

DIRECT CONTACT, MEDIA USE, AND VOTING

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Chapel Hill
2005

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ABSTRACT

WEIYANG JOANN WONG: Direct Contact, Media Use, and Voting
(Under the direction of Xinshu Zhao)

For decades mass communication scholars have examined the effects of mass media on voting behavior, whereas many political scientists have explored how direct contact contributes to voter turnout. Conflicting results are found in these two streams of research. Voting behavior might result from both interpersonal and mass communication, but traditional voting research typically overlooks either aspect and thus could not fully explore the impacts upon voting behavior. This study intends to bring together interpersonal and mass communication in the voting decision-making process by focusing on both direct contact and mass media effects on voter turnout.

Using nationally representative panel survey data, this study simultaneously analyzes four media-use variables (television news, newspaper reading, television commercials and radio advertisements) and four direct contact variables (financial donation requests, direct mail, electronic mail and phone calls). The results indicate that both media use and direct contact have a direct and positive impact on voter turnout. Furthermore, media use also has an indirect effect on voter turnout through direct contact. A reverse effect is found between media use and voting. Media use appears to be both a consequence of voting intention and a predictor of voting behavior. The finding that people who intend to vote will consume media more than people who don't plan to vote confirms the theory of uses and gratifications.

DEDICATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear parents. My father, Mao-Cheng Wong, had been the biggest advocate of my education and had been waiting to see me getting this highest degree. Sadly, he passed away on April 27, 2004, a year before I completed my dissertation research, and did not get to read this. My mother, Wen-Chen Wong, has greatly valued the education of all three of her children. Her love and care has helped to mold me into who I am. If I have any contribution to this world in my life, she deserves to share in the credit.

Writing a dissertation is not only a test of research ability, but also a test of perseverance. My husband, Michael O'Connell, has encouraged me throughout the process. I have never known a person with such high tolerance for a companion who is under extreme stress. He has provided the best support to help me finish this study.

Finally, this dissertation would not have been completed without the guidance of my committee members – Jane Brown, Barbara Entwisle, Guang Guo, Phil Meyer and especially Xinshu Zhao. Dr. Zhao has been my best teacher and mentor. He has enlightened my critical thinking and my research philosophy. In my life-long research and teaching career, as well as in my personal life, he will always be a positive influence, and will always be in my heart.

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INTRODUCTION

During 1992 U.S. Presidential Election, I was in Taiwan. The U.S. election was the lead story of most local media. During 2000 U.S. Presidential Election, I was in France. The U.S. election was, again, the top headline of most French media. Nobody would doubt that mass media and the U.S. Presidential Election are intertwined. I was impressed by how widely media effects spread across geographical boundaries.

During 2004 U.S. Presidential Election, I was in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. One element of the election unexpectedly came into my routine life: direct contact. Strangers knocked on my door to tell me to vote. (Few of them actually told me for whom I should vote.) People at the stores gave me voter registration forms to fill out. For the first time, I was invited to a fundraising party for a candidate. At the party, organizers asked not only for money, but also for volunteers to contact voters. Some people at the party believed that the more volunteers they sent out to the neighborhood, the more votes would be cast.

These experiences prompted my interest in studying the role of media and direct contact in elections. Did these precious financial and human resources really increase voter turnout as expected? Mass media are the major political information source for many Americans. How did media and direct contact play out in mobilizing voters? This study seeks answers.

CHAPTER 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The cares of political life engross a most prominent place in the occupation of a citizen in the United States; and almost the only pleasure of which an American has any idea, is to take a part in the Government, and to discuss the part he has taken.... This ceaseless agitation which democratic government has introduced into the political world, influences all social intercourse. I am not sure that upon the whole this is not the greatest advantage of democracy...

–Alexis de Tocqueville (1838)

Political participation has been a major part of American life, long considered the heart of democracy. Some people believe the amount of political decision making that citizens take part in reflects the level of democracy. The more people make decisions, the more they enjoy democracy. Verba and Nie (1972) noted that although such a definition of democracy is crude, it may get at the heart of the matter.

Forms of political participation have evolved since the 1920s. Huntington and Nelson (1976) noted that broadening political participation is a hallmark of political modernization. Only the wealthy elite are involved in government and politics in a traditional society; the peasants, traders, and artisans usually were not aware of the political world (Huntington & Nelson, 1976).

Nowadays political issues are more or less saturated in most citizens' lives. Political news stories occupy significant space in print and time in broadcast media. Political figures and issues are often discussed even in entertainment media. Political labels and signs, such as bumper stickers, window stickers, and lawn signs, appear in

many neighborhoods in the United States (especially during an election year). Political participation now exists in the microprocesses of social life (Schudson, 1998). This change occurred due to both widespread mass media messages and expanded political campaigns.

The media have been a major supplier of American citizens' political information, including details about policy making, public opinion, government decisions, and electoral campaigns. Thomas Jefferson, the third president and a founding father of the nation, once said, "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." Politics and mass media are connected, and one cannot be discussed without the other. Denton and Woodward (1985) stated that the mass media are basic to the study of politics.

Exposure to a political message is considered a passive form of political participation. It has long been debated whether media use contributes to voting, a more active type of participation. Elections are considered the basic component of democracy. In elections, citizens get to select their political leaders, and the government's authority is legitimized. Elections restrain elected government officials who need to behave well to win. Elections also provide a peaceful means for resolving conflicts. Conventionally, voter turnout is considered an indicator of how democratic the society is.

One common way of disseminating Western democracy to developing countries is to hold elections to have citizens select their government officials. Both the United Nations and the U.S. government currently are helping Iraq organize local elections. This is considered the first step for the Iraqi people to establish a democratic society. Beyond

the notion that an election is the beginning of democracy, voter turnout is viewed as an important sign for the political future for Iraq. Michael Kozak, acting assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, stated, “Voter turnout in the upcoming Iraqi elections is more important to the political future of the country than it is to the credibility of the electoral process (Shelby, 2005).” Regardless the credibility of the process, the broad participation is crucial for the growth of democracy in Iraq.

Voting is regarded as the strongest indicator for political participation in most studies. Ironically, the United States has one of the lowest voter turnouts of any democratic country. In a 29-country voter turnout comparison study, the United States had the second-lowest turnout rate, with only 51.2% of eligible voters voting in the 2000 presidential election (Wattenberg, 2002). (Indonesia had the highest turnout rate with 92.8% in the 1997 parliamentary election.) Because of the low turnout rate, campaign organizers as well as nonpartisan political organizations, such as labor unions, Christian groups, trade associations, and other advocacy organizations, have launched campaigns to mobilize votes in recent elections. This get-out-the-vote field work has been a major element of recent American presidential campaigns.

This study intends to investigate patterns of mass political participation in the United States. The relationships among campaign field work, media use, and voting behavior will be examined. Tens of millions of dollars are spent in each election cycle (Herrnson, 2004). It is important to understand the effectiveness of campaign field work in generating voter turnout. Although most studies focus on the direct effect of campaign field work and overlook its possible indirect effect through media use on voting behavior,

this study will trace the various aspects of effects of campaign field work on both media use and voting behavior.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

2.1 How Is Political Participation Defined?

Although American political system is rooted in participatory democratic theories (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996), scholars have long disagreed about broad the definition of political participation. Does it refer to behavior only, or does it also include attitudes and perceptions related to participatory behavior?

2.1.1. Early definitions. In early studies, participation was defined as political action taken by citizens. One of the early works of research on political participation focused on the political activity of Americans. Woodward & Roper (1950) developed a participation scale with four measures: support for pressure groups, personal communications with legislators, participation in a political party, and habitual political discussion. About 20 years later, Verba & Nie (1972) included very similar ideas in their definition of political participation: (1) voting, (2) campaign activity, (3) personal contacts with government officials, and (4) group or organizational activity by citizens to deal with social and political problems. Olsen (1980) argued that political participation can be conceptualized as one major dimension composed of several distinct levels of political involvement. He proposed a model that divided political participation into six strata: (1) political leaders, (2) political activists, (3) political communicators, (4) political citizens, (5) political marginals, and (6) political isolates. Olsen's model cast a big net to

capture all “political classes” of participation. His theoretical model differed from Verba and Nie’s four modes of participation in the way that it included a category of leaders operating within the formal political system. In Verba and Nie’s approach, political marginals’ participation or lack thereof was neglected.

McClosky's (1968) definition has been viewed as the classic. He described the specific actions of political participation as “those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and, directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy” (p. 252).

As Burt (2002) noted, early studies focused almost exclusively on electoral behavior and the instrumental dimension of participation. The expressive dimension was completely left out. In instrumental dimension research, the impact of one’s participation on public policy is the focus, whereas the studies on the expressive dimension are concerned with participants’ sense of involvement (Parry, 1972). The instrumental dimension is functional and the expressive dimension is symbolic. The two-dimensional view of political participation provides a broader construct than the narrower focus of the early studies. Most political participation studies conducted in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s were limited to electoral activities and concentrated on the instrumental dimension (Burt, 2002). Thus, some newer versions of the classical definition emerged to encompass the broader scope of political participation. Roberts and Edwards (1991, p.93) provided their definition:

Participation, as used in political contexts, is thus the voluntary activity of an individual in political affairs, including, inter alia, voting; membership of and activity connected with political groups such as interest groups, political

movements and parties; office holding in political institutions; the exercise of political leadership; informal activities such as taking part in political discussions, or attendance at political events such as demonstrations; attempts to persuade the authorities or members of the public to act in particular ways in relation to political goals.

Although this definition is beyond the scope of only electoral activities, it is still in the instrumental dimension. In this definition, the participants' sense of involvement is not evaluated and the capacity to differentiate participants among democratic forces is limited. Citizens in a protective democracy, such as China, may have a weaker sense of involvement than people in a participatory democracy (Burt, 2002). In a protective democracy, the citizenry plays a passive role – representatives speak for their constituents. However, participatory democrats believe that citizens should be more active because government should extend only as far as necessary to protect individuals' rights and a liberal, capitalist, market society. Political participation in a protective democracy should be evaluated differently from the participation in a participatory democracy. Roberts and Edwards' definition also cannot be applied to authoritarian regimes where voting is compulsory. Because the definition limits participation to voluntary activities of an individual, coerced and obligatory forms of participation are excluded (Axford, 2002).

Some scholars provided further detail by naming each possible act of political participation. Birch (1993) listed 11 types of participation:

1. Voting in national elections.
2. Voting in referendums.
3. Canvassing or otherwise campaigning in elections.

4. Active membership in a political party.
5. Active membership in a pressure group.
6. Taking part in political demonstrations, industrial strikes with political objectives, rent strikes in public housing, and similar activities aimed at changing public policy.
7. Various forms of civil disobedience, such as refusing to pay taxes or obey a conscription order.
8. Membership on government advisory committees.
9. Membership on consumers' councils for publicly owned industries.
10. Client involvement in the implementation of social policies.
11. Various forms of community action, such as those concerned with housing or environmental issues of the day.

Although this list is more inclusive than many definitions, it is still not complete. Signing petitions and engaging in Internet political chat sites, for example, are missing.

Rather than suggesting a definition or a list, Conway (1985) explained the meaning of political participation by grouping different acts according to their nature. His grouping of participation included “active versus passive,” “conventional versus unconventional,” and “symbolic versus instrumental” participation (Conway, 1985).

Active participation includes instrumental or goal-oriented involvement, such as voting, campaign activity, and initiating contacts with government officials. *Passive involvement* includes attending supportive activities (such as attending a fundraising party for a political candidate), paying attention to political issues, or simply being aware of a campaign.

Conway's *conventional participation* refers to the actions that are accepted as appropriate by the dominant political culture. Different from Birch's idea, Conway's differentiation between conventional and unconventional participation lies in the acceptance in the dominant political culture rather than in legal boundaries. Birch's *unconventional participation* refers to illegal acts, such as burning the national flag. Conway viewed taking part in political demonstrations and strikes as unconventional because they are not as acceptable as other behavior such voting and campaigning activity (although they may not be illegal).

Conway asserted that participants were *instrumentally* involved (such as in voting or campaign activity) with the goal of obtaining a specific personnel or policy outcome, whereas, with *symbolic participation* (such as saluting the national flag), citizens did not expect to receive any personal reward.

Conway's grouping of kinds of political participation is more systematic and inclusive than many other definitions. These differentiations are helpful in understanding the dynamics of each participatory act and the reasons an individual participates.

2.1.2. Definitions in other countries. Although political participation studies originated in the United States, researchers in other countries argue for changes in the conceptualization of political participation in the context of globalization. Since the classic definition is outdated and too narrow for our contemporary times, they suggest a definition that encompasses the variety of forms of political participation. In its survey of citizens and democracy, the *Swedish Study of Power and Democracy* used a broad definition of participation that includes any attempts to influence society (Micheletti). Actions that concern only one individual are not considered political. In his participation

study in China, Shi (2002), for example, identified 20 participatory acts and grouped them into seven categories: voting, campaign activities, appeals, adversarial activities, cronyism, resistance, and boycotts. This grouping is appropriate for the political system in China, which is very different from the major democracies in the West, including the United States. Norris (2002) concluded:

Not only is the obituary for older forms of political activism premature, but new forms of civic engagement may have emerged in modern societies to supplement traditional modes. Political participation appears to have evolved and diversified over the years, in terms of agencies, the actions used for political expression, and the political actors that participants seek to influence...participation is also explained by the structure of the state, the role of agencies, and social inequalities.
(p. xi)

2.1.3. Definitions in this study. This study adopts a broad definition of political participation, including both active and passive involvement.

Voting. Active participation includes voting, which is viewed as the most widespread and regularized political activity. Voting is particularly important in American politics. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971) defines a U.S. citizen as “a person, native or naturalized, who has the privilege of voting for public offices, and is entitled to protection in the exercise of private rights (p. 442).” Reynolds (1988) noted that “the definition of the vote as a civic function, rather than a partisan one, is one of the unique and cardinal features of the electoral system of the United States (p.173).” Verba and Nie (1972) pointed out that voting might be the single most important act when one

considered the overall impact of citizenry on government performance. Therefore, the other forms of active participation will not be addressed in this study.

Media Use. Media use and direct contacts are the two most important components for voting. Media use is considered a form of participation. According to Conway (1985), media users are getting political information and, thus, being aware of political issues is participatory. In one study on the family culture and political participation, political participation was measured by media exposure, political knowledge, and conversation (Liebes & Ribak, 1992). Liebes and Ribak examined children's political involvements under different family communication patterns. They found that children from families with a high concept – oriented dimension¹ and low socio-oriented dimension² have a higher frequency of television news viewing.

By the end of the 20th century, virtually every country (democratic and otherwise) had seen a shift in the locus of influential political communication from interpersonal communication to the mass media (Bennett & Entman, 2001). More and more voters claim to have new media as their primary source of political information. Media use and voting behavior are strongly intertwined. One cannot discuss one without the other. The relationship between news media use and voting behavior has interested researchers for more than 60 decades. However, results are mixed and there are numerous calls for future research focusing on various types of political media use.

¹ The concept-oriented dimension distinguishes families that encourage the child to think about political and social issues. The highly concept-oriented families believe that it is important to have family discussion, to get across their point of view even when the others do not like it.

² The socio-oriented dimension distinguishes families that encourage the child to value harmony. A highly socio-oriented parent or child thinks that children should not show anger in a group situation, should not challenge their parents or argue with them, and should keep away from trouble.

Direct Contact. Among all forms of political participation, direct contact and media use are the most direct and crucial constituents for voting behavior. Many participatory acts, such as membership in a political party, initiating contact with a government official or signing a petition, usually do not correlate specifically to voting. Direct contact refers to participants getting contacted by campaign activists through postal mail, electronic mail, telephone, and face-to-face contacts. This interpersonal approach has become an important channel for candidates to communicate with voters. The direct contact has increased and tens of millions of dollars have been spent in direct contact per election. This personal channel might cost more for campaign organizers than sending out the messages through mass media.

Most studies have simplified the mechanism of voting behavior. Mass Communication scholars focus merely on media use (mass communication) and political scientists concentrate only on direct contact (interpersonal communication). Based on Liebes and Ribak's (1992) study that children who watched more television news also engaged more in the discussion of television news in the families, this study argues that there should be a strong relationship between mass communication and interpersonal communication in the political context. The relationship between media use and direct contact has not been explored. Thus, this study embraces both media use and direct contact and intends to simultaneously investigate the relationships of the two with voter turnout.

2.2 Theoretical Perspectives

2.2.1 Participation mechanism. To understand the process of political participation, some have focused on the political participation mechanism. In a large-scale survey study, Verba and Nie (1972) examined participation input (how much participation, of what sort, and by whom), the process of politicization, and the consequences of participation. They summarized the components of participation in a diagram. (See Figure 1.)

An individual's decision of whether to participate is related to his or her social circumstance – the set of social characteristics that defines the individual's demographic situation. The decision making-process is also influenced by an individual's political attitude and the institution the person belongs to. Verba and Nie's study provided a great understanding of the mechanism of political participation. However, their data were collected in 1967, a time when campaign persuasion and media use were not as crucial. The mechanism of participation may have changed since then, especially with the rapid growth of the electronic media.

2.2.2 Demographic forces. A wealth of literature suggests political participation is subject to demographic factors, including socioeconomic status (SES), gender, race, and education. Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954) pointed out three major types of political cleavage (wedges that separate high and low political involvements): (1) occupational, income, and status cleavage; (2) religious, racial, and ethnic cleavage, and (3) regional and urban-rural cleavage. This approach assumes that for the majority of the population, political behavior is determined by social identification, associations, and membership (Berelson, Lazarsfeld & McPhee, 1954).

Education. Education is considered the most important component of SES in influencing political participation. (The other components are income and occupation.) (Conway, 1985; Verba & Nie, 1972) Although SES overall has been related to turnout, education has routinely showed the strongest relationships with turnout in the United States (Almond & Verba, 1965; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960 1954; Huntington & Nelson, 1976; Inkeles, 1969; Milbrath, 1965; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). People with more education vote at a higher rate than those with less education. In a six-nation study on working-class men, Inkeles (1969) found that each additional year of education added about 2.5 points to an individual's active participation score (range from 0 to 100) when other variables – factory experience, rural or urban origin, media consumption, and length of urban residence, were held consistent.

In comparison to other demographic variables such as sex, place of residence, occupation, income, age, etc., Almond and Verba (1965) concluded that education seems to be the strongest determinant of political attitudes. Some scholars explained this by asserting that higher-educated citizens are more aware of the consequences of government action on their lives, and thus have higher rates of participation (Verba & Nie, 1972; Huntington & Nelson, 1976; Milbrath, 1977; Conway, 1985). Verba and Nie (1972) presented this simple explanation:



Individuals of high SES develop civic orientation and their civic attitudes lead to participation (Verba & Nie, 1972).

Most research has reinforced the finding that there is a positive relationship between SES and voter turnout. However, Avey (1989) pointed out that the reasoning provided by most research – that the cause of nonvoting is a lack of competence concentrated in certain segments of the population – is disputable. Avey argued that most studies focused on conventional types of participation, especially voting and campaign activity. Few studies examined the relationship between SES and unconventional participatory acts, such as riots, demonstrations, and strikes.

Socioeconomic Status. Among these demographic forces, SES has been examined the most, especially in terms of direction of the vote (Berelson et al., 1954). In terms of voting intention, most studies have found a positive correlation with educational level (Verba & Nie, 1972; Huntington & Nelson, 1976; Gosnell, 1927). An early experimental study of voting showed that many people did not vote because they had never been told how to vote (Gosnell, 1927). Gosnell concluded that this timidity and ignorance had become an important cause of non-voting, especially among middle-aged white women of foreign parentage and young black women who lived in the poorest parts of the city.

These findings may have been valid when Gosnell conducted his research, but they may not be applicable in contemporary society. The mass media have grown dramatically and have played a central role in the conduct of American politics (Graber, 1997). Campaign canvassing has become an important technique for candidates and parties to reach voters (Herrnson, 2004). Modern societies have higher levels of political participation than traditional societies because of differences in SES structure (Huntington & Nelson, 1976).

Other than low levels of capacity to process political information, low turnout among citizens with low SES was explained by the perception of civic orientation, such as perception of government responsiveness and a sense of obligation to participate (Brody, 1978). People with higher SES tend to have a higher sense of civic duty than citizens with lower SES (Conway, 1985).

Gender. Other demographic variables – gender, race, and age – also are associated with political participation. In the 18th and 19th centuries, politics was viewed as a man’s sphere, and it was not until the early 20th century that women in the United States were granted the right to vote. The chasm between the development of men’s and women’s political rights resulted in different patterns of political participation. In recent studies, a “gender gap” has been identified in the political dispositions of women and men in both national and cross-national research (Axford, 2002). These differences include rates of turnout, party identification, political attitudes, and political values (Mueller, 1988).

The number of women becoming involved in political activities and holding elective office has increased dramatically since the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. In terms of political attitudes, early research found that women were more likely than men to vote for right-wing or centrist political parties (Brim, 1955; Duverger, 1955; Wallach & Caron, 1959). Axford (2002) attributed women’s conservative tendencies to their lower trade union membership, stronger religious observance and greater longevity. However, in a recent study, Axford (2002) found the opposite results in the 1990s: in Portugal, Spain, Canada, the United States, Denmark, and Germany, women were more

left wing than men. Shapiro (1959) had earlier also found women to be less conservative than their male counterparts.

A similar gender difference has been shown in voter turnout research. In early research, women were found to be less politically active than men (Almond & Verba, 1965; Conway, 1985), but the trend has reversed recently (Christy, 1987; DeVaus & McAllister, 1989; IDEA, 2003). Norris (2002) stated that the traditional gender gap had become insignificant in many postindustrial societies. Conway (1985) noted that men had a higher voter turnout than women from 1952 to 1984, but after 1984, women's turnout has not been lower than men's (73.6 % of both men and women said they voted in the most recent election). Female turnout exceeded male turnout for the first time in the 1984 election when a woman ran for vice president.

Race. Race is another determinant of political participation. Most research suggests that blacks have a lower participation rate than whites. When comparing turnout rates in the 1964, 1966, 1996, and 1998 elections, blacks' rates were lower than the national average; whites' rates were higher than the average (Wattenberg, 2002).

Differences in education levels among blacks do not show a strong correlation with campaign activity (Verba, Nie, & Kim, 1971). Once SES is held constant, blacks participate at higher rates than whites (Bobo & Gilliam, 1993). Thus, the relationship found between race (specifically blacks and whites) and voter turnout in previous studies may be largely spurious. The failure to take SES into account leads to a questionable interpretation that it is race and not SES that affects voter turnout.

This high black participation rate has been explained with two theories – the compensatory theory and the ethnic community approach. The compensatory theory

suggests that because of their subordinate status and exclusiveness in white society, blacks join political organizations and participate actively in politics to an exaggerated degree to overcome their low visibility in politics in a hostile white society (Babchuk & Thompson, 1962; Myrdal, 1944; Orum, 1966; Stoll, 2001). The ethnic community approach posits that membership in subordinated minority communities leads people to develop strong feelings of group attachment and consciousness. The group norms encourage political action to improve the status of the group (McPherson, 1977; Olsen, 1980; Verba & Nie, 1972).

However, Walton (1985) pointed out that these theories suffer from several methodological limitations. The limitations include studies of only a small number of black participants and indirect measures of central concepts (such as the group consciousness measure) (Olsen, 1980). Also, these theories were designed to explain black political behavior when blacks were suffering from greater exclusion from U.S. society (Bobo & Gilliam, 1993).

In response to changes in the social and political status of blacks, Bobo and Gilliam (1993) proposed the influence of black empowerment on racial differences in participation. Empowerment refers to the extent that a group has achieved significant representation and influence in political decision making (Bobo & Billiam, 1993). As Hamilton (1986) noted, the level of empowerment is positively associated with the degree of political participation. By analyzing the data from the 1987 General Social Survey, Bobo and Gilliam (1993) found that blacks are more politically active than their white counterparts in cities where blacks hold positions of political power. Their results

also showed a positive relationship between levels of empowerment and levels of political knowledge.

Immigrants. The immigrant population has grown rapidly in the United States (Park & Vargas-Ramos, 2002). From 1990 to 2000, the percentage of whites among the U.S. population dropped from 80.3% to 75.1% (Grieco & Cassidy, 2001). Thus, the two major political parties and their candidates have worked hard to reach out to minorities (Park & Vargas-Ramos, 2002). Research on immigrant political participation and minorities other than blacks (especially Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans) has become important in understanding mass voting behavior.

However, in most survey data there are relatively small samples of minority populations, so there is not a lot of systematic and representative research (Park & Vargas-Ramos, 2002). Most minority participation studies have focused on voter turnout exclusively. In the 1996 elections, Asian and Pacific Islanders and Latinos had the lowest turnout rate – 45% and 44.3% respectively – among other racial/ethnic groups (Casper & Bass, 1998). In a 1986 study of voters in California, Nakanishi (1986) found 72% of all Californians were registered voters, but only 43% of Japanese Americans, 35.5% of Chinese Americans, 27% of Filipinos Americans, 16.7% of Asian Indians, 13% of Korean Americans, and 4.1% of Vietnamese were registered.

The proportion of Latin Americans in the United States grew 58% between 1990 and 2000. Latin Americans have become the nation's largest minority, comprising 12.5% of the nation's population, compared with 12.3% for African American (Hamilton, 2002). However, this population growth does not necessary lead to an increase in Latino voter turnout (DeSipio, 1996). Hispanics accounted for only 5.2% of the national voter

turnout in the 1998 elections (Kennedy, 2000). In the 2000 presidential election, only about a quarter of voting-age adults in predominantly Latino neighborhoods voted in the election, compared with 51% of the eligible electorate as a whole (Hamilton, 2002). Michelson, a political science scholar, calls Latino electoral participation rates “dismal” in comparison to the group’s share of the American population (Hamilton, 2002).

The explanations for these low rates of minority participation include the SES model, the ethnic group consciousness model, and political mobilization. In explaining Hispanics’ low voter turnout rate, many of them are young and have lower-than-average incomes and lower-than-average education levels (Hamilton, 2002). However, Park and Vargas-Ramos (2002) pointed out this model’s inadequacy in applying to some minority participation. Some race/ethnic groups – African Americans and Latinos – have lower average income and education than whites, and the SES model seems to explain their low rates of participation. But the model does not work for Asian Americans. Even though Asian Americans have higher incomes and education than their white counterparts, they do not demonstrate higher political participation than whites.

To explain this low participation of Asian Americans, some reasons were suggested: (1) most Asians are immigrants who are too busy earning a living and educating their children to focus on public affairs; (2) in traditional Asian fashion, they also set the welfare of their families as their chief priority, relegating civic duty to a low spot on their agenda; (3) though they may be citizens, many feel that as newcomers they are guests who as a courtesy to their hosts should remain silent; (4) those from countries with despotic regimes, like the Chinese and Vietnamese, either distrust government or are baffled by the democratic process; (5) as recent immigrants they frequently are focused

more on developments in their native lands than on events in America; and (6) they do not regard politics as a reputable career, an attitude that mirrors their remembrance of the corruption and venality that pervades much of public life in Asia. (Karnow, 1992; Park and Vargas-Ramos, 2002).

However, little empirical evidence supports that reasoning. In her study on immigrants' political incorporation, Wong (2001) concluded that activism related to issues in the country of origin may actually act as a catalyst for participation in American politics. The effects of attachment to one's native country on participation need to be examined repeatedly among various ethnic groups. More research should focus on these explanations (Park & Vargas-Ramos, 2002). For example, some scholars stated although most Cuban Americans are busy earning a living and are more 'riveted' by developments in their native land, they exhibit very high levels of political participation.

Age. Age has long been one of the most fundamental predictors of various forms of political participation, such as electoral turnout, party membership, and involvement in organizations (Norris, 2002). In general, political participation tends to rise and fall with age (Axford, 2002). The issue of encouraging young voters comes up every four years. However, every four years, the election data bring disappointment and show that young adults just do not vote. In the United States, the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1972, but election participation among 18 to 24 year olds dropped from 52% in 1972 to 37% in 2000. This drop is larger than the four percent slide among Americans overall (Rosenberg, 2004). In a 2004 youth voter survey, most of the young voters who were not registered to vote claimed that they did not know the candidates and the issues well enough to vote (Rosenberg, 2004).

Some scholars, however, asserted that the differences in participation patterns are the result of generational replacement, rather than a product of life cycle or aging. Miller & Shanks (1996) suggested that people who first came to political consciousness during the turbulent politics of the 1960s tend to demonstrate a lower rate of political participation than their parents. Putnam (2000) also provided evidence showing lower civic engagement among the postwar generation. Similar findings were found in Western European nations from the 1960s to the early 1990s (Norris, 2002). In a cross-national study, Topf (1995) confirmed that younger citizens in the 16 European countries had lower voter turnout than the older citizens in those countries. Yet, it is not clear whether this difference resulted from a generational or a life-cycle effect (Norris, 2002). In other cross-national research, International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) reported a consistent pattern in some European countries: People under 30 years old have the lowest electoral participation and late middle-aged citizens have the highest voter turnout.

The conclusion of young adults' apathy toward politics might be too presumptuous if voter turnout rate is the only indicator. A poll of 1,202 college students conducted for Harvard's Institute of Politics in 2003 revealed that more than half of the respondents said they've volunteered for community service within the past year.

2.2.3 Psychological perspectives. Competence theory postulates that a high level of personal control promotes political involvement. Personal control refers to an aspect of attitudes that an individual's belief of whether his effort results in an outcome (Carmines, 1980). Smith (1974) noted that people who feel effective are more likely to participate in ways that actually make them effective. In some studies of college students,

the results showed that respondents with a higher level of personal control were more politically involved than those with a lower level of personal control (Blanchard & Scarboro, 1973; Gore & Rotter, 1963; Rosen & Salling, 1971; Strickland, 1965).

However, some research has found the opposite relationship between personal control and political involvement (Ransford, 1968; Silvern & Nakamura, 1971).

According to Maslow (1954), human behavior is motivated by the attempt to fulfill basic needs, such as love, self-esteem, safety, etc. Need theory predicts that in the context of political behavior, personal control is a personality trait that corresponds to the need for safety (Renshon, 1974). People with a high level of personal control tend to be satisfied, and thus would not be compelled to act (and more specifically, to vote) to gain control over some aspects of their surroundings (Carmines, 1980).

In response to the conflict between these two theories, Carmines (1980) claimed that “they are too noncomparable and more importantly, too methodologically flawed to lead to any definitive conclusion about their relative appropriateness.” Carmines’ findings from a study of adolescents support a version of competence theory in which personal control selectively influences political involvement. Moderately strong, positive correlations were found between personal control and involvement among those who perceived politics as salient.

This showed that personal control is only one of the forces that drive political involvement, so studies should also incorporate other factors, such as participants’ political interests, attitudes toward various political issues, and personality, to examine the psychological motivation for political participation (Conway, 1985). Knutson (1972) showed that individuals with unmet physiological needs (such as food, clothing, and

shelter), satisfaction with their family's financial status during childhood, and satisfaction with their employment or career demonstrated a much lower level of political participation than others who did not have unmet physiological needs.

Previous studies concerning personal control and political involvement also have tended to focus on only one type of participation. It is not surprising, then, that the findings are conflicting, because participants may have different control needs between conventional and unconventional participation. Note that most of these studies used adolescents and college students as their samples and have low external validity in terms of generalizing to the large population.

2.2.4 Rational choice theory. Rather than viewing voting behavior from a subconscious psychological perspective, some economists and political scientists believe that humans are purposive and goal-oriented and make rational decisions about their behavior (Turner, 1991). Rational choice theory postulates that action is fundamentally rational and that people calculate the likely costs and benefits of any action before deciding what to do (Scott, 2001).

Rational choice theory predicts that voters rationally calculate the costs and benefits of going to vote. Consider a cost-benefit comparison of voting and not voting made by individual A. The outcome of an election may make a significant difference for individual A. Assume R represents the differential benefits of election results that are favorable to A. However, the election outcome is most likely to occur regardless of whether A votes or not. The only time it would make a difference is when the election is decided by one vote. Let P be the probability of all other voters besides A being equally divided. P is likely to be a very small number. The expected benefit to A of voting is

then the product of the benefit of a favorable result times the probability of the vote being tied without A's vote. On the cost side, there is the time and trouble of going to the polls. Additionally in many elections there is the cost of becoming informed about the issues or candidates. Let us assume that the total cost of voting is C . Economic rationality then dictates that individual A votes if and only if $RP > C$ (Blais & Young, 1999).

Although rational choice theory has been applied in many voting studies, critics contend that the theory is detached from reality. Some scholars pointed out that people generally do not make cost-benefit comparisons for their voting choices (Kanji & Archer, 2002). Instead, people's choices are dictated by their culture, just like how they decide what to eat and how to dress. Also, rational choice theory views the consumption of media as a cost for voters (part of C in the formula above). This may be problematic because audiences may perceive the process of getting information from media as a "gain" rather than a "cost."

This may be especially true regarding entertainment media. Campaign information appears more and more in the entertainment media in addition to traditional news media. For example, campaign advertisements can be seen in many public domains, such as community bulletin boards, signs on the streets, and buses. Increasingly, campaign information also appears in the entertainment media, such as talk shows, magazines, and the Internet. Audience members are exposed to information about parties and candidates without any intention or effort dedicated to obtaining political information.

2.3 Significance Of This Study

According to Verba and Nie's (1972) model, the mechanism of political participation consists of multiple elements and processes (See Figure 1). However, most studies have focused solely on one aspect at a time. Thus the interplay among those factors was not revealed and the results might be spurious. The mechanism of political participation cannot be fully explored without considering the interplay of various potential factors. This study includes respondents' social circumstances (demographics), institutions (media use and direct contact), and decision making (voting intention) to capture voting behavior.

CHAPTER 3

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION

3.1 How Does Mass Media Use Relate To Political Participation?

3.1.1 Historical origin. Most political participation research in mass communications focuses exclusively on voting behavior. Paul F. Lazarsfeld of Columbia University was often credited for bringing voting behavior into communication research. His most well-known inquiry, the 1940 Erie County Study, was the first quantitative study of voting behavior (Rogers, 2004). In Lazarsfeld's study, the main dependent variable was voting, as voting was considered the most important indicator of political action (Chaffee & Hockheimer, 1985). The independent variables included media use – exposure to newspapers, news magazines, and radio – socioeconomic status, and political party identification.

Surprisingly, Lazarsfeld and his colleagues did not find significant effects of media use on voting behavior (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1944). Ninety one percent of the 600 voters they interviewed had made up their minds about whom to vote for before the electoral campaign began. Here the electoral campaign was measured by media exposure. Political party identification appeared to be the most effective predictor for voting behavior. This research concluded that campaign appeals were less likely to convert voters than to activate, crystallize, or reinforce choices already made on the basis of partisan loyalty and SES (Nimmo & Sanders, 1981). Lazarsfeld thus asserted that

media have a minimal effect on voting behavior. This “limited effect model” has been carried into later research.

The combination of interpersonal communication and media also was first introduced in the political decision research at Columbia University (Rogers, 2004). Despite the fact that more respondents claimed newspapers and radio were helpful sources for their voting decision making than those who reported to be influenced by personal sources, Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944) concluded that people, more than anything else, can persuade other people. The authors described opinion leaders as having a high level of media exposure that they passed on to others (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1944). Lazarsfeld’s 1940 study came to be cited as the basis for the two-step flow model of personal influence mediating between voters and the public affairs arena (Chaffee & Hockheimer, 1985).

Although the impact of this early research remains pervasive, Rogers (2004) noted that communication scholars may have overemphasized the minimal effects of mass media. Intellectual leadership in U.S. election research shifted to the University of Michigan in the 1950s. Many assumptions, conclusions, and interpretations of the Columbia studies were maintained in this second-generation research. From the 1940s to the early 1970s, media use variables were generally limited in the Michigan questionnaires to one item per medium (radio, newspapers, magazine, and television). Following from the Columbia tradition, party identification was considered a stronger predictor of voting than media use.

However, later research called into question this minimal-effects conclusion (Rogers, 2004). The American political environment changed over the years in terms of

media use and campaign strategy. Much evidence suggested that voters have become better informed and more issue-oriented over the decades (Nie, Verba, & Petrocik, 1976). Nie, Verba and Petrocik (1976) noted that people in the United States today are less likely to say they belong to a party, and this measure is now a weaker predictor than it was a few decades ago. Campaigns are conducted today not by political parties so much as professional campaign consultants (Rogers, 2004). In terms of media, television, which has become an important campaign information source for voters, was not widely introduced until the early 1950s (Vivian, 1991), so television was not even considered when Lazarsfeld's research was conducted. In 2001, 56% of the American public responded in surveys that television was their main source of political news, while 24% responded newspapers and 14% said radio (Graber, 2001).

Throughout the 1960s, some scholars suggested that the limited-effects image was oversimplified and misleading under many circumstances (Carter, 1962; Klapper, 1960). Because of this dispute over the limited effects model, after the 1972 election campaign, the advent of a number of new political communication studies brought the field to a new generation (Chaffee & Hockheimer, 1985). These studies, including the Michigan electoral series, began to add measures related to mass communication (Miller, Miller & Kline, 1974). One significant aspect of this new wave of political communication research is the challenge to the statement that audiences understand a political message based on their partisan attitudes (Swanson & Delancey, 1980). The traditional limited media effect model did not pay much attention to how respondents process and interpret the information.

With doubts raised regarding whether the political communication process is pre-determined by partisan attitude, the third generation of political communication research yielded a more complicated interpretation of the relationship between political communication and voting behavior. These studies asked: (1) How do voters use campaign communication (the uses and gratifications approach), (2) How does information diffuse throughout a campaign (the diffusion of information approach), (3) what is the agenda-setting role of the news media, and (4) how do people construct their political views (a constructivist approach) (Nimmo & Sanders, 1981; Swanson & Delancey, 1980).

3.1.2 The theory of uses and gratifications. The uses and gratifications model originated in the 1940s and first was used in the study of entertainment media content – quiz programs, classical music, soap operas, and comics (Nimmo & Sanders, 1981). The theory views people's media consumption patterns as intended action on the part of the media consumers. This psychological approach shifts from the mechanistic perspective's interest in direct effects of media on receivers to assessing how people use the media (Fisher, 1978). The focus is on an individual's choice and use (Rubin, 1994). Media content consumption is regarded as active rather than passive behavior on the part of receivers who seek gratifications.

The first application of the uses and gratifications model on public affairs was conducted by Blumler and McQuail (1969) in Britain. They identified eight different motivations – vote guidance seeking, reinforcement of decisions already made, surveillance of the political environment, excitement, anticipated utility in future interpersonal communication situations, alienation, partisanship, and relaxation – for use

or nonuse of political content of the media. The results showed the strength of motivation played different roles in mediating the impact of political communication.

Blumler and McQuail's study was extensively followed in the United States (Chaffee, Ward & Tipton, 1970; Hawkins, Pingree, Smith & Bechtolt, 1979 ; McLeod & Becker, 1974; Mendelsohn & O'Keefe, 1976). Rather than focusing on the motives and effects, Mendelsohn & O'Keefe (1976) investigated an audience's evaluation of the ability of the media to satisfy political needs. They found that newspapers were more able to satisfy cognitive or informational motives than television. In a study of Israeli high school students, Adoni (1979) found that respondents saw clear distinctions among the various media. Newspapers, television, and radio were evaluated as useful for the development of civic attitudes toward the political system and books were helpful in developing national orientations.

Another type of uses and gratifications research focused on the linkages between motives and media use. Certain types of motives are correlated with certain media content. For example, Becker (1976) found that surveillance was the best positive predictor for exposure to the televised 1973 Senate Watergate Hearings and a motive for relaxation was the best negative predictor. Other researchers found the most important determinant of presidential debate viewing in 1972 was person's customary use of public affairs content in television and newspapers (McLeod, Durall, Ziemke & Bybee, 1979).

Although most uses and gratifications studies showed strong evidence of media use, some scholars called for attention to some problematic methodological issues and presumptions. Some studies employed self-reporting of the audience to measure motives, and others made inferences about audience motives by measuring some separate, albeit

related, variables (Becker, 1979). These strategies assume the researcher fully understands the relationship between positive motivations and negative forces. A different perception of what is political may exist between researchers and respondents. For example, Becker and McLeod (1981) suggested that communication researchers usually consider unemployment a political issue, while most respondents may consider it a family economics matter.

In a 1972 campaign study, Mendelsohn and O'Keefe (1975) analyzed survey data collected in Ohio and investigated the relationship between media and voting decisions. Voters who decided early in the campaign were found to limit their media exposure to search out the materials that would support or justify their decisions (Mendelsohn & O'Keefe, 1976). For undecided voters (about 14% of the respondents), a wide range of available sources from the media were used and voters hoped to arrive at their decision with the help of the sources.

Few uses and gratifications researchers have focused on various types of political acts as motives for media use. Voting behavior seems to be the sole political act included. Since voting is not the only indicator of the degree of citizens' political involvement, more research should focus on various types of political participation, including conventional and unconventional acts. The relationship between media uses and various types of campaign information seeking, such as candidates' personality, campaign issues, and policy, also should be investigated. Voters' motives for political media use can be understood better by examining various political involvements in addition to voting. This study incorporates five types of direct contact – face-to face, telephone, electronic, direct

mail, and request for financial support – to examine whether voters seek political information from mass media to gratify their political needs.

3.1.3 The diffusion of innovations. While uses and gratifications research focuses on an audience's motives for media use, the diffusion of innovations approach describes how information is diffused and how receivers arrive at their voting decisions based on the information gathered. The origin of diffusion of innovations was agricultural research, in which researchers studied how innovative farm technology was diffused among farm workers. In the 1960s, communication researchers adopted this approach to study news diffusion (Roberts & Edwards, 1991).

In the political domain, Savage (1981) defined diffusion as “the adoption of a communicable element, symbolic or artifactual, over time by decision-making entities linked to some originating sources by channels of communication within some sociocultural system.” There are two types of political diffusion research: (1) attention arousal and information-seeking effects, and (2) decision stages, such as voting (Savage, 1981). The first type of research includes diffusion of rumors (Shibutani, 1966), news events and campaign messages (Atkin, 1972; Funkhouser & McCombs, 1971; Tichenor, Donohue & Olien, 1970). The other type is directed to the decision stage, including the diffusion of policies (Becker, 1970; Bingham, 1976; Eyestone, 1977; McVoy, 1940), technology (Frantzich, 1979), and violence (Most & Starr, 1980). In his 1972 presidential election study, Zukin (1976) found high correlations between some voters' attributes and their decisions to vote for the challenger – George McGovern. These attributes include (1) compatibility – how much respondents like McGovern, (2) observability – voters' evaluation of the performance of the incumbent (Nixon) as

President, and (3) relative advantage – respondents’ reasons for support of or opposition to McGovern and Nixon. The voters who supported the challenger were considered “innovative” (Zukin, 1976).

Thio (1971) pointed out the gap in studies of adopter-innovation compatibility between the approach to adopter and that to the observer. Most political diffusion studies concentrated on the “client-focused traditions.” The model emphasized communication receivers, and the “demand” side of diffusion has led to overlooking the “supply” side (Savage, 1981). The supply side is the role and structure of diffusion agencies. Savage (1981) noted that no political diffusion studies currently exist that deal explicitly with “supply” considerations.

Another criticism of diffusion research targets its association with a particular research tradition – the focus on the acceptance of new farm practices and technologies. The diffusion researchers have often held an implicit belief that the innovations or new ideas they study impact individual and collective welfare (Savage, 1981). They hold that these innovations are beneficial and that the purpose of diffusion research is to promote their acceptance (Almond & Verba, 1965). Thus, the potential resistant adopters are considered “less-innovative” (Savage, 1981). However, Weeks (1970) argues that some acceptance of change might entail risk. Although some evidence has shown the risk of diffusion, most scholars simply ignore the consequences and perceive the risk as a barrier to innovation (Savage, 1981).

3.1.4 Agenda-setting theory. McCombs and Shaw first introduced the idea of agenda-setting communication research to suggest that media set the political agenda for the public. The theory postulates the salience of an issue or other topic in the mass media

influences its salience among the audience (McCombs, 1981). With content analysis and survey data, they found that newspapers were the prime movers in defining the agenda of issues for Charlotte, North Carolina, voters during the 1972 presidential campaign (Shaw & McCombs, 1977). Shaw and McCombs (1977) also examined a number of contingent conditions that might enhance the news media's agenda-setting influence. They found those conditions – the psychological concept of the need for orientation, comparative roles of newspapers and television, and the fit of interpersonal communication in the mass communication process – reconfirmed the original hypothesis that media agenda influence the public's perception of important issues (McCombs & Bell, 1996).

Evidence also has shown the influence of media agenda-setting on political behavior (McCombs & Shaw, 1974; Weaver, McCombs & Shaw, 2004). In a study of the 1990 election for governor of Texas, Roberts (1992) found a strong relationship between issue salience and actual votes. While holding demographics and media use variables constant, the reported votes for governor were correctly predicted 79% of the time by the level of issue concern over time. When one political issue had high level of salience and received more public attention, the candidate who addressed the issue in favor of the public received more votes than other candidates. Weaver (1991) similarly found that public concern about a major issue was linked with actual behavior, such as writing a letter, attending a meeting, voting, or signing a petition.

After reviewing media agenda-setting research findings from the previous quarter century, Weaver (1994) argued that non-traditional media (or new media) contribute to voter involvement. The conventional wisdom contended that voter alienation resulted from the campaign agenda set by politicians, rather than by voters. The 1992 election

study provided evidence of new media's positive influence on political interests. The non-traditional media refers to televised talk shows, television tabloid programs, toll-free telephone numbers, computer bulletin boards, MTV news, and electronic town meetings. With the help of these new media, voters are allowed to question candidates directly and to hear candidates' detailed responses largely unfiltered by journalists and professional spokespeople (Weaver, 1994). This ability to set one's own agenda apparently increases political interest and voter involvement.

Most agenda-setting studies employed quantitative content analysis and assumed that the more frequent a topic was mentioned in the media, the more salient the issue would be to the media users. McCombs (1981) noted that while it is appropriate in the early stage for exploratory purposes, future research should focus on the examination of the nature of the cues used by the audience to establish the salience of a topic. Moreover, although the agenda-setting function predicts both attitudes and behavior, the process of the influence is not clear. The ways respondents receive and construct the media agenda to develop attitudes and behaviors is still not fully addressed in the agenda-setting literature.

3.1.5 The constructivist approach. The constructivist approach provides a way to investigate the diverse array of communication contexts, processes, competencies, and effects. Swanson (1980) stated, "Understanding how citizens interpret or create the meaning of political messages has been and continues to be a major theoretical and empirical problem in political communication research." In the political domain, a constructivist approach postulates a series of relations among behavior, beliefs, and interpretation of a political message. Behavior, such as voting, is viewed as a meaningful

result of an individual's belief. Belief is derived from the process of an individual interpreting a political message (Swanson & Delancey, 1980). Different from the traditional effects model, in constructivist analysis, the influence of attitudes on an individual's beliefs depends on the complexity of a person's system for construing political actors and events (O'Keefe, 1980).

Politically complex perceivers have highly differentiated subsystems incorporating relatively large numbers of constructs. For example, complex perceivers place candidates on a larger number of dimensions than noncomplex perceivers do. Noncomplex perceivers' beliefs about political figures are strongly connected to their attitudes about those figures, while complex perceivers' beliefs are not reflective of their attitudes (Swanson & Delancey, 1980). The constructivist approach views the beliefs as implemented in behavior. Thus, noncomplex perceivers relate attitude more closely to political behavior than complex perceivers do.

Pomper (1975) coined the phrase "responsive voter." The voter, although holding some partisan attitude, is constantly assessing and responding to election issues. The consequence of this responsiveness is related to behavior.

The constructivist approach provides an alternative to explaining political behavior through the process of interpreting messages, constructing beliefs and attitudes. It may offer useful ways of examining directly the content of political beliefs which lead to behavior (Swanson, 1981). However, constructivist research in the political domain to date has been essentially exploratory and descriptive.

3.1.6 New media. Since the 1990s, the importance of Internet use in political participation has increased (UPI, 2000). The Web started to play an influential role with

the 1996 election. Although research directly addressing Internet use in political communication is still in its infancy (Kaid, 2003), researchers started to pay more attention to the Internet the during 1996 and 2000 elections.

The striking difference of Internet use versus traditional media use lies in the interactivity of the Internet. Since this interactivity is expected to stimulate information-seeking by the users (Curbirth & Coombs, 1997; Jacques & Ratzan, 1997), some studies have compared the learning functions of Internet use and traditional media use.

McKinney and Gaddie (2000) found that the Internet was a superior channel to traditional television in terms of issue learning from the presidential debates. However, Eveland and Dunwoody (2001) did not find any advantage for Web materials over traditional print materials for learning.

A few studies directly addressed the impact of Internet use on political participation. Although one study claimed that access to the Internet had no impact on voter participation (Bimber, 2001), most studies found positive effects of Internet use on voting behavior. In an experimental study, Kaid (2003) investigated the impact of different communication channels – Internet and television – and formats – advertising, debate, and news messages – on political participation. The study showed that Internet use and the debate format were both significantly related to voting intention (Kaid, 2003). Similarly, in a survey, Tolbert and McNeal (2003) showed that respondents with access to the Internet and online election news were significantly more likely to report voting in the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections. Weber and Bergman (2001) found that those who engaged in Internet activities were more likely to be engaged in a variety of political

activities. However, Weber and Bergman's survey has been criticized for its non-random sample.

3.1.7 Other political media research. After the second generation of Michigan research, most studies found significant media effects on political participation (Barbic, 1976; Freedman & Goldstein, 1999; Gans, 1993; Scheufele, Shanahan & Kim, 2002; Valentino, Beckmann & Buhr, 2001; Yanovitzky, 2002), but researchers disagree on the findings in the third generation of political communication research (Boiney & Paletz, 1991; Finkel & Geer, 1998; Mastin, 2000). In a study of the African-American population, Mastin (2000) found that local news media do not serve the civic information needs of African Americans. Church involvement and interpersonal networks, instead, are better predictors for their civic participation.

Similarly, employing content analysis on political advertisements and survey data from the National Election Studies, Finkel and Geer (1998) found that attack advertising does not influence either overall turnout rates or individual self-reported votes. Also, no demobilizing effect for negative advertisements was found among Independent voters. However, the study assumed that all respondents watched the advertisements and that the interaction with other media content, such as debates, campaign news coverage, and talk shows, was ignored. As some have pointed out, individuals' memory of past events is notoriously frail. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) noted that surveys are ill-equipped to detect the effects of campaign advertising, and suggested that controlled experimental designs are a better approach for studying campaign advertising.

Other researchers have argued for the differentiation of various media and claimed that only certain forms of media have an impact on political behavior (Cheung,

Chan & Leung, 2000; Hayes & Makkai, 1996; Kaid, 2003; Scheufele, 2002; Simon, 1996). Some studies found a superior newspaper effect on voter turnout over other media, such as television and radio (Latimer & Cotter, 1985; Simon, 1996; Simon & Merrill, 1993). Simone (1996) did not find any link between voting and alternative media use (such as MTV and talk shows) in an analysis of the National Election Studies data, including the use of television, radio and magazines. Similar patterns also have been found internationally. With telephone interviews of 2,476 Hong Kong Chinese respondents, Cheung, Chan and Leung (2000) found that people with high exposure to election coverage in newspapers appeared to be more likely to vote than those with exposure in other mass media. The authors claimed, "This finding dispels the worry that mass media only trivialize issues and thus discourage the audience's voting." (p.204) These findings about newspaper effects are consistent with Weaver and Drew's (1995) findings that newspaper coverage is more likely to stimulate political thinking than other media.

Rather than examining the effects among various media, (Scheufele, 2002) investigated the different effects of hard and soft news user with the incorporation of interpersonal communication. Scheufele found that the impact of hard news use (including newspaper and television hard news) on political participation was moderated by a person's interpersonal discussion about politics. This relationship was stronger for people with high levels of discussion than for people with low levels of discussion. Scheufele (2002, p.58) explained, "People who are frequent hard news users are significantly more likely to engage in various forms of political action if they talk these issues through with others than are frequent news users who talk to others less often."

Although most recent studies have found media effects on political participation (and particularly on voting behavior), there is debate about different outcomes of various media. Print and electronic media are different in their presentation nature, and thus their effects have been expected to be different. However, there is no agreement among scholars about the different effects of various media channels. Moreover, various forms of media content might have different effects on political participation. Political news, advertising, and entertainment media should not be mingled in the analyses.

This analysis was planned to investigate the impact of media use on voting over time. Most election studies have been conducted a few weeks before or right after election day. This study presumes that around election day, media consumption is higher than at other times, regardless of citizens' typical levels of political interest. Thus, regular and sporadic media users are treated the same way. The data analyzed in this study were collected at three different time periods – four months before, two months before, and immediately after the election. These panel data allow for the differentiation of regular media users and those who have media exposure only around election day. This study also strives to capture direct contact that is channeled not through mass media, but through field work.

3.2 Does Direct Contact Increase Participation?

It has been argued that a successful political campaign needs mass media inputs (O'Keefe, 1975), and thus most campaign studies concentrate on mass media research. However, forms of political participation derived from campaign activities (and not

directly associated with media), such as contributions of time and money to a political campaign, display of campaign buttons and posters, and other political actions, also are important (Chaffee & Hockheimer, 1985). Evidence has shown that direct contacts have been successful in mobilizing voters (Caldeira, Clausen & Patterson, 1990; Gosnell, 1927; Milbrath, 1965; Zipp, Laudeman & Leubke, 1983). Herrnson (1992) also stated the importance of field work in election campaigns based on the fact that political parties have spent tens of millions of dollars per election cycle on coordinated campaigns. Avey (1989) explained, “Because they are heard and because the canvasser is able to tailor the appeal, people who are contacted are likely to feel that their vote makes a difference.”

There are numerous ways to conduct campaign field work: personal contact (door-to-door canvassing, also called shoe leather politics), direct mail, leaflets, phone banks, and electronic mail. By analyzing the data from the 1952-1990 American National Election Studies (NES), Wielhouwer and Lockerbie (1994) found that while the two parties have not been uniformly effective in direct contact (with Democrats being consistently more effective during the last 30 years of the period), the sum of their efforts has been consistently effective. They concluded that the two parties not only increased voter turnout by personal contact, but also mobilized citizens in the process of politics (Wielhouwer & Lockerbie, 1994). However, in the NES study, the respondents were asked “...did anyone from one of the political parties call you up or come around and talk to you about the campaign this year?” This question is double-barreled and the difference between personal contact and telephone canvassing could not be discerned.

3.2.1 Personal contact. Personal contact is one of the most examined canvassing modes because it has been a traditional mobilization technique for political parties in the

United States for many years. As Green and Gerber (2004) put it, “Door-to-door canvassing was once the bread and butter of party mobilization, particularly in urban areas.” Most research confirmed the significant effectiveness of personal contact on voter turnout, in both competitive and uncompetitive electoral settings (Gerber & Green, 2000; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1992; Krassa, 1988). After reviewing a dozen personal contact canvassing experiments conducted after 1998, Green and Gerber (2004) estimated that one additional vote is produced for every 14 people who are successfully contacted by canvassers. Personal contact from both the political party and non-partisan organizations are effective in mobilizing voters (Cassel & Hill, 1981; Chambers & Davis, 1978). Although political parties usually concentrate on contacting high-SES voters, low SES voters are more likely to respond to political organizing (Zipp et al., 1983).

Most personal contact studies claimed a turnout effect, but no preference effect (Eldersveld, 1956; Gerber & Green, 2000; Kramer, 1970; Miller, Bositis & Baer, 1981). From survey data collected in the 1952, 1956, 1960, and 1964 elections, Kramer (1970) found that precinct-level canvassing was effective in increasing turnout, but not effective in influencing voter preference for presidential, congressional, or local-office candidates.

Although the positive impact of personal contact on voter turnout is agreed upon by most scholars, the preference effect is still being debated. In conflict with the majority of previous literature, Blydenburgh (1971) found significant preference effects and argued that previous preference-effect studies had examined only the elections that were covered extensively by the mass media. In those elections, he argued, personal contact is just an additional bit of conflicting (or complementing) information. Blydenburgh studied the Monroe County legislative election that was largely ignored by the mass

media. Thus, personal contact was the only information on which many voters could make decisions.

Rather than arguing for whether there is an effect of personal contact, some researchers have provided more insight into the mechanism of the effect. In a field experiment during the 1980 presidential primary election, Miller, Bositis and Baer (1981) claimed that the effectiveness of attempts to stimulate voter turnout is age-related. Specifically, older voters, aged 60 and greater, are less likely to be influenced by personal contact than younger voters. The timing of the appeal also appeared to be a factor that interacted with age in generating voter turnout (Miller et al., 1981). For voters aged 21 to 30, appeals made close to election day were most effective. An earlier personal contact effect was more effective for the mature voters, aged 30 to 59.

Despite these slightly mixed results, personal contact is still savored by political parties and some organizations because of its relatively low cost. Green and Gerber (2004) stated that door-to-door canvassing is the tactic of choice among candidates and campaigns that are short on cash. They described this mobilization technique as “the secret weapon of underdogs.”

3.2.2 Direct mail. Direct mail is another mobilization technique frequently used by candidates and campaign organizers. Although the administrative burdens of direct mail are minimal, the cost of preparation, printing, and postage can be considerable (Green & Gerber, 2004). Considering all levels of political campaigns from school board to presidential elections, more money is spent in direct mail than television (Denton & Woodward, 1998). In contrast to door-to-door canvassing, direct mail appears to be effective in generating specific segments of votes, rather than increasing overall turnout.

The first direct mail study can be traced back to 1927. Gosnell's (1927) experimental study concluded that turnout increased one percent in the presidential election of 1924 and nine percent in the municipal election of 1925. However, this significant effect has not been confirmed by more recent research. Green and Gerber (2004) explained that "One could well imagine that Chicagoans of the 1920s, who received mail only occasionally, might read Gosnell's missives with a level of curiosity that would be rare nowadays."

In an experimental propaganda study conducted in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Eldersveld, 1956), both direct mail and personal contact were employed in different groups of participants. The results showed that the effect of personal contact was significantly greater than that of direct mail on voter turnout in elections of both 1953 and 1954 (Eldersveld, 1956; Eldersveld & Dodge, 1954). Although direct mail has a relatively small effect on overall voter turnout, some studies revealed that nonpartisan direct mail increases turnout by a rate of one additional voter for every 200 recipients, which is greater than two other categories of direct mail – partisan mail and issue advocacy mail (Green & Gerber, 2004).

According to Armstrong (1988), direct mail has utterly revolutionized American politics because it drastically changed the nature of lobbying and the communication between politicians and voters. The 1972 presidential election demonstrated the power of direct mail (Blumenthal, 1982). Out of frustration of getting no endorsements from organized groups, wealthy supporters, and party regulars, McGovern successfully generated funds from individual citizens with direct mail (Denton & Woodward, 1998). Some also argued that Republicans and conservatives have to employ direct mail to

bypass the “liberal mass media” (Blumenthal, 1982). Direct mail is able to arouse attention and stimulate desire through personalized correspondence (Denton & Woodward, 1998).

In a study on motivating voting among young adults (Burgess, Haney, Snyder & Transue, 2000; Sullivan & Transue, 2000), participants were asked to sign and self-address pledge cards, and the cards were sent back to them two weeks prior to election day. One of the two groups of voters also completed the sentence: “I will vote because _____.” Receiving a pledge card with the sentence prompt had a positive influence on voting above and beyond demographic and psychological predictors of voting. Burgess et al. (2000) stated that the positive effect of canvassing on encouraging a behavior may be enhanced if individuals are simply asked to generate meaningful reasons for that behavior. This finding is provocative: A minimal mobilization effort could result in a stronger motivating effect on voting than more traditional and more expensive techniques.

3.2.3 Telephone canvassing. Phone banks are another vote mobilization technique. The effectiveness of telephone canvassing varies. Green and Gerber (2004) concluded that prerecorded messages are ineffective, while phone banks staffed by enthusiastic volunteers typically are effective in increasing turnout.

The relaxed style of most volunteer phone banks is more successful than robo calls (prerecorded messages) in increasing votes. A few weeks before the 2000 elections, the Youth Vote coalition of nonpartisan organizations employed volunteer phone banks in four cities, and two of the four sites showed a large effect on voting (Green & Gerber, 2004). In a field experiment conducted in the District of Columbia, it was found that

one-third of the people who were contacted by phone voted in the 1979 elections while only about one-fourth of the participants in the control group that did not get a phone call voted (Adams & Smith, 1980). Green and Gerber (2004) concluded that one additional voter is produced for every 35 contacts, in general.

However, in a comparison study, (Gerber & Green, 2000) employed three mobilization techniques – telephone calls, direct mail, and personal contact – to investigate the different effects on voter turnout. Interestingly, despite their effort to ensure that the callers delivered messages in an engaging, conversational style, the telephone appeals were the least effective among all three. Consistent with previous literature, face-to-face canvassing had a stronger effect than direct mail in generating votes. Miller, Bositis and Baer (1981) conducted a field experiment study using all three channels of communication simultaneously – telephone calls, direct mail, and face-to-face canvassing. Surprisingly, the multiple-contact appeals did not surpass those of a single contact. The authors suggested that multiple contacts might have a “nagging” effect and actually depress turnout (Miller et al., 1981).

3.2.4 Leaflet canvassing. Leaflet canvassing receives less attention in scholarly work than other communication channels. In this technique, a card or a door hanger delivered to households is used to communicate with voters. Friedrichs (2003) conducted an experimental study in the 2002 general elections by using door hangers that conveyed a partisan message, listed the polling place, and encouraged voter turnout. Another leaflets study was conducted in the 1998 campaign; postcards were delivered to the participating households (Gerber & Green, 2000). The postcards were nonpartisan and emphasized civic duty to encourage votes. In both studies, for every 66 registered voters

whose doors received leaflets, one additional vote was produced (Green & Gerber, 2004). Green and Gerber noted that leaflets are generally cheaper than canvassers, but this technique is cost-effective only when vast numbers of voters do not receive contact from a face-to-face campaign. Face-to-face canvassing is the most effective technique.

3.2.5 Electronic mail. The advent of the Internet opens a new communication channel for campaigns and voters. The percentage of the U.S. population using the Internet grew from 46% in 2000 to 63% in 2004 (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2005). The nature of electronic mail allows a large number of direct contacts at a low cost. The “forward” function available to users also increases the potential number of voters reached (Green & Gerber, 2004). However, Green and Gerber (2004) noted that most users are overrun with unsolicited e-mail communication (known as spam), and most e-mail servers are equipped with a filter to reject or reroute spam. Also, because of the widespread computer viruses from unknown senders, many recipients do not even open the e-mails from the senders they do not recognize. Even if the campaign e-mail gets to voters’ mailboxes, the chance that the e-mail gets to be read is slight.

In the 2002 elections, a nonpartisan organization, Votes For Students (led by the University of Minnesota), conducted an experiment to test the effect of e-mail canvassing on voter turnout. Sixteen universities were chosen and e-mails were sent out to students to encourage voting. As expected, many e-mails went unopened, and only 26% of the recipients opened at least one of the campaign e-mails (Green & Gerber, 2004).

Thus, for these early studies, e-mail appears to have a negligible effect on voter turnout. However, this finding is more suggestive than reliable. Empirical research on questions about the impact of electronic mail on voting behavior is still scarce. The

procedures need to be repeated with all ages of adults, and partisan e-mails should be tested to see if they affect turnout. Personalized e-mails, rather than mass e-mails (or spam), also should be considered in voter turnout (Green & Gerber, 2004).

3.3 Direct Contact and Media Use

Because of its ability to tailor personal messages to individuals, direct contact, in general, increased voter turnout. This persuasion process was through interpersonal communication. Media, on the other hand, provided political information through mass communication. Both channels have been found effective in mobilizing voters. However, no research has explored the interplay of direct contact and media use in voting behavior. Without examining the interplay of interpersonal persuasion and mass communication in voting behavior, the effects of each of them cannot be certain. This study incorporates both direct contact and media use to test their direct and indirect effects on voting behavior.

3.4 Significance

Most political participation research relies on survey data to examine the relationship between voter turnout, media use and direct contact (Beck, 1991; Blydenburgh, 1971; Cain & McCue, 1985; Kramer, 1970; Lupfer & Price, 1972; Wielhouwer & Lockerbie, 1994). Although some scholars argue that survey analysis is limited in helping to understand participants' motives and psychological process, survey data are able to capture the pattern of mass political behavior and help social scientists predict the outcome of mass behavior. In reaction to the limitation of survey research,

some studies employed controlled experiments (Eldersveld, 1956; Gosnell, 1927; Gerber & Green, 2000; Green & Gerber, 2004; Miller, Bositis & Baer, 1981). However, most experiments are administered on “captive” populations – typically college students who must serve as guinea pigs to gain course credit. College students are not representative of all other adults. A further weakness of the typical experiment is the somewhat sterile, laboratory-like environment in which it is administered, an environment that bears little resemblance to the noise and confusion of election campaigns.

A small amount of research has employed qualitative methods (focus groups and in-depth interviews) in voting studies. This type of research has the advantage of being able to explore the whole of a phenomenon among smaller samples, arriving at enlightening and useful observations. However, these studies cannot claim general external validity among large populations.

Given the goal and the nature of the research question in this study, survey analysis was chosen to investigate the relationships among voting, media use and direct contact. This study did not intend to explore respondents’ psychological processes or sentiments toward political messages, but did instead capture the patterns of citizens’ political behavior. Survey research dominates the investigation of political behavior and political attitudes primarily because of its ability to tap into the beliefs and behaviors of a large sample of respondents relatively easily and quickly. Niemi and Weisberg (1993) pointed out that the most direct, and often the most valid, way of understanding why people vote as they do is to ask them. This study will use a nationally representative survey data set to investigate the relationship between direct contact, media use and political participation measured by voting.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES

Rather than testing the effects of campaign field work on voting at one point in time, this study was designed to examine the impact of direct contact on media use and voting behavior over time. This study hypothesized that direct contact not only contributes to overall voter turnout, but also increases media use, which in turn further increases voter turnout. In other words, direct contact affects voter turnout in two paths, a direct path and an indirect path mediated by media use. The direct and indirect process of direct contact can be fully tested only with panel survey data that provide the capacity to trace the impact of direct contact and media use over time. (See Figure 2.)

This study intends to answer the question of whether direct contact and media use affect voter turnout. To answer the question, three main hypotheses were tested:

H1: Direct contact at an early stage of the campaigning has a positive effect on media use at a later time.

Other than social forces (social identification, associations, and memberships), direct contact and media use have received the most attention in voting studies. Most studies found the direct impact of both on voter turnout. However, little research has paid attention to the relationship between the two and their collective effects on voting.

This study argues that direct contact may prompt voters to seek campaign information from the media. Thus, mediated by media use, direct contact has an indirect affect on voter turnout.

H2: Media use has a positive and direct effect on voter turnout.

Much research has confirmed the effects of media use on voter turnout (Cheung, Chan & Leung, 2000; Freedman & Goldstein, 1999; Simon, 1996; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). However, either cross-sectional data or one-shot survey data were analyzed in most studies. In cross-sectional data, the validity of tracing patterns over time cannot be as accurate as panel data. Most cross-sectional surveys were conducted either right before or right after election day. This study argues that more people are more likely to expose themselves to campaign information on the media around election day than earlier. Panel data allow for discerning regular media users and those who consume media only around election day.

Moreover, in many studies, respondents were simply asked how often they consumed media, and thus faulty memory is a concern. To overcome this limitation, the questions about television exposure in this study included three questions (evening news, late night news, and 12 o'clock news at noon) to help respondents recall their experiences more precisely.

H3: Direct contact has a positive and direct effect on voter turnout.

Previous studies have asserted the positive effect of direct contact on voter turnout. Caldeira, Clausen and Patterson (1990) and Wielhouwer and Lockerbie (1994) examined broad patterns of party contacts, such as calling voters, sending mail to voters, and soliciting volunteer work or money, and their effects on voter turnout were evident. The data, however, were collected before 1990, when Internet use was not common. This study employs the variable of electronic mail canvassing, which is considered most efficient – the ability to reach the most voters with the least expense. This hypothesis test is expected to further confirm the direct collective effects of direct contact on voter turnout.

In addition to offering hypotheses, this study also makes some predictions. They are called predictions to differentiate them from the three main hypotheses, which have more theoretical implications. (See Figure 3.) The implications, however, are important for methodological reasons. The predictions provide assurance that the data behave in the way that common sense would suggest. They also set up a baseline against which the main hypotheses can be tested.

Prd. 1a: Exposure to direct contact increases over time during an election.

Prd. 1b: Exposure to direct contact at an earlier stage during an election is positively correlated with the same variable at a later stage of the election.

Prd. 2a: Media use about campaigns increases over time during an election.

Prd. 2b: Media use at an earlier stage of an election is positively correlated with the same variable at a later stage of the election.

Prd. 3a: The number of people who plan to vote increases as an election progresses.

Prd. 3b: Voting intention measured at an earlier stage of an election is positively correlated with voting intention reported at a later stage of the election.

CHAPTER 5

METHODS

5.1 Data and Sample

The data were obtained from the 2004 Election Panel Study jointly conducted by the University of Wisconsin's Wisconsin Advertising Project and the Brigham Young University Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy. Random-digit dialing was used to generate the sample. Respondents were drawn randomly across the country from the Washington D.C. area and 48 states (Alaska and Hawaii were not included in the sample), and thus the dataset is a representative sample of the nation as a whole. In addition to national inferences, the sampling design recognized the need to make inferences for Senate and Presidential battleground states. The design oversampled the battleground states and undersampled the non-battleground states, but this sampling strategy still provided enough cases to make strong national inferences.

The sampling designers consulted three sources – the *Cook Political Report*, *The Washington Post*, and ABC News – for public analysis of competitive states as of early June, 2004, to form the basis of assigning battleground states. If at least two of the three sources agreed, the states were considered to be battleground. The allocation of states in each domain can be seen in Appendix A. Among presidential battleground states, CO, FL, LA, MO, NV, PA, WA, and WI also are Senate battlegrounds. Appendix B presents the distribution of cases across the states, which is quite close to the design allocation.

The data are from a three-wave panel design. The same respondents were interviewed and re-interviewed three times at different points (June, September, and November) throughout the campaign season. This analysis used the last two of the three waves. The sampling design called for completing 2,802 interviews. In the June wave, the actual number of completed interviews was 2,782. The September wave was conducted over an eight-day period and 1,523 interviews were completed. The response rate was 55% with the June wave as baseline. The November wave began on the evening of election day, November 2, 2004 and 1,438 interviews were complete. The response rate was 52% with the June wave as baseline and 94% with the September wave as baseline.

Because the sample was designed to over-represent competitive states and under-represent non-competitive ones, a weight variable was used for all analyses. Because of the relatively large non-response in the September wave, post-stratified weights are appropriate for the analysis. The post-stratified weights take into account sex, race and age differences between the sample and the population of registered voters, based on 2000 election census data. All the post-stratified weights are correlated with $R = .93$ (Franklin, 2005). To maximize the relationship between the panel and the population, the weight for the November wave will be used in the analysis.

5.2 Measures

5.2.1 Dependent variables. Three measures from the November wave of the survey were used as the dependent variables: direct contact, media use, and voting behavior. The exact questions and answer categories are shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Direct Contact. Direct contact includes multiple techniques of campaign field work, including personal contact, direct mail, telephone, and electronic mail. Different from most other studies, the respondents also were asked specifically whether they were requested to donate money to a campaign. Donating money to a campaign is considered relatively engaged participation. The responses were dummy coded. A “yes” answer was coded as 0 and a “no” answer was coded as 1.

Media Use. Media use measures consisted of television news watching, television campaign exposure, newspaper reading, and radio exposure. Television news watching measures were broken down by local early evening news at 5 or 6 p.m., local nightly news at 10 or 11 p.m., and local news at noon. Respondents also were asked whether they had exposure to any campaign commercials on television. Newspaper reading was measured by reading days in the week before election day. Radio exposure refers to the exposure to an advertisement from a campaign.

Media use is a compound variable, and therefore an additive index was created for both the September wave and the November wave. For the three television news questions, each respondent’s answers were added together and linearly transformed on a 0-100 scale. A zero refers to those who do not watch television news at all, and a 100 means people who watched the news at all times (noon, evening, and night) every day in the week. This aggregated television news watching level was combined with other media use variables: newspaper reading, radio exposure, and television campaign commercial exposure. The same procedure was performed to create an aggregated media use level to indicate each respondent’s media use value.

Voting Behavior. The November wave of the survey began on the evening of the election day and respondents were asked whether they had voted that day. (See Table 1.) Similar to media use, direct contact is a compound variable and thus an index needs to be created. All five direct contact variables are dichotomous. A “yes” answer is recoded as “1” and a “no” answer is recoded as “0.” Each respondent’s answers were then added together and linearly transformed on a 0-100 scale. A zero refers to voters who did not receive any contact from anyone from the two major political parties or campaign organizations on behalf of any candidate. A 100 indicates that the voter has been contacted by people on behalf of a candidate with a letter, phone call, e-mail and face-to-face conversation, and asked to donate money to a campaign.

5.2.2. Independent variables. Three measures from the September wave of the survey were used as the independent variables for regression analyses: direct contact, media use, and voting intention.

Direct Contact. Similar to the September wave, direct contact was measured by multiple techniques of campaign field work, including personal contact, direct mail, telephone, and electronic mail. The respondents were asked specifically whether they were requested to donate money to a campaign. An index was created to indicate each individual’s direct contact level. The reliability of the additive index is 0.6. The average direct contact is 18.82 in the September wave and 35.96 in the November wave.

Media Use. Media use was measured the same way in both the September and November waves. The measures consisted of television news watching, television campaign exposure, newspaper reading, and radio exposure. The order of the questions about television news watching was randomized for each respondent to avoid order

effects. Television news watching measures were broken down by local early evening news at 5 or 6 p.m., local nightly news at 10 or 11 p.m., and local news at noon. Respondents also were asked whether they had exposure to any campaign commercials on television. Newspaper reading was measured by reading days in the week before election day. Radio exposure referred to the exposure to an advertisement from a campaign. Similar to the dependent variables, an additive index was created for media use level to indicate each respondent's media use value.

The reliability of the additive index is low (Crombach's Alpha = .3), however, because of the limited items – a total of four items – and because two variables are dichotomous. Each medium, thus, will be used individually in the regression analyses. The compound variable, media use, is still included in the analysis for reference.

Voting Intention. This wave of the survey was conducted about two months before election day. Voting intention was measured by asking how likely the respondents were to vote in the election. (See Table 2.)

5.2.3. Control variables. Control variables included respondents' age, gender, race, education level, and political party preference. Rather than using the party identification variable as most studies did, this study used party preference as a more precise indicator. In this study, party preference was measured by asking respondents which political party they think they are closer to.

5.3 Analysis

5.3.1. Missing value treatments. In the September wave data, 339 cases were missing because these respondents could not be reached for interviews. When direct

contact variables, voting, and all media use variables in this wave were treated as numerical independent variables, mean substitution was used to bring back these cases for analysis. To avoid any distortion of these replacements, dummy treatment was performed. A dummy variable was created to account for the missing value in each independent variable. These dummy variables were included in the regression equation together with the main independent variables. Therefore, the missing dummy variables absorb the variation in the dependent variables. This variation is possibly explained by the missing cases in the independent variables.³

5.3.2. Regression analysis. To determine the effects of direct contact and media use on voting behavior, path analysis was performed with SPSS. (See Figure 4.) To test the first hypothesis, path A will be included in a multiple regression analysis. The following equation presents the analysis. The September wave is referred to as “1,” and “2” refers to the November wave.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Media 2} &= \text{Media 1} + \text{Control Variables} + \text{Direct Contact 1} \\ &+ \text{Direct Contact 1} \end{aligned} \quad (\text{Equation 1a})$$

With the control for media use on the September wave, the effects of direct contact on media use can be determined. For the second and third hypotheses, path two and path three will both be included in the analysis:

³ All regression analyses were also performed without missing dummy coding for a sensitivity check. The results are similar to the results from the regression analyses with dummy coding. The author chose to report the results from the regression analyses with dummy coding for statistical validity.

$$\text{Voting 2} = \text{Voting 1} + \text{Control Variables} + \text{Media 1} + \text{Direct Contact 1}$$

(Equation 2a)

While controlling for voting intention in the September wave, the effects of direct contact and media use at an earlier time on voting behavior can be discerned. The dependent variable – voting – in this equation is categorical and thus logistic regression needs to be applied and the exponentiated Beta will be interpreted.

This study argues that panel data provide a better understanding of the effects of direct contact and media use than cross-sectional data. First, with the ability to control for voting intention two months before election day, media use and direct contact effects on voting behavior can be singled out. Second, in cross-sectional data the media use measures reflect behavior only during the week before election day. This may be biased, because people tend to expose themselves to campaign information during that week more than at other times. However, in this panel survey, the respondents were asked about media use two months before election day and on election day. Thus, the regular media use pattern is captured relatively accurately. For comparison, the media use and direct contact variables in the September wave also were included as independent variables for separate analysis. Path analysis is considered appropriate because both direct and indirect impacts of direct contact can be examined.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

6.1 Descriptive Analysis

6.1.1. Demographics. About 46% of the respondents were male.⁴ The average age was 50.16 years old (ranging from 18 to 99 years). Twenty-three percent of the people finished high school education. Thirty-seven percent of the sample received college degrees and 21% held graduate degrees.⁵ Eighty-six percent of the participants were white and about 4% are black. Nearly 36% said they considered themselves Republicans and about 32% Democrats.

6.1.2. Media measures. In the September wave data, the respondents average about 30 points on a zero-to-100 scale for the overall television news exposure; 17.8% had no exposure at all. About 31% did not watch early local news at all. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents did not watch any news at noon, but nearly 24% watched early local news seven days a week. Fourteen percent of the participants watched late-night news every day and nearly half of them did not watch late-night news at all. The frequencies of these television news measures in September wave data were similar to the frequencies in the November wave. Table 3 shows the differences of television news exposure in the two waves.

⁴ Precisely, 54.5% of the participants were female in the September and 53.6% in the November wave.

⁵ This is based on the November wave data (N=1348).

More frequent than television news exposure, about 42% of the participants in the November wave survey reported reading newspapers seven days a week. The average newspaper exposure is 57.76 on a zero-to-100 scale. Twenty-one percent did not read any newspaper at all. About half of the respondents remembered hearing a radio advertisement from a campaign, and the average exposure was 48.02 in the November wave. The reported exposure to television commercials was much higher than radio advertisements. About 80% of the respondents reported they had seen a campaign commercial on television. Respondents reported more exposure to both radio advertisements and television commercials in the November wave. The average media exposure is 54.13 in the September wave and 60.93 in the November wave on the zero-to-100 scale. (See Table 4.)

6.1.3. Direct contact measures. In the September wave survey, the majority of respondents did not report having much contact with the two parties or campaign organizations on behalf of any candidate. Until election day, people received more contact through postal mail, telephone, personal interaction, and e-mail. The proportion of people who reported being asked to donate money to a campaign was not different between the two waves. (See Table 5.)

6.1.4. Voting. In the survey in September, 94.6% of respondents reported that they would vote in the fall's election for President of the United States and Congress. Only 2.2% of the people claimed to be undecided. At the end of the election day, 91.1% of participants said they voted in the election.

6.2 Inferential Analysis

6.2.1. Predictions. All six predictions were supported. Regression analyses showed that the variables in the September wave were strongly correlated with the same variables in the November wave. Mean comparison analyses (Paired T-Tests and Chi Square Tests) also indicated the means of all variables were significantly increased in the November wave. Direct contact in the September wave strongly predicted direct contact in the November wave ($B = .468, p < .001$). Media use in the September wave was a strong factor for media use in the November wave ($B = .505, p < .001$). Similarly, voting intention was a highly significant predictor for voting behavior ($\text{Exp}B = 6.316, p < .001$). The confirmation of these predictions not only validates the data but also provides a robust baseline for the hypotheses tests.

6.2.2. Media use as the dependent variables. The first hypothesis states that direct contact at an early stage of the campaign has a positive effect on media use at a later time. To examine the effects of direct contact on media use, the following equation was tested.

$$\text{Media II} = \text{Media I} + \text{Control Variables} + \text{Direct Contact I} + \text{Voting I} \quad (\text{Equation 1a})$$

As mentioned earlier, missing dummy variables were included in the regression analysis. Thus, Equation 1 became the following:

$$\text{Media II} = D_M + \text{Media I} + \text{Control Variables} + D_V + \text{Voting I} + D_{VC} + \text{Direct Contact I} \quad (\text{Equation 1b})$$

D_M: missing dummy for Media I

D_V: missing dummy for Voting I

D_{VC}: missing dummy for Direct Contact I

All four media use variables were used individually in the regression analysis.

Direct contact did not show any significance in predicting media use behavior. Thus, the first hypothesis was not supported. However, voting intention as assumed in September was a strong factor predicting television commercial exposure in November ($B = 2.798, p < .001$). Although voting intention was not a significant predictor of subsequent newspaper reading, the relationship approached statistical significance at $p = .056$. When media use, the compound variable, was used in the regression, the results were similar to the results of television commercial exposure. Voting intention was a significant predictor of overall news and advertising media use. (See Table 6.)

6.2.3. Voting as the dependent variable. The second hypothesis tests the effects of media use on voter turnout and the third hypothesis tests the effects of direct contact on voter turnout. Since voting is a dichotomous variable, logistic regression was performed. With missing dummy coding for independent variables in the September wave data, the equation tested was:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Voting II} = & D_V + \text{Voting I} + \text{Controlled Variables} + D_M + \text{Media Use I} \\ & + D_{VC} + \text{Direct Contact I} \end{aligned} \quad (\text{Equation 2b})$$

D_V: missing dummy for Voting I

D_M: missing dummy for Media I

D_{VC}: missing dummy for Direct Contact I

All four media use variables were used individually in the regression analysis.

Television news was the only medium that had significant power in predicting voting behavior (ExpB=.984; $p = .016$). Direct contact was a stronger factor in voting when television news, television commercials, and radio advertisement were included in the analysis. However, when media use was used in the regression, direct contact was not a significant predictor of voting behavior (ExpB=1.018; $p = .075$). Table 7 shows the logistic coefficients of media use and direct contact on voting behavior. Thus, hypotheses two and three were partially supported.

The effects of each direct contact channel were tested in separate regression analyses with controlling for television news, television commercials, and radio advertisements. Telephone contact was a significant predictor for voter turnout (ExpB=4.5; $p < .05$). Although electronic mail contact was not significantly predicting voter turnout, its effects cannot be ignored with the significance level close to 0.05. Direct mail, request for financial support, and face-to-face contact each was not a strong factor for voter turnout. (See Table 8, 9 and 10.)

6.2.4. Additional analyses. In hypothesis tests, voting intention surprisingly appeared to be a significant predictor of direct contact. Additional analyses were performed to explore the opposite direction of potential relations among media use, voting intention, and direct contact. With self-reported direct contact as the dependent variable, the following equation was proposed:

$$\text{Direct Contact II} = D_{VC} + \text{Direct Contact I} + \text{Controlled Variables} + D_V + \text{Voting I} \\ + D_M + \text{Media Use I} \quad (\text{Equation 3})$$

D_{VC} : missing dummy for Direct Contact I

D_V : missing dummy for Voting I

D_M : missing dummy for Media I

Similar to the previous analyses, each mass medium was used in the regression equation individually.

Voter intention was a significant predictor in all of the analyses. Newspaper reading and exposure to radio advertisements were strong predictors of direct contact. Similar results were found for the compound variable, media use. (See Table 11.)

Since the compound variable direct contact was strongly influenced by voting intention, each direct contact channel was tested individually in the regression analysis to examine the effects of voting intention on each of them. Voting intention appeared to affect both direct mail and telephone canvassing significantly across all four media uses, whereas it had no strong effects on electronic mail, face-to-face contact, or request for financial support. (See Table 12, 13, 14 and 15)

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

The relationships among media use, direct contact and voter turnout were examined. Both media use and direct contact had a positive impact on voter turnout. However, direct contact did not lead to media use as hypothesized. Direct contact mobilized votes significantly, but it did not have any indirect effect on voter turnout through mass media. In other words, both mass communication and interpersonal communication had a direct effect on voter turnout. Direct contact (especially telephone canvassing) and voting (intention or behavior) influenced each other significantly. People who had stronger voting intention were more likely to recall the phone calls they received from a campaign. Moreover, a reverse effect was found between media use and voting. Media use appeared to be both a consequence of voting intention and a predictor of voting behavior, as has been suggested or assumed in most previous studies. Surprisingly, in this study, media use predicted direct contact, rather than vice versa, and led to interpersonal communication. (See Figure 5.)

7.1 The Relationship between Media Use and Voting

7.1.1. Media effects on voter turnout. Although some literature suggested a superior newspaper effect on voter turnout over other media, the results in this study show that only television news exposure had significant effects on voter turnout. These

contrary findings may be due to the different measures and the nature of the data. Most previous research has been based on cross-sectional data analysis and the media use measure reflected only the time period right before the election – usually the week right before the election. This measurement strategy did not capture respondents' regular patterns of media use. Media use usually increases significantly during the week before election day.⁶ Moreover, in this particular election a high proportion of voters made their voting decisions early. Early decision-makers might have different goals than undecided voters when they look to media. (See Figure 6.)

To better understand the different results from the panel data and cross-sectional data, I replicated the regression analysis employed in most previous studies with only the November wave data. Interestingly, the results were similar to those of previous studies employing only cross-sectional data. In the cross-sectional analyses, newspaper reading behavior a week prior to election day was significantly related to voter turnout ($\text{ExpB} = 1.013$; $p < .001$) while television news exposure was not related ($\text{Exp} = 1.003$; $p = .434$). However, when media use variables from the September wave were used in the same regression analysis (with the same control variables), the results were the other way around. Television news exposure two months prior to election day ($\text{ExpB} = 1.006$; $p = .087$) had a greater effect than newspaper reading ($\text{ExpB} = .994$; $p = .196$) on voter turnout.

Because of the richness of the data in this study, voting intention and direct contact at an early stage of the 2004 campaign, in addition to the demographics, could be

⁶ This is tested in the prediction 2a and 2b. The mean score of media exposure about campaigns significantly increases from the September wave to the November wave ($t=11.079$; $p < .001$). In the regression analysis, the media use in the September wave is also positively correlated with the media use in the November wave ($B = .495$; $p < .001$).

controlled in the regression analyses. The panel survey data provided a different perspective to understand different roles of media use for voters at different stages of a campaign. Cognitive impact takes more time than simply absorbing information. If newspapers are more likely to have a cognitive impact on voters than television news, as Mendelsohn and O’Keefe (1976) suggested, newspaper reading needs to be a long-term behavior to have effects. Television news, a relatively quick informational source, may create effects in a shorter period. This may be why newspaper reading measured a week before the election predicts voting behavior (in the cross-sectional data), while, television news exposure measured two months prior to election day predicts voting behavior (in the panel data). Note that in most studies, exposure to television news and commercials are not distinguished in either survey measurement or analysis. In this study in which the different kinds of campaign communication were distinguished, television news had exclusive effects on whether people voted or not. Television commercial exposure did not predict voting behavior. The effects of television watching in general might have been suppressed by the undistinguished inclusion of television commercial exposure in the previous studies.

7.1.2. Voting intention effects on media use. In this study, television commercial exposure did not predict voting behavior. However, voting intention did predict television commercial exposure. People with strong voting intention in September paid more attention to television commercials about campaigns. Similar findings were also found for newspaper exposure. (See Figure 7 and 8.)

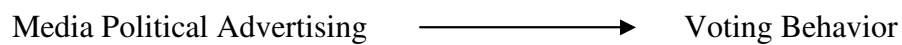
These findings further confirm the theory of uses and gratifications. Audiences apparently evaluate the ability of the media to satisfy political needs. Newspapers are

better able to satisfy cognitive or informational motives than television news. In this study, people who were active in the election read newspapers more frequently, perhaps to satisfy their needs for political information. However, television commercials appear to serve a different function. With video and audio features in advertisements, campaign organizers carefully manipulate the images of their candidates and their opponents. The primary motive for watching television commercials may not be to gather information, but to be entertained. Thus, we would expect less behavioral impact. Motives for watching television commercials deserve further study in future research.

7.2 The Relationship between Media Use and Direct Contact

Rather than media use being affected by direct contact as was hypothesized, some types of media use predicted self-reported direct contact experience. Although radio was not a major political information source for most people, the exposure to its political advertisements predicted direct contact. Unexpectedly, interpersonal communication did not lead to mass communication exposure. Instead, people who paid more attention to television commercials and radio political advertisements were more likely to remember getting direct mail from a campaign. (See Figure 9, 10 and 11.)

Some studies have found a positive effect of political advertising on voter turnout. This relationship might be spurious because those studies did not take direct contact into account. In this study, direct mail was found to be a mediating factor between advertising and voting behavior. Rather than this sequence:



the relationship should be expressed like this:



Advertising has a persuasive nature that differentiates it from news coverage. Media consumers are usually aware of this difference and may turn to interpersonal communication to either validate or reject the ideas they get from advertisements before they make any decision, even whether to vote or not.

7.3 The Relationship between Direct Contact and Voting

In this study, interpersonal communication effects seemed to be more powerful than mass communication effects on voting behavior. Voting (intention or behavior) and direct contact – especially telephone canvassing, direct mail, and direct mail – influenced each other significantly. Voting intention had a positive impact on direct contact.

Respondents who planned to vote two months prior to election day were more likely to recall receiving contact from a campaign. On the other hand, people who received more direct contact were more likely to vote. This echoes Lazarsfeld’s statement that “people can move other people more than anything else.”

7.3.1. Direct contact effects on voting. At the aggregate level, direct contact had more consistently positive effects than media use on voting. As much research suggested, party mobilizations have had success with direct contact through field work as a strategy to increase turnout. The survey data confirm the results from most studies employing quasi experiments.

Furthermore, the number of contact channels had different levels of effects on voting behavior. Both telephone canvassing and electronic mail increased voter turnout after controlling for exposure to radio advertisements, television news and television commercials. (See Figure 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.)

If a voter remembered receiving phone calls from a campaign, the voter was about 3.5 times more likely to vote than voters who did not remember receiving any phone call. If a participant remembered receiving electronic mail from a campaign, the participant was about eight times more likely to vote than the participants who did not remember receiving any electronic mail. Personal contact, request for financial support, and direct mail canvassing did not have a significant impact on voter turnout.

These results contrast with the findings from Gerber and Green's (2000) research in which they found that telephone appeals were less effective than direct mail and personal contact. This may be explained by different ways of data collection. Gerber and Green employed quasi experiments. Although participants were randomly placed into control and experimental groups, it is problematic to attribute voter turnout solely to the direct contact. If participants did not remember the contacts, it was more likely they did not make the decisions based on the contacts. Quasi experiments can capture only the existence or the absence of the contacts; they cannot evaluate voters' psychological process based on the contacts. In contrast, in survey data, self-report measures represent voters' memory of the contacts, and even though that memory may be faulty, remembering suggests the contact had some impact.

7.3.2. Voting intention effects on direct contact. The reverse effects of voting are more prominent than the effects of direct contact on voter turnout. At the aggregate

level, voting intention significantly predicted direct contact (including direct mail, request for financial support, personal contact, telephone, and electronic mail) when all four media uses were controlled.

Similar to the effects of direct contact on voter turnout, in the reverse effects, voting intention is a strong factor in predicting the exposure to telephone canvassing. (See Figures 12, 13 and 14.) Participants who made early decision to vote were about 40% more likely to report receiving telephone calls from a campaign. Voting intention also had significant effects on the memory of receiving direct mail. (See Figures 10, 11, 18 and 19.)

Respondents who planned to vote were 36% more likely to report receiving direct mail from a campaign than those who did not plan to vote two months prior to election day. In contrast, voting intention did not explain the variances in exposure to financial support request, face-to-face contact or electronic mail. In other words, people who planned to vote were more likely to pay attention to postal mails and telephone calls from the two parties or campaign organization on behalf of a candidate.

Although voters did not initiate the contact with campaign organizers, voters could choose to accept or reject the contact. For example, people commonly delete unwanted electronic “spam” mail without reading it. People also tend to censor non-personal phone calls through caller IDs or by simply hanging up, especially if they are prerecorded messages. Similarly, voters could also ignore and not read postal junk mail. People who made an early decision to vote were more likely to accept and pay attention to the contact from a campaign.

7.4 Limitations

In the November wave survey, 91.1% of respondents claimed that they voted in the 2004 Presidential Election. However, according to the United States Elections Project (2004), the actual turnout was only 60.3%. This gap could be explained by respondents' self-selection in the survey – those who were likely to vote were most likely to stay in the study. Politically apathetic citizens might avoid interviews regarding elections, and these people might be less likely to vote in the election. This self-selection might have increased the non-response rate. Records of the reasons for incomplete interviews would be helpful in verifying this potential limitation.

Since voting is considered a civic duty, it becomes a sensitive topic if a person does not plan to vote or did not actually vote. Some research concluded that respondents usually deny their socially undesirable attributes, especially when there is an interviewer involved in the interviewing process (Marquis & Polich, 1981). This can be avoided by employing a self-administrated survey. Changing the order of the questions is another solution to lessen the response bias. Some survey methodologists suggest that the questions in a survey should sequence from general and less threatening items toward more specific and more sensitive items. Unfortunately, in both the September and November waves of the survey, voting was the first question (among 68 questions). This might have caused response bias because respondents felt the pressure to answer “I am going to vote” or “I voted” to avoid social undesirability. The bias could be reduced by moving the question toward the end of the survey. However, an item that is toward the end of the survey tends to have a lower response rate. Therefore, it is desirable to administer the survey with different question orders to balance those concerns.

7.5 Suggestions for Future Research

The two-way impact of direct contact and voting behavior should be confirmed by survey studies with different samples. The mechanism of the relationship between the two should be investigated through focus groups and in-depth interviews to understand voters' attitudes and behaviors change based on personal sources.

The different effects of political advertisements and news coverage on voters confirm that media consumers interpret them differently. Future research should focus on the constructivist approach to examine how voters understand what they receive from political advertisements and how their understanding of the information leads to interpersonal communication.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This study employed panel survey data to shed some light on the media's direct and indirect effects on voter turnout. The study found that media consumption has a different function at different stages of a campaign. Direct contact does increase voter turnout. Telephone calls, direct mail and electronic mail are efficient in mobilizing votes.

The study also revealed the indirect effects of media use through direct contact on voter turnout. These effects are found only for political advertisements, not news coverage. Direct contact appears to be voters' source of validation for mass communication messages, and more specifically, for political advertisements. Voters hold the power of refusing contacts from campaign organizations. Most research presumes voters are passive in receiving contacts from a campaign. However, voters could intentionally ignore the message and not let the contact have any impact on their decisions. Thus, rather than being passive, voters are their own gatekeepers and may actively choose to have contact with campaigns.

Interpersonal communication appears to be more powerful than mass communication in mobilizing voters. These data suggest that campaign organizers should think twice before allocating too much of their budgets to political commercials. This study suggests such advertising has only indirect effects on voter turnout. It may be more efficient to focus on direct contact, which has strong and direct effects on voter

turnout. With two-way effects of direct contact and voter turnout, it is worth exploring the voters' traits regarding how they select contacts before starting any campaign field work. Because direct contact and voter turnout influence each other significantly, the effects of direct contact will skyrocket once the right contact channels hit the right market targets.

Table 1

Variables in the November Wave of Survey

Category	Questions	Answer Category
Voting	In talking to people about the elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have time. How about you – did you vote in the election this November?	1.Yes, did vote 2.No, did not vote 3.Refuses to say whether voted 4.Don't know
Media Use	How many days in the past week did you watch the early local evening news at 5 or 6 p.m.?	Range: 0-7
Media Use	How many days in the past week did you watch the local nightly news at 10 or 11 p.m.?	Range: 0-7
Media Use	How many days in the past week did you watch the local news at 12 o'clock noon?	Range: 0-7
Media Use	How many days in the past week did you read the newspaper?	Range: 0-7
Media Use	Did you hear a radio ad from a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
Media Use	Did you see a campaign commercial on television?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
	Now, we have a series of questions about any contact you may have had last week from the two parties or campaign organizations on behalf of any candidate. Please tell us whether you have been contacted in this way during the last week. Have you...	
Direct Contact	Received a letter or mail piece from a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
Direct Contact	Received a request to donate money to a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
Direct Contact	Received a phone call from a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
Direct Contact	Received an e-mail from a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know

Table 2

Independent Variables in the September Wave of Survey

Category	Questions	Answer Category
Voting Intention	How likely are you to vote in this fall's election for President of the United States and Congress?	1.Definitely will vote 2.Probably will vote 3.May or may not vote 4.Definitely will not vote 5.Don't know/Refused
Media Use	How many days in the past week did you watch the early local evening news at 5 or 6 p.m.?	Range: 0-7
Media Use	How many days in the past week did you watch the local nightly news at 10 or 11 p.m.?	Range: 0-7
Media Use	How many days in the past week did you watch the local news 12 o'clock noon?	Range: 0-7
Media Use	How many days in the past week did you read the newspaper?	Range: 0-7
Media Use	Have you heard a radio ad from a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
Media Use	Have you seen a campaign commercial on television?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
	Now, we have a series of questions about any contact you may have had last week from the two parties or campaign organizations on behalf of any candidate. Please tell us whether you have been contacted in this way during the last week. Have you...	
Direct Contact	Received a letter or mail piece from a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
Direct Contact	Received a request to donate money to a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
Direct Contact	Had a face-to-face conversation or contact with someone from a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
Direct Contact	Received a phone call from a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know
Direct Contact	Received an e-mail from a campaign?	1.Yes 2.No 3.Refused 4.Don't know

Table 3

Television News Exposure in September and November

		Percent who watched in September	Percent who watched in November	Difference (November - September)
Early local news	0 days	31.2	26.9	- 5.2
	7 days	23.6	25.7	2.1
Noon	0 days	78.1	75.9	- 2.2
	7 days	2.7	4.0	1.3
Late local news	0 days	43.6	41.3	- 2.3
	7 days	14.1	14.6	.5
Overall TV news index (0-100)		29.91	32.05	2.14

Note. This table shows the frequencies of 0 and 7 days only because these two categories have the highest frequencies. The rest of the cases are scattered between 1 to 6 days. The difference of overall TV news index between September and November is statistically significant in the prediction tests – both T-test and correlation analysis.

Table 4

Other media use in September and November

		Percent who watched in September	Percent who watched in November	Difference (November – September)
Newspaper Reading	0 days	21.3	19.5	-1.8
	7 days	41.5	42.8	1.3
Radio Ads	No	52.0	39.2	-12.8
	Yes	48.0	60.8	12.8
TV Commercials	No	19.1	8.4	-10.7
	Yes	80.9	91.6	10.7
Overall media use index (0-100)		54.13	60.93	6.8

Note. This table shows the frequencies of 0 and 7 days only because these two categories have the highest frequencies. The rest of the cases are scattered between 1 to 6 days. The difference of overall media use index between September and November are statistically significant in the prediction tests – both T-test and correlation analysis.

Table 5

Direct Contact in September and November

		Percent who claimed receiving in September	Percent who claimed receiving in November	Difference (November - September)
Postal Mail	Yes	30.2	63.2	33
Face-to-Face	Yes	8.0	17.9	9.9
Telephone	Yes	16.4	60	43.6
E-Mail	Yes	12.1	13.9	1.8
Money Donation Request	Yes	27.4	26	-1.4
Overall Direct Contact Index (0-100)		18.82	35.96	17.14

Note. The variables are all dichotomous. The difference of overall direct contact index is statistically significant in the prediction tests (both T-test and correlation analysis.)

Table 6

Regression Coefficients of Direct Contact and Voting Intention on Media Use

DV	IV	SE	B
TV Commercials			
	Direct Contact	.033	.014
	Voting Intention	1.31	4.83***
Newspaper			
	Direct Contact	.037	.043
	Voting Intention	1.47	2.798 ^a
TV News			
	Direct Contact	.024	-.016
	Voting Intention	.964	1.29
Radio Advertisements			
	Direct Contact	.057	-.059
	Voting Intention	2.26	3.65
Media Use			
	Direct Contact	.022	.0103
	Voting Intention	.876	3.323***

Note. ^a p= .056
 *** p< .001

Table 7

Logistic Coefficients from the Regression of Media Use on Voting

	Exp(B)	p
TV Commercials	1.003	.369
Direct Contact	1.020	.046*

Newspaper	1.002	.606
Direct Contact	1.018	.064

TV News	.984	.016*
Direct Contact	1.022	.031*

Radio Advertisements	1.004	.265
Direct Contact	1.021	.046*

Media Use	1.006	.401
Direct Contact	1.018	.075

Note. Direct contact, in addition to the demographic variables, was controlled in the analysis.

*p< .05

Table 8

Logistic Coefficients from the Regression of Direct Contact on Voter Turnout When Controlling for Television News Exposure

	Exp(B)	p
Telephone	4.772	.018*
Electronic Mail	9.191	.050 ^a
Direct Mail	1.46	.358
Request for Financial Support	1.38	.471
Face-to-Face Contact	1.632	.528

Note. * $p < .05$

^a. Although the significance level is not smaller than .05, the effect should not be ignored.

Table 9

Logistic Coefficients from the Regression of Direct Contact on Voter Turnout When Controlling for Television Commercials Exposure

	Exp(B)	p
Telephone	4.308	.029*
Electronic Mail	8.875	.056 ^a
Direct Mail	1.381	.438
Request for Financial Support	1.319	.534
Face-to-Face Contact	1.754	.481

Note. * $p < .05$

^a. Although the significance level is not smaller than .05, the effect should not be ignored.

Table 10

Logistic Coefficients from the Regression of Direct Contact on Voter Turnout When Controlling for Radio Advertisements Exposure

	Exp(B)	p
Telephone	4.341	.029*
Electronic Mail	9.861	.051 ^a
Direct Mail	1.371	.449
Request for Financial Support	1.346	.506
Face-to-Face Contact	1.641	.535

Note. * $p < .05$

^a. Although the significance level is not smaller than .05, the effect should not be ignored.

Table 11

Regression Coefficients of Media Use and Voting Intention on Direct Contact

	B	SE
Television Commercial	.022	.019
Voting Intention	3.45**	1.20

Newspaper Reading	.054**	.018
Voting Intention	3.27**	1.2

Television News	.02	.03
Voting Intention	3.46**	1.2

Radio Advertisements	.0397**	.015
Voting Intention	3.128**	1.204

Media Use	.115**	.033
Voting Intention	3.067*	1.204

Note. Voting intention, in addition to the demographic variables, was controlled in the analysis.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 12

Logistic Coefficients from the Regression of Voting Intention on Direct Contact when Controlling for Television News Exposure

	Exp(B)	p
Telephone	1.415	.002**
Electronic Mail	1.235	.375
Direct Mail	1.394	.002**
Request for Financial Support	1.098	.548
Face-to-Face Contact	1.142	.432

Note. **p< .01

Table 13

Logistic Coefficients from the Regression of Voting Intention on Direct Contact when Controlling for Television Commercials Exposure

	Exp(B)	p
Telephone	1.404	.002**
Electronic Mail	1.232	.380
Direct Mail	1.38	.003**
Request for Financial Support	1.093	.569
Face-to-Face Contact	1.150	.410

Note. **p< .01

Table 14

Logistic Coefficients from the Regression of Voting Intention on Direct Contact when Controlling for Radio Advertisements Exposure

	Exp(B)	p
Telephone	1.372	.004**
Electronic Mail	1.223	.401
Direct Mail	1.334	.008**
Request for Financial Support	1.048	.763
Face-to-Face Contact	1.117	.518

Note. **p< .01

Table 15

Logistic Coefficients from the Regression of Voting Intention on Direct Contact when
Controlling for the Amount of Newspaper Reading

	Exp(B)	p
Telephone	1.411	.002**
Electronic Mail	1.204	.436
Direct Mail	1.368	.004**
Request for Financial Support	1.118	.485
Face-to-Face Contact	1.096	.591

Note. **p< .01

Figure 1

The Components and Process of Political Participation (Summarized by Verba and Nie, 1972)

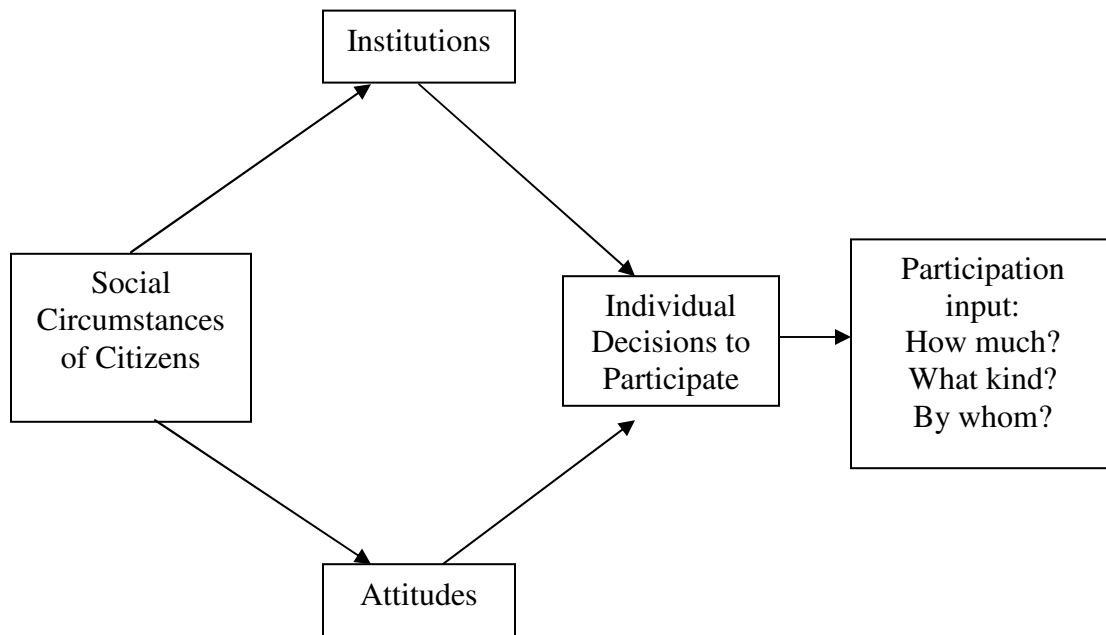


Figure 2

Panel Analysis of the Relationships among Direct Contact, Media Use and Voting

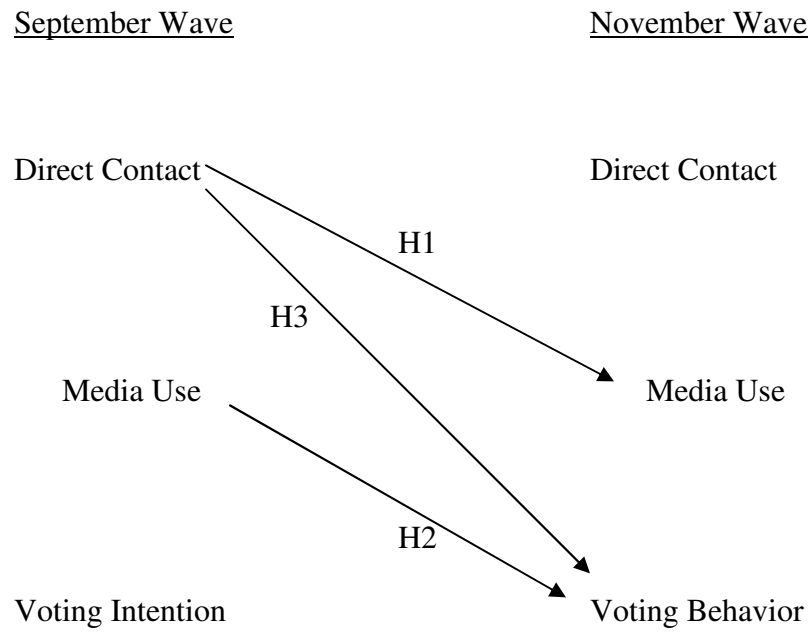


Figure 3

Three Predictions

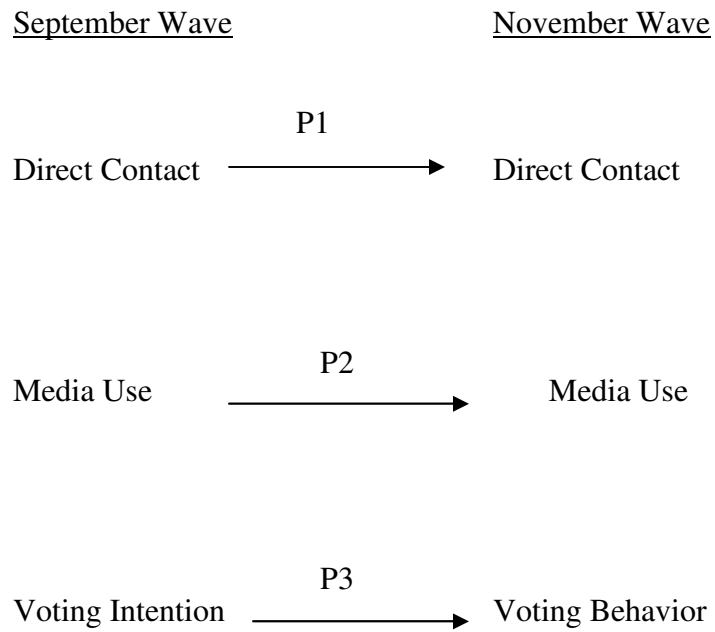
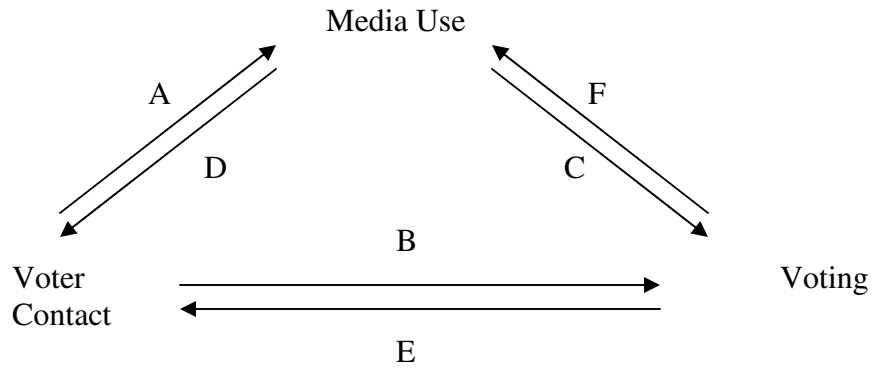


Figure 4

Methodological Model for Panel Analyses



Equation 1:

$$\text{Media 2} = \text{Media 1} + \text{Control Variables} + \frac{\text{Direct Contact 1}}{A} + \frac{\text{Voting 1}}{F}$$

Equation 2:

$$\text{Voting 2} = \text{Voting 1} + \text{Control Variables} + \frac{\text{Media 1}}{C} + \frac{\text{Direct Contact 1}}{B}$$

Equation 3:

$$\text{Direct Contact 2} = \text{Direct Contact 1} + \text{Control Variables} + \frac{\text{Voting 1}}{E} + \frac{\text{Media 1}}{D}$$

Figure 5

The Positive Relationships among Media Use, Direct Contact, and Voting

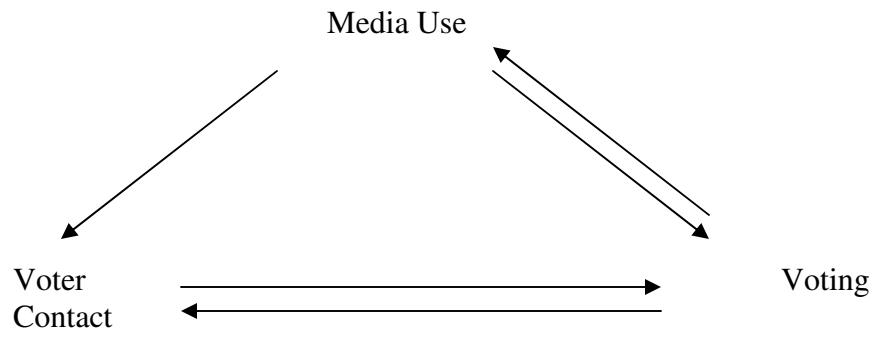


Figure 6

The Positive Relationships among Television News, Direct Contact, and Voting

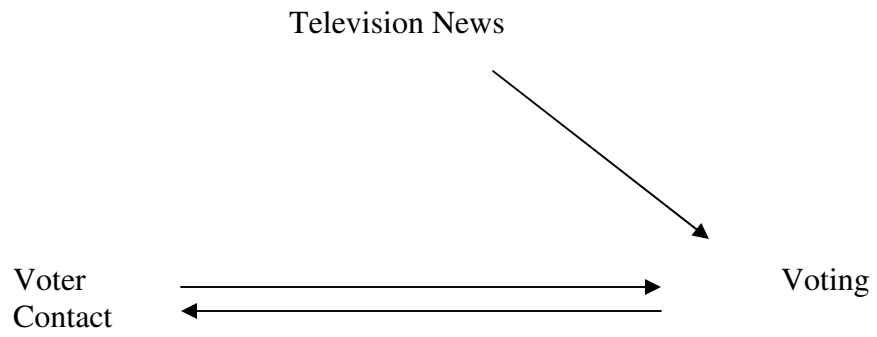


Figure 7

The Positive Relationships among Television Commercials, Direct Contact, and Voting Intention

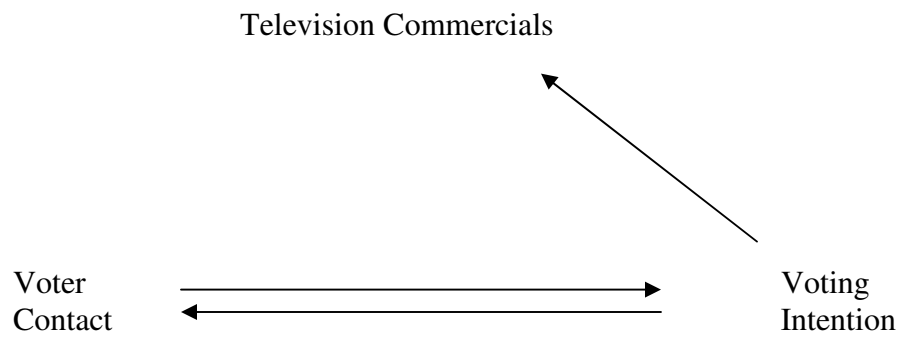
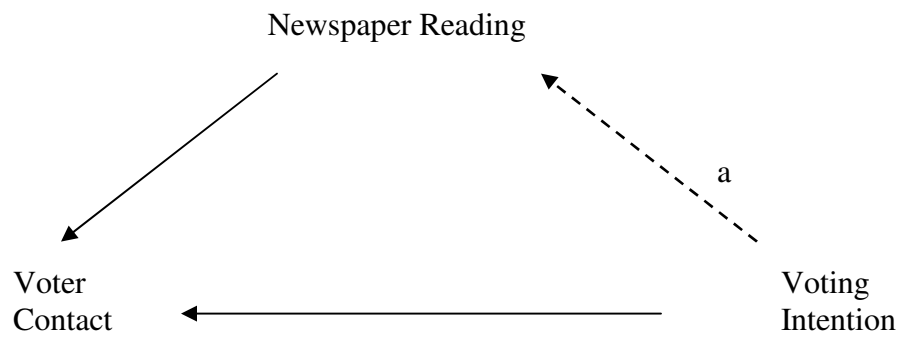


Figure 8

The Positive Relationships among Newspaper Reading, Direct Contact, and Voting Intention



Note. ^a $P = .056$

Figure 9

The Positive Relationships among Radio Advertisements, Direct Contact, and Voting

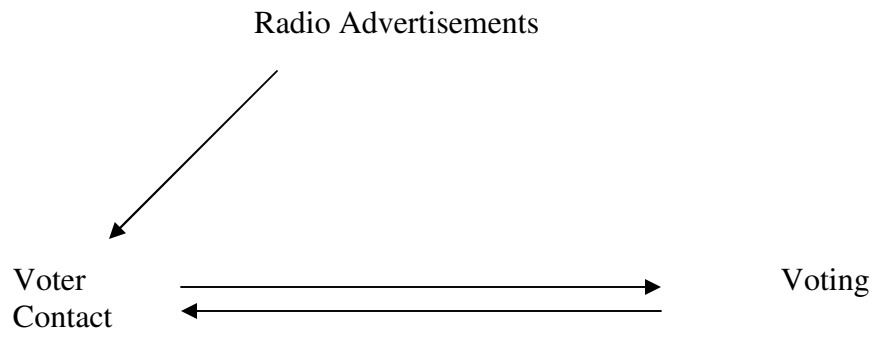


Figure 10

The Positive Relationships among Television Commercials, Direct Mail, and Voting Intention

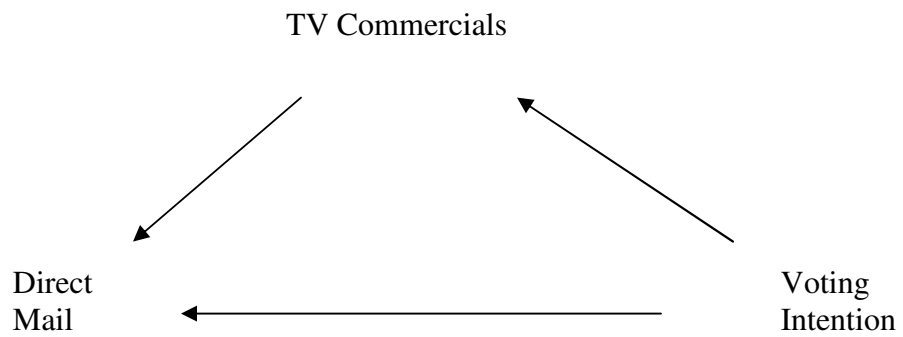


Figure 11

The Positive Relationships among Radio Advertisements, Direct Mail, and Voting Intention

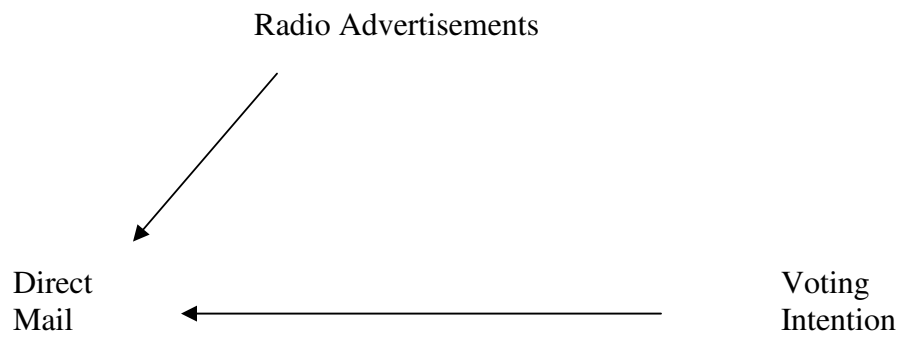


Figure 12

The Positive Relationships among Television News, Telephone Contact, and Voting Intention

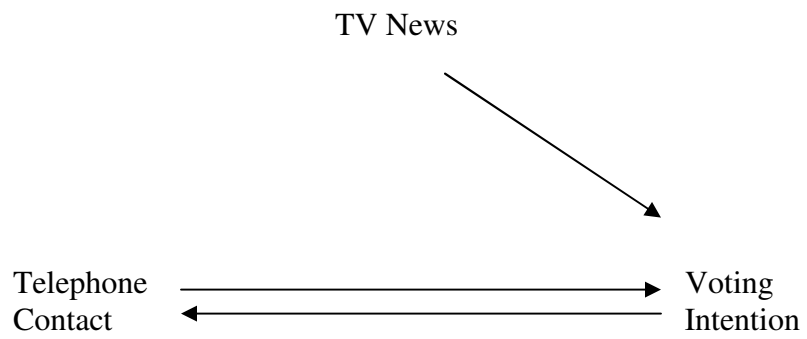


Figure 13

The Positive Relationships among Television Commercials, Telephone Contact, and Voting Intention

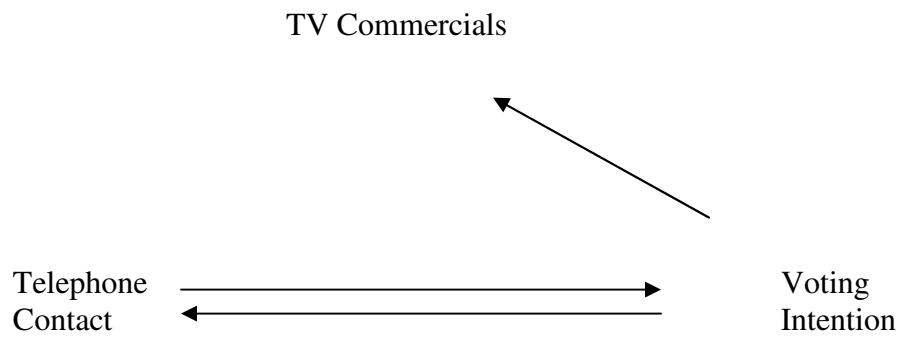


Figure 14

The Positive Relationships among Radio Advertisements, Telephone Contact, and Voting Intention

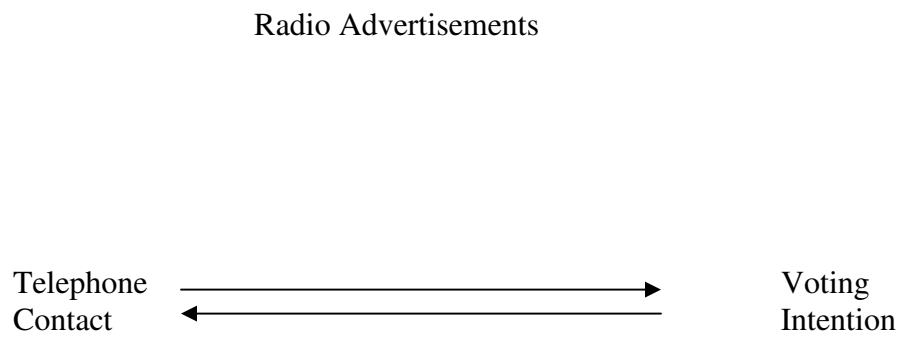
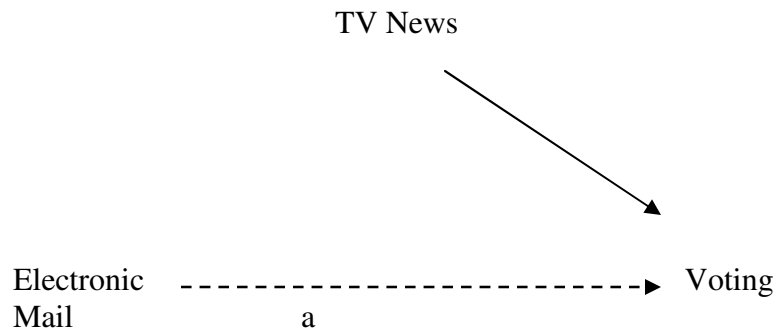


Figure 15

The Positive Relationships among Television News, Electronic Mail Contact, and Voting

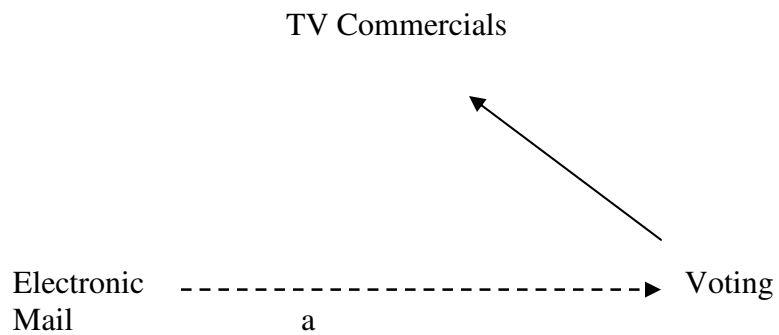


Note. ^a P= .050

The effect of electronic mail on voting, while not quite statistically significant, is close to the cutoff point of .05 and thus is worth noting.

Figure 16

The Positive Relationships among Television Commercials, Electronic Mail Contact, and Voting

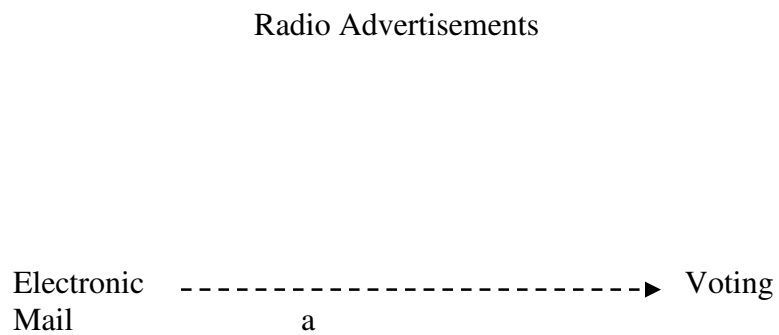


Note. ^a $P = .056$

The effect of electronic mail on voting, while not quite statistically significant, is close to the cutoff point of .05 and thus is worth noting.

Figure 17

The Positive Relationships among Radio Advertisements, Electronic Mail Contact, and Voting



Note. ^a $P = .051$

The effect of electronic mail on voting, while not quite statistically significant, is close to the cutoff point of .05 and thus is worth noting.

Figure 18

The Positive Relationships among Television News, Direct Mail, and Voting Intention

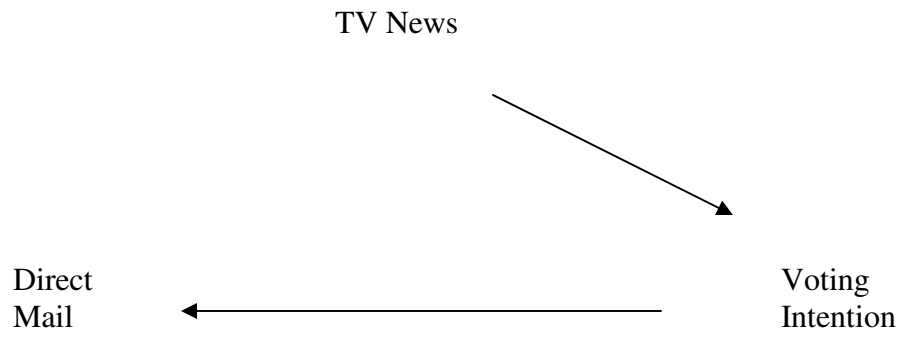
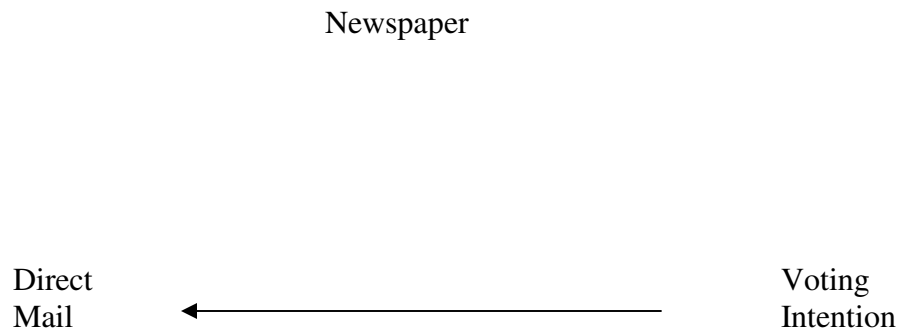


Figure 19

The Positive Relationships among Newspaper Reading, Direct Mail, and Voting Intention



Appendix A

The Allocation of States in Each Domain

Domain	States
Non-battleground	AL, CT, DC, DE, ID, IN, KS, MA, MD, MS, MT, ND, NE, NJ, NY, RI, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WY
Senate only battleground	CA, GA, IL, KY, NC, OK, SC, SD
Presidential battleground	AR, AZ, CO, IA, LA, ME, MI, MN, MO, NH, NM, NV, OR, PA, WA, WI, WV
Single State 1	FL
Single State 2	OH

Appendix B

Sample Size by States

	State	n	State	n
1	AL	29	NE	11
2	AZ	57	NV	22
3	AR	32	NH	20
4	CA	218	NJ	43
5	CO	57	NM	22
6	CT	19	NY	90
7	DE	5	NC	51
8	DC	2	ND	6
9	FL	201	OH	400
10	GA	44	OK	26
11	ID	8	OR	53
12	IL	92	PA	174
13	IN	40	RI	7
14	IA	47	SC	31
15	KS	17	SD	6
16	KY	30	TN	33
17	LA	70	TX	105
18	ME	23	UT	12
19	MD	33	VT	4
20	MA	42	VA	45
21	MI	150	WA	87
22	MN	82	WV	25
23	MS	18	WI	91
24	MO	93	WY	3
25	MT	6		

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