416-XXXX



---

**Online Appendix B: Treatment Effects for Kenosha, WI, by Treatment Group**


---

(1) <u>Timing</u>	(2) <u>Norm</u>	(3) <u>Social Pressure</u>	(4) <u>N</u>	(5) <u>Turnout %</u>	(6) <u>Turnout Difference (Trmt - Ctrl)</u>
Control	--	--	43320	49.0 (.24)	--
8 days prior					
	None	No	401	46.4 (2.49)	-2.6
	None	Yes	401	46.1 (2.49)	-2.9
	Inconsistent	No	402	48.8 (2.50)	-0.2
	Inconsistent	Yes	390	49.5 (2.53)	0.5
	<b>Consistent</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>53.7</b> <b>(2.47)</b>	<b>4.7*</b>
	Consistent	Yes	402	49.8 (2.50)	0.8
4 days prior					
	<b>None</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>49.0</b> <b>(2.50)</b>	<b>0.0</b>
	<b>None</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>55.5</b> <b>(2.49)</b>	<b>6.5**</b>
	Inconsistent	No	404	49.3 (2.49)	0.3
	Inconsistent	Yes	405	50.1 (2.49)	1.1
	<b>Consistent</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>54.3</b> <b>(2.54)</b>	<b>5.3*</b>
	Consistent	Yes	393	51.7 (2.57)	2.7

---

\*= sig at .05 level (one-tailed test) \*\*= sig. at the .01 level (one-tailed test)  
Standard errors appear in parentheses.

---

**Online Appendix C: Treatment Effects for Lubbock, TX, by Treatment Group**


---

(1) <u>Timing</u> Control	(2) <u>Norm</u> --	(3) Social <u>Pressure</u> --	(4) <u>N</u> 63500	(5) <u>Turnout %</u> 40.5 (.19)	(6) Turnout Difference (Trmt - Ctrl) --
15 days prior					
	None	No	400	41.8 (2.47)	1.3
	<b>None</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>44.5</b> <b>(2.49)</b>	<b>4.0*</b>
	Inconsistent	No	400	42.8 (2.48)	2.3
	Inconsistent	Yes	400	37.8 (2.43)	-2.7
	Consistent	No	400	43.8 (2.48)	3.3
	Consistent	Yes	400	44.3 (2.49)	3.8
11 days prior					
	None	No	400	40.8 (2.46)	0.3
	None	Yes	400	42.5 (2.47)	2.0
	Inconsistent	No	400	44.3 (2.49)	3.8
	<b>Inconsistent</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>44.8</b> <b>(2.49)</b>	<b>4.3*</b>
	Consistent	No	400	42.5 (2.47)	2.0
	Consistent	Yes	400	37.3 ( 2.47)	-3.2
4 days prior					
	None	No	400	42.3 (2.47)	1.8
	None	Yes	400	42.3 (2.47)	1.8
	Inconsistent	No	400	41.0 (2.46)	0.5
	Inconsistent	Yes	400	42.5 (2.47)	2.0
	<i>Consistent</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>44.3</i> <i>(2.49)</i>	<i>3.8</i>
	Consistent	Yes	400	42.0 (2.47)	1.5

---

\*= sig at .05 level (one-tailed test) \*\*= sig. at the .01 level (one-tailed test)  
Standard errors appear in parentheses.

---

**Online Appendix D: Defining Voter Types\***


---

A. Voters who have been registered for 8 years or more.

Voted in General Elections	Voted in Primary Elections				
	<u>4 of 4</u>	<u>3 of 4</u>	<u>2 of 4</u>	<u>1 of 4</u>	<u>0 of 4</u>
4 of 4	Habitual	Habitual	Habitual	Habitual	Habitual
3 of 4	Habitual	Habitual	Habitual	Regular	Regular
2 of 4	Habitual	Habitual	Regular	Regular	Occasional
1 of 4	Regular	Regular	Occasional	Rare	Rare
0 of 4	Empty Set	Occasional	Rare	Rare	Registered Non-Voter

B. Voters who have been registered for 6 to 8 years.

Voted in General Elections	Voted in Primary Elections				
	<u>4 of 4</u>	<u>3 of 4</u>	<u>2 of 4</u>	<u>1 of 4</u>	<u>0 of 4</u>
3 of 3	Habitual	Habitual	Habitual	Habitual	Regular
2 of 3	Habitual	Habitual	Regular	Regular	Occasional
1 of 3	Habitual	Regular	Regular	Occasional	Rare
0 of 3	Empty Set	Occasional	Occasional	Rare	Registered Non-Voter

C. Voters who have been registered for 4 to 6 years.

Voted in General Elections	Voted in Primary Elections					
	<u>3 of 3/</u> <u>4 of 4</u>	<u>2 of 3</u>	<u>2 of 4</u>	<u>1 of 3</u>	<u>1 of 4</u>	<u>0 of 3/</u> <u>0 of 4</u>
2 of 2	Habitual	Habitual	Habitual	Habitual	Regular	Regular
1 of 2	Habitual	Regular	Regular	Regular	Occasional	Occasional
0 of 2	Empty Set	Occasional	Occasional	Rare	Rare	Registered Non-Voter

D. Voters who have been registered for 2 to 4 years.

Voted in General Election	Voted in Primary Elections				
	<u>3 of 3</u>	<u>2 of 3</u>	<u>2 of 4</u>	<u>1 of 3/</u> <u>1 of 4</u>	<u>0 of 2/</u> <u>0 of 3</u>
1 of 1	Habitual	Habitual	Regular	Occasional	Occasional
0 of 1	Regular	Regular	Rare	Rare	Registered Non-Voter

---

\* Voters registered for less than 2 years were not categorized.