Campaigning in Context:
A Practical Statewide Study of Correlations between Campaign Contact Methods, Partisanship, Timing, Frequency, Population Density, and Regionalism on Voter Turnout

By
© 2018

Marcus P. Williamson
M.A., The University of Kansas, 2016
M.A., The University of Limerick, 2010
B.A., Oklahoma City University, 2008

Submitted to the graduate degree program in Political Science and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____

Chair: Professor Mark Joslyn

_____

Professor Donald Haider-Markel

_____

Professor Burdett Loomis

_____

Professor John Kennedy

_____

Professor Steven Maynard-Moody

Date Defended: April 3, 2018

The dissertation committee for Marcus P. Williamson certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Campaigning in Context:
A Practical Statewide Study of Correlations between Campaign Contact Methods, Partisanship, Timing, Frequency, Population Density, and Regionalism on Voter Turnout

_____

Chair: Professor Mark Joslyn

Date Approved: April 3, 2018

Abstract

Studies of campaign influence on individual voter turnout typically analyze responses from a single door-to-door, telephonic, or mail interaction involving a non-partisan source contacting individuals in a localized urban area. I argue these investigations are unsatisfying. They do not consider hyperpartisanship, campaign micro-targeting strategy developed from large data collection, regional diversity, and repeated contact attempts. This study examined partisan campaign contact correlation with voter turnout utilizing a "real-world" statewide dataset created from a coordinated partisan get out the vote (GOTV) effort during the 2014 election cycle. Four traditional GOTV methods were investigated: volunteer door-to-door, volunteer telephone call, postal mail, and professional interactions. Treatment and control groups were empirically tested against a dependent variable of whether or not a voter cast a ballot following the attempted partisan contact. This large data set allowed for an analysis of several conditions supporting my argument. These included a voter's partisan affiliation, when the contact occurred, how often a voter was contacted, the region where the contacted voter lives, and local population density. The results presented many findings distinctive from previous scholarship. Partisan volunteer door-to-door contact was not always the best method to increase voter turnout. Different contact methods show stronger correlations with voting among various partisan groups. Turnout among the treatment groups was higher or lower dependent upon when contact occurred. Any campaign contact closer to Election Day generally improved voting likelihood among aligned partisans, but not with voters registered as unaffiliated or anti-partisan. Additionally, contact frequency resulted in dissimilar turnout levels among treatment groups dependent on contact method and partisan affiliation. The data also showed unique reactions to each contact method contingent on the voter's congressional district or local population density. These results have implications on

iii

our understanding of individual voter behavior, partisanship, contact timing and frequency

correlation with turnout, large-district campaign strategy, and regional GOTV efforts.

Table of Contents

vi

Tables and Figures

Tables

Figures

Chapter One

Introduction

American voter turnout scholarship largely focuses on methods used by candidates to persuade voters to cast a ballot in their favor. This seems straightforward, as a candidate who earns at least one more vote than his or her opponent(s) typically wins an election. However, real world strategies are not as simple as trying to appeal to more voters. A race is not won by being more popular through persuasion alone, but by activating more supportive voters to cast their ballot in an election or disengaging unsupportive voters from participating. This consideration of voter turnout is important and has not yet been fully examined in the literature.

Unanswered questions ask not only what voter contact methods are effective for activating supportive voters, but also how regional factors change campaign field effectiveness to "get out the vote" (GOTV). Are these contact methods associated with higher or lower turnout when applied at different times during an election cycle? Does the partisanship of a region relate to a partisan campaign effort to GOTV? Is more contact always correlated to a positive outcome? How have traditional field contact methods changed in the modern campaign era with social media targeting, cellular text messaging, emails, and other recently activated forms of communication?

The data to be presented examines partisan campaign contact with potential voters, and if voters are more likely to vote in an election as a result. This dissertation finds evidence indicating door-to-door contact is *not* always the best campaign GOTV method to increase voter turnout. I also investigate other variables associated with partisan campaign contact that correlate to a change in voter behavior. Among these are partisan affiliation, contact frequency, when in an election cycle the contact occurs, the region the voter lives in, and population density.

Virtually no previous research on voter turnout utilizes internal party data with large sample sizes assembled from actual partisan efforts to support hypotheses. This study investigates real world data developed from a partisan source during the 2014 general election cycle in Kansas to understand the association of campaign efforts on voter turnout. Voter persuasion will not be considered in this study. With the ability to examine the actual effects that one party and several campaign efforts may have had on the voting public, data will be compared to how several variables relate to voter turnout. Modern campaigns are able to use large data sets to micro-target and micro-message individual registered voters. Therefore, campaigns are designed differently in the modern era of large data, social media, and electronic communication. The study of how campaigns target individuals and the outcomes produced must also adapt to the modern era. The focus must shift from viewing voter participation as a question of how a group reacts to mass media to an understanding of how individual voters react in their specific situation to various campaign sponsored stimuli.

The first situation to be studied is the often-reviewed contact methods a campaign may use and its relationship to voter turnout. This includes partisan volunteer phone calls, identification contacts conducted by professional firms, postal mail, and partisan volunteer door-to-door canvassing. The second factor to be considered is the frequency of these contact methods, i.e., how often targeted individual voters are contacted. Does more contact from a campaign mean a higher likelihood of voting? Is there a limit to how much contact is enough? Third, the impact of when an individual is contacted and its effects on turnout will be explored. Finally, correlations between contact method, timing, frequency, geographic region, and population densities to voter turnout are explored. The investigation of how different partisan

groups react to contact reveals important findings, particularly in a state that is electorally

dominated by a single political party.

Research on campaign activities typically focuses on the relationship between the core

elite campaign staff or a non-partisan source, and its effects on the voting public. Limited work

has been done regarding decisions made concerning one-on-one voter engagement through a

partisan campaign's volunteers who act as proxy messengers for a candidate. This study

contributes to expanding the literature. Messaging, partisan affiliation, voter ideology, and

timing have been applied to the understanding of message approval for the purpose of

persuasion. However, the literature must be expanded to address the relationship between contact

timing and frequency influences on GOTV.

This study's primary purpose is to determine relationships between state and local level

campaign activities and voter turnout. Comparing effects of partisan field campaign contact

tactics on turnout among aggregate state-level efforts to local and regional data is important. If

state-level activities in a rural state with a relatively small and partisan population are significant,

then clues for developing a greater understanding of the differences will be found. If not, then

institutional impacts are minimal among the campaign efforts vying for office at various

governmental levels in different localities.

The outcome has many implications not evident in other investigations. First, it will offer

a better understanding of campaign effects on a monocultural and heavily partisan electorate

such as Kansas. The variables brought by national level politics to the local for president or

congress have implications, as outside forces do not always align with the local electorate's

personality or culture. A sentiment particularly found in lower population rural states such as

Kansas is that "elites from the coasts" has a negative effect on the voting population, regardless of the ideology of the voter.

Second, this dissertation has further value for the practical political field through examination of contact methods on early voting turnout. Future campaigns are likely to continue volunteer activities for field outreach and related activities. Understanding how volunteers are utilized has interest to potential candidates and their campaigns. The rise in popularity of early voting is apparent in states with such systems. Understanding how campaigns can "bank" reliable votes early creates a calculus of early win versus loss votes, developing an Election Day strategy to ensure a win, or offsetting potentially early voting losses. As a strategic advantage, campaigns vie to earn early votes so they may focus on reaching low-propensity voters to maximize their total supporter turnout.

Third, the electorate's recent tendency to register as unaffiliated apart from either major party is in part due to dissatisfaction with the actions or messaging developed and disseminated by the parties. However, messaging literature suggests that cues a voter may take from the parties remains high, indicating a quandary of sorts. Are voters registered as unaffiliated more likely to take their messaging cues from independent sources, or are they still inclined to develop partisan attributes towards a preferred party regardless of registration status? Are unaffiliated voters targeted by campaigns? Is any contact positively correlated between a partisan source and unaffiliated voters? These research questions to be investigated relate to campaign influences on voter participation as they occurred in Kansas during the 2014 general election cycle. This introduction continues with an overview of the theoretical approaches, data, methods, and background of the 2014 election cycle in Kansas. It concludes with a chapter-by-chapter outline of this dissertation.

Do campaigns even matter?

The question of whether partisan candidate campaigns even matter has been a focus of the literature concerning democratic function, theory, and governmental ability. The question itself is broad and best investigated when broken down into two fundamental questions. First, do voters have the ability to change their behavior? Are members of a democratic society able to shift their nature when it comes to if and for whom they will vote? This question has been studied extensively, and rightly so as it investigates a core principle of the democracy equation. If the majority of a population is not interested in participating in the process of choosing governmental leaders, then democracy may not be the most prudent system for maximum public involvement.

The second fundamental question is if campaign activities engaging the masses win candidate support and votes. If they do not, then one could deduce the role of a campaign is only to promote awareness of a candidate and his or her issue positions to a specific population. This could mean that any energy to drive increased participation, or excitement within a set of persuadable voters that could tip the balance of an electoral outcome, is futile.

Political campaigns utilize various contact methods to coerce individuals and groups into actions that may not be typical for them. Voter behavior is not a constant. It varies as groups change when they will participate. It also changes at the individual level, as some ebb in and out of participation while others are consistently more likely to participate. Investigating what influences the change in behavior of those who are less likely to vote as active participants is the focus of this investigation. By looking at the sociological effects of voter behavior, the impact of close relationships and upbringing on determining personal actions is at the center of the Columbia School approach. Largely conducted in the 1940s and 1950s, this series of studies

conducted by scholars at Columbia University argued personal influences have the most impact on determining the long-term behavior of that individual in both the participation and persuasion context. Relationships matter in determining voter participation and vote choice. The seminal work by Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954) analyzed behaviors as they occurred during the 1948 presidential election, and concluded that the primary factor in determining how an individual will behave is derived from understanding his or her familial background. The views and practices held by close family members and friends have a major influence on predicting the behaviors of an individual. Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee argue it is only when inconsistency exists within these close relationships does the possibility of fluctuation arise in how a particular person behaves. Other influences, such as mass media exposure to news and campaign sponsored advertisements or persuasive outside group involvement, have lesser effects relative to the impact that close interactions have on an individual.

A subsequent argument was developed to study if an individual's relationships influence his or her behavior, or if he or she develops close relationships with those who are already similar to their preferred activities *post hoc*. Do our surroundings define us or do we define our surroundings by choosing where to establish ourselves? Campbell et al. (1960) presented a contribution to this discussion. Their conclusion argues the person chooses his or her ideological alignment and positioning before associating more closely with specific groups. Political parties play a particularly relevant role here. Other influences are judged against the ideology of an individual's party preference in a psychological fashion once the affiliation is set. Voter behavior may change, but only when major personal or social forces influence the individual to do so. This assertion has had a lasting impact on the study of electoral behavior.

Critics point to the idea of factors and situations an individual is exposed to during the course of his or her life will forever be compared to their original position (Key 1966).

Departing from social and psychological contexts, the idea emerges that individuals are not pinned to a specific sphere of behaviors ingrained through early learned and experienced situations. Rather, personal political behavior is an expression of situations experienced over a longer period of time. An individual's ideology or partisan identification may change depending on a series of variables an individual considers when determining his or her voting actions. This approach uses rational choice as its methodology and has its inception with the work of Downs (1957). However, the work of Riker and Ordeshook (1968) expanded the Downsian approach by adding a variable of "civic duty" to the calculus. In this approach, individuals consider their responsibility to society when considering election participation. The formula sets utility as a function of the individuals' belief in the candidate of their choice, modified by the possibility their preferred candidate can win an election. The consideration is placed against costs associated with voting and the sense of duty individuals feel they have with voting ($R = B * P - C + D$). All of these elements have spawned studies to consider important aspects of understanding (and possibly predicting) if an individual will participate in the voting process. Popkin et al.'s (1976) examination of ideology presents the case for parties to be instrumental in providing ideological shortcuts for an individual to utilize when considering variable B (the benefits of having the chosen candidate win an election) and determining the voter's personal attachment to a candidate. Likewise, the persuadability of an individual when considering to participate in an election and determining his or her vote choice has been studied and found to be a malleable factor that can be manipulated by various forces (Fiorina 1981; Coate, Conlin, and Moro 2008; Greene 2011). The costs (variable C) of voting have been reviewed through demographic and

ideological context (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), as well as various legal barriers that may inhibit citizens from voting (Ansolabehere and Konisky 2006).

The duty variable (*D*) is of particular interest to this study. An aspect of this study's thesis is partisanship in terms of how voters respond to campaign contacts at an individual level. The partisan affiliations of both the campaign and targeted voter can influence the resulting likelihood of turnout following campaign contact. The attitudes surrounding personal duty are therefore important. Voting should not only be considered a civic duty, but also as a partisan duty. This conflates with variable B (the utility a person benefits from one candidate winning over another). The consideration is particularly important given the Republican Party's dominance in Kansas. Partisan campaign contacts may invoke different reactions among registered voters, dependent on their party registration or affiliation.

The duty variable presented in the Riker and Ordeshook discussion has been investigated extensively as a civic construct. This aspect is a regular feature of the American National Election Study (ANES), and has been reviewed in depth to show linkages with gender, age, and religiosity (Blais 2000). Turnout as a function of civic duty is not a constant, and socialization trends towards voting as a civic duty is decreasing in recent generations (Blais ibid.; Wattenberg 2008). The reliance on self-reported voting found in most studies may result in a bias due to misreporting actual behaviors (Katosh and Traugott 1981), particularly among those who are highly educated (Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986). This may lead to faulty correlations between civic duty and turnout.

The social protocol directing sections of the population to misrepresent their voting behaviors towards over-participation shows the importance of duty to among individuals as it relates to turnout. The sense of voting duty guides people to a perception that they are required to

vote in order to be a contributing member of society. If this sense of personal duty was unimportant, the variable should be dropped from consideration when reviewing turnout likelihood. However, since there is a consistent tendency to over-report this behavior, duty and turnout seem to have a strong relationship to one another. While comparative politics has provided interesting analysis on the effects of duty in countries with compulsory voting laws (Panagopoulos 2008), the American context may only deal with this condition as an element of responsibility manipulated by outside forces.

One outside force that can influence voting duty is political parties. While the term "duty" has been widely investigated in the context of civic duty, it should also be reviewed in terms of partisan duty. The modern era of hyperpartisanship resulted in widening the divide between individuals of opposing parties and increasing the number of individuals registering as unaffiliated voters. Therefore, we must consider the duty someone who is a strong backer of a political party feels towards supporting that party's candidates in election. Can a campaign inspire a sense of partisan duty to affect behavior towards action?

Previous study of GOTV methods

Research on campaign actions is diverse. Studies investigate GOTV efforts made through secondary mobilization means, including those conducted by interest groups, activists, and volunteers (Cox 2015; Enos and Hersh 2015). Scholars ask if campaign effects are able to change the level of individual participation. An individual's ideology or partisan identification may change, or even be reversed, depending on a series of variables that each individual considers when determining his or her actions.

Regular campaign field activities engaging the electorate on an individual basis are compelling for research because of the ability for empirical quantitative data to be developed

from observation. This is particularly true when investigating campaign efforts on turnout. Campaigns enact GOTV activities designed to inspire targeted individuals to participate. At the forefront of campaign contact method literature stands the work of Gerber and Green. Their 2000 study investigated the population of New Haven, Connecticut, during the 1998 election cycle. It still stands as a point from which much of the recent literature investigating turnout behavior takes its cues.

Gerber and Green's 2000 investigation tested three methods of direct individual contact: telephone calls, postal mail pieces, and door-to-door canvassing. However, several aspects of their conclusions are questionable, particularly when applied to partisan or ideological campaigns. First among these are the findings themselves, which state door-to-door contact resulted in the greatest impact upon voter turnout. Contacts were made by paid canvassers, most of whom were graduate students. This situation is quite different than the typical campaign volunteer. The demographic of a graduate student, particularly in New Haven, would be highly educated, informed, and likely be trained to remove any ideological slant an unpaid campaign volunteer is likely to bring. The demographic representation of the graduate student was such that more than half of the canvassers were African-American and/or fluent in Spanish as well (pp. 655, ibid.). This is not representative of the population of New Haven as a whole. Also, the message delivered was non-partisan in nature, pairing with the League of Women Voters. This statement carries a different implication than one in which a party, political ideology, or partisan candidate is supported.

The non-partisan message was not limited to the canvassing effort. The study's direct mail and telephone call elements were performed by paid individuals. Again, this influences the results. A traditional campaign operation in the field may or may not use consultants to perform

regular contact activity with paid professional callers. Gerber and Green's non-partisan message delivered by paid workers does incorporate the element of civic duty initially proposed in the Riker and Ordeshook equation, however. The mail pieces were designed to include patriotic messaging that directly appealed to a sense of civic pride that the potential voter may or may not hold within a partisan frame. The recited script delivered by telephone and direct door contact also had the same tone developed to appeal to the recipients' sense of general civic duty, not accounting for potential partisan influences.

Figure 1.1 – Partisan campaign targeting strategy in ideologically symmetrical and asymmetrical populations

a) Standard symmetrical Downsian approach
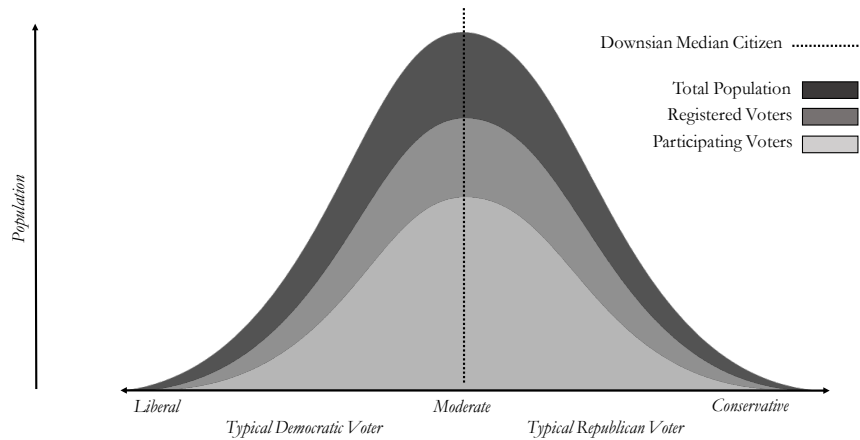
b) Ideologically asymmetric population
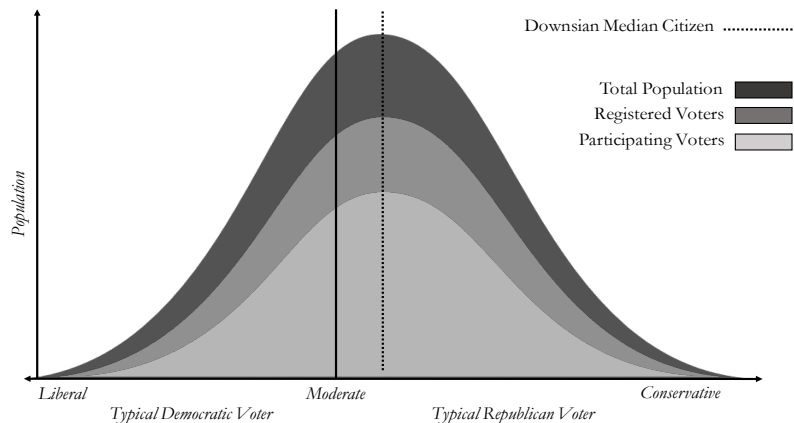
c) Shifting voter turnout in an ideologically asymmetric population
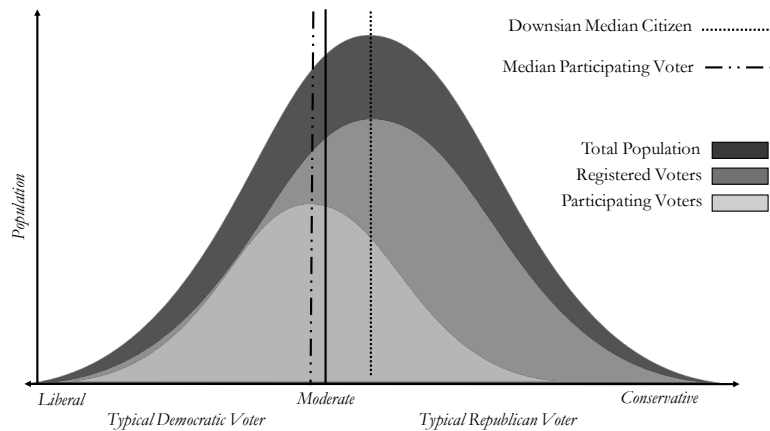
The arguments that Downs and Gerber and Green presented are compelling. However, there is another flaw found in both of these research studies. The assumption behind each of these approaches is that a political electorate will be equally dispersed across an ideological spectrum as in Figure 1.1(a). This is not always the case. Many districts have an electorate that is ideologically skewed in one way or another. This is represented as a conservative majority district in Figure 1.1(b). To overcome this deficit, savvy minority party candidates will not strictly appeal to the median voter in a hyperpartisan culture. Instead, they must adopt tactics that change the participatory population of a district into one where it is more aligned in favor of a candidate, as Figure 1.1(c) illustrates. This is done through various contact methods targeting potential voters for new registrations and turnout. If a minority party campaign can shift the participating electorate toward one that favors their positions, their candidate has a better chance of victory.

Figure 1.2 – Elite and volunteer campaign interactions with potential voters

Partisan campaign
(Primary elite message sender)

Primary/elite direct message contact methods
- *Campaign events*
- *Press release*
- *Television ads*
- *Radio ads*
- *Print ads*
- *Postal mail*
- *Email*
- *Online advertising*
- *Social media*
- *Robocalls*
- *Paid door-to-door*
- *Paid ID calls*
- *Paid persuasion calls*

Partisan campaign volunteer/proxy
(Primary message receiver, secondary message sender)

Secondary/volunteer/ proxy message contact methods
- *Door-to-door*
- *Postal mail*
- *Email*
- *Social media promotion*
- *Letters to the editor*
- *Text messaging*
- *Social network interaction*

Potential voter
(Primary or secondary message receiver)

Voter interactions do not exist in a vacuum; they originate from several sources. As Figure 1.2 outlines, a modern partisan campaign will utilize several different contact points and methods to engage targeted voters. As the Gerber and Green (2000) study was conducted at a time when internet and cell phone technologies were not nearly as developed as they are today, one would expect variations to influence a potential voter's decision to participate in an election. For example, the message sender may vary between the elite and direct partisan campaign source or a secondary volunteer partisan proxy source. The partisanship of the message has effects, as does the frequency and number of interactions. These issues were not considered in the New Haven studies.

A second weakness of the Gerber and Green study is the ignored timing variable. Although not directly discussed in the study, when a contact was made should have an effect on

the decision to vote. Persuasion studies demonstrate the earlier a voter decides on whom they will vote for, the less likely they are to be moved from that position (Nir and Druckman 2008). This presents an interesting case for campaign strategy where contact timing or voting may have more to do with the behavior among those with a higher cost barrier to voting, a lower sense of duty towards voting, or a foreseen lower benefit in election participation.

A third unsatisfying element of the Gerber and Green's study relates to the number of campaign contacts an individual receives. This element was a part of Gerber and Green's continued work on investigating campaign strategies with mobilization efforts (Bergan et al. 2005), but not in their original 2000 study. Increased campaign contact with specific voters can increase turnout. This makes a strong case for multiple campaign contacts contributing to achieving electoral success. Exactly how much voter contact is needed in a given situation is unknown.

Gerber and Green's 2000 findings did not go unchallenged, particularly regarding their methodology and analysis (Imai 2005). Gerber and Green did publish a reaction to this challenge, adjusting a portion of their data processing methodology (Gerber and Green 2005a). This adjustment did not change their initial findings, however. Gerber and Green have gone on to conduct many more studies (Gerber, Green, and Nickerson 2003), researching the influence of telephone calls (Gerber and Green 2005b), the effects of partisan mail pieces (Gerber and Green 2003; Gerber, Green, and Green 2003; Michelson, Bedolla, and McConnell 2009), campaign spending (Gerber 2004), emails (Druckman and Green 2013), and the design of future field experiments (Gerber and Green 2012). Their regularly updated books for academics and campaign practitioners originally published in 2004 places them at the academic forefront of the study on voter contact and turnout effects (Gerber and Green 2004; Green and Gerber 2012).

The Gerber and Green studies do not stand alone. Nickerson et al. (2006) replicated elements of the New Haven study with a similar analysis of the Michigan Democratic Party's Youth Coordinated Campaign activity during the 2002 Michigan gubernatorial election cycle. Campaigns utilized door hangers (a substitute for direct mail pieces), volunteer phone calls, and door-to-door canvassing. Nickerson's study addressed some of the same concerns as those listed above with the Gerber and Green work, namely they directly incorporated volunteer campaign efforts to deliver the various messages and not paid consultants or organizations. This treatment of potential voters also included a partisan message and delivery system, as it was conducted by an element of the Michigan Democratic Party to potential voters. Nickerson's study found all three methods of contact have merit.

Partisan message effects

The partisan duty variable has effects on campaign activity within the electorate in terms of GOTV. Of interest is the relationship between party messaging with the public. The trend of partisan activities is more sharply focused on candidate support rather than developing particular policy relationships between partisan government officials and the masses (Aldrich 2011).

Message content and its delivery to the public through mass media dispersion and consumption has had interest in the past, beginning with the investigations on message priming, framing, and agenda setting (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Zaller 1992; Zaller and Feldman 1992; Chong and Druckman 2007). The development of social media and its impact on political discourse is ongoing. Discussions of the impact on political engagement (Dahlgren 2009) and electoral behavior (Kushin and Yamamoto 2010) shows some preliminary signs of social

affecting mass voting behavior in both persuasion and participation. This is particularly true at the individual level (Bennett 2012).

While the relationship between mass media and attitudes is important, the context of campaign message interaction with individual voters is not the focus of this study. The function of mass media will be taken here as a constant, particularly with the possibility that exposure to opposing campaign mass messaging is unbalanced towards one campaign over another, predisposed affinity towards a particular ideology or party will immunize most voters from persuasive messaging (Zaller 1992). Only direct contact campaign activities between a campaign itself and individual potential voters will be assessed. The campaign activities investigated here are live and recorded professional ID contacts, volunteer phone calls, campaign postal mail pieces, and volunteer door-to-door canvassing.

Background of the 2014 election cycle in the Kansas context

This study will utilize data developed within Kansas during the 2014 election cycle. Kansas had challengers in each of its four congressional districts that year, as well as a contested U.S. Senate race. In addition, five statewide elected offices were on the ballot: Governor and Lieutenant Governor (as a ticket), Kansas Secretary of State, Kansas Attorney General, Kansas State Treasurer, and Kansas State Insurance Commissioner. Republican incumbents running for re-election held each of these statewide offices. All 125 State House of Representative seats, two special state Senate elections, and county level offices were also on the ballot. No major campaigns were in effect for any local measures or statewide referenda.

Despite the lack of a presidential cycle, these races for major statewide offices created a charged political atmosphere. Several unique factors also drew increased national attention. Most notable was the contentious U.S. Senate race. Long-time incumbent Republican Senator Pat

Roberts first defended his re-election campaign against self-proclaimed Tea Party leader Milton Wolf in a primary, before turning his attention to the general election to face Democratic nominee Chad Taylor. Taylor himself won the Democratic Party's nomination in a tight primary race against Patrick Wiesner, earning victory by less than 7% of the closed primary vote.

The general election took a turn when Independent candidate Greg Orman announced his candidacy before the August primary, developing several potential scenarios widely discussed in the media. Included was the possibility an independent Orman could be the deciding vote in a U.S. Senate projected to have nearly even partisan representation. This story piqued national media interest. As Orman gained in the polls, support waned for Democratic candidate Chad Taylor. Taylor filed a petition with Republican Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach on September 3 to be removed from the November ballot. The Kansas Secretary of State's office initially accepted Taylor's withdrawal notice, but then denied it claiming that the wording used on the notice did not meet the requirements stated in Kansas statute. Taylor sued Kobach for his right to withdrawal from the race. A secondary law suit developed when a Democratic primary voter, who was later determined to be the father of a staffer for Republican Governor Sam Brownback, sued Taylor and the Kansas Democratic Party (KDP) for eliminating the right given to the closed primary voters in nominating the party's candidate. The Kansas Supreme Court heard the case in an expedited process in early September, finding in favor of Taylor and allowing for the removal of his name from the ballot. The resulting decision required the Office of Kansas Secretary of State to re-develop the November ballot, placing in jeopardy the printing and distribution of early ballots to mail and overseas voters. During this time, the U.S. Senate race allowed for Orman and Roberts to proceed head-to-head, with Orman rapidly rising in the polls to catch Roberts by mid-October.

The U.S. Senate race was not the only highly contested race in Kansas during the 2014 cycle. The race for Kansas Governor received much attention as well. Incumbent Republican Governor Sam Brownback faced a limited primary opponent, but was challenged by Democratic nominee Paul Davis in the general election. Davis developed momentum early with high fundraising levels and established his potential as a serious challenger to Brownback. Polls during the 2014 cycle often showed the race to be within the margin of error or slightly in Davis' favor.

Table 1.1 – Vote percentage for Kansas governor, 1990-2014

Year	Democratic Vote (%)	Republican Vote (%)	Win Margin (%)
2014	46.1	49.8	3.7
2010	32.2	63.2	31.0
2006	57.9	40.4	17.5
2002	52.0	45	7.0
1998	22.6	73.3	50.7
1994	38.9	61.1	22.2
1990	48.6	42.6	6.0

Note: Third party candidates not included, resulting in a non-100% total

While Kansas has not elected a Democrat to the U.S. Senate since 1932, the balance between parties in the Governor's office has remained even since 1974, the year Kansas gubernatorial term lengths were extended from two years to four. Three Democratic and four Republican governors have been elected since that time. As Table 1.1 shows, the margin of the electorate swinging between Democratic and Republican gubernatorial candidates has varied widely since 1990, with some 30% of the voters willing to vote for the other party's candidate. The 2014 gubernatorial election provided the closest margins between the major candidates in terms of percentage and raw electoral vote in the past 25 years, highlighting the competitiveness of that particular race.

Kansas Democratic Party Coordinated Campaign field plan

As midterm cycles in Kansas involve campaigns for Governor and Lt. Governor (as a ticket), Kansas Secretary of State, Kansas Attorney General, Kansas Treasurer, Kansas Insurance Commissioner, and 125 Kansas House seats, four U.S. House seats, as well as potentially a U.S. Senate race, the impact of several races vying for the attention of voters is higher than may be expected in other states during non-presidential election cycles. The effort of a party to unify efforts across these numerous races has traditionally been developed into a coordinated campaign where resources from the various individual campaigns may be shared with one another. Given the geographically large area of Kansas, this effort assists partisan campaigns with fewer resources and increases impact in all of Kansas' 105 counties that cover more than 82,000 square miles. This KDP effort is traditionally known as the Kansas Coordinated Campaign (KCC). The 2014 KCC comprised campaigns for congressional, statewide, statehouse, and many county offices. The required financial buy-in covered the expenses of shared office space, field staff, and other resources. The intent was to promote partisan candidates across the state while complying with election laws that prevent the co-mingling of money between of state and federal level candidates.

The 2014 KCC asked candidates across the state to provide strategic input and financial resources towards the effort. Preliminary campaign strategies were then disseminated to the campaigns to create a cohesive partisan effort as part of their individual campaign strategy. With the natural differences between candidates and offices, the KCC has traditionally focused on field operations allowing for individual candidates to focus on specific communications strategy, fundraising, and supplemental field efforts. These shared field efforts endeavored to promote the entire ticket of Democratic candidates, helping to support those candidates with fewer resources,

along with those candidates who were better funded. Campaign field aspects are traditionally directed efforts at the grassroots level. This includes door-to-door canvassing, phone calls to voters, yard and highway signage, and other activities to directly engage individual voters on a personal level using volunteers as proxies for the campaigns.

Volunteers are typically dedicated to a particular campaign, with the majority of interest directed to "top of the ticket" candidates. As the 2014 cycle in Kansas did not have a Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, the majority of volunteer focus was directed towards the gubernatorial contest. Volunteers work without pay and are driven by ideological reasons to activate. A disconnect exists between the campaign's highly ideological volunteers and the voters they contact. Volunteer proxies are not as effective at persuading supportive voters (Enos and Hersch 2015).

As the 2014 election cycle developed, so did the KCC's field plan. Staff hiring and assignment to four designated sites across the state guided volunteers who were recruited and organically arrived to support the field efforts.[1] Through the KDP's use of a Democratic National Committee (DNC) proprietary voter file database known as VoteBuilder, likely voters were identified and organized into target lists for volunteers to contact in order to either 1) increase their likelihood to turnout for the general election, or 2) to persuade moderate voters to cast their ballot for Democratic candidates. Generally speaking, KCC staff were able to identify these targets based on previous voting history and a series of rankings or support scores developed with proprietary methods to determine those voters with a high likelihood for persuasion.

The relationship between 2014 KCC paid and volunteer contacts with targeted voters is the focus of this study. Investigating the impact of partisan field efforts on increasing turnout is

---

[1] These selected locations were Overland Park (Johnson County, KS-03), Topeka (Shawnee County, KS-02), Pittsburg (Crawford County, KS-02), and Wichita (Sedgwick County, KS-04).

analyzed with independent variables of partisanship, timing, frequency, regionalism, and population density in the following chapters. Understanding state level partisan campaign operations and their impact on voting populations illuminates variances along demographic and ideological lines. Looking at how these relationships interact with one another is significant for understanding campaign strategy, and develops theory looking at interpersonal political relationships, particularly in state level elections in partisan environments with rural areas.

Structure of the study

This study investigates voter turnout as it relates to volunteer phone calls, volunteer door-to-door canvassing, paid ID contacts, and elite messaged and delivered postal mail contact methods conducted through the 2014 KCC to potential voters. It analyzes the situation from new perspectives that Gerber and Green and others did not fully consider. Data collected from the 2014 Election Cycle by the KDP's GOTV efforts will be reviewed. These unique data allow an examination of a very large set of observations, sample sizes into the hundreds of thousands, and a variety of pertinent independent variables. The proprietary data were made available for research with permission from appropriate levels of KDP and DNC administration with the understanding they be used only for academic purposes following a data de-identification process eliminating potential personal information.

The data collected by the KDP during the 2014 election cycle included personal demographic categories and turnout rates for potential voters. These have been merged with a second data set from the KDP that recorded attempted contacts made by volunteer and paid efforts during the 2014 cycle. They will be correlated to various demographics (age, gender, urban or rural population, and ideology), as well as other independent variables (contact timing and frequency) to discover possible relationships to voter turnout. For this study, data will be

limited to contacts made by 2014 KCC efforts, and will only investigate contact attempts after Primary Election Day on August 5, 2014, through the General Election Day on November 4, 2014.

This study's second aspect is analysis of when a voter was successfully contacted relative to Election Day. Messaging and message impact have focused primarily on persuading the potential voter toward one candidate or another. Previous studies on voter persuasion have found most voters unable to recall the specific details of a campaign's message or platform over time. However, the memory of initial emotional impression is lasting. If voters experience an element of "forgetfulness," then the timing of any contact should have a measureable effect. The timing variable is found here to be correlated with variations in turnout.

Using statewide and individual congressional house districts across the state, two groups will be tested from the available data using individuals as the unit of analysis. The first group will be those who were targeted by the KDP to receive 2014 KCC contact. This group will be divided again into those who were successfully contacted or not, as well as by contact method. These two main groups will be tested against one another to study arguments focused on contact method type, professional versus volunteer contact, frequency, timing, partisanship, region, and population density.

While mass media impacts on behavior and attitudes are important, the context of partisan messaging and interaction with voters at an individual level are the focus for this study. Again, the effects of mass media will be taken here as a constant, particularly with the possibility that even where the exposure to opposing campaign mass messaging is unbalanced towards one campaign over another, predisposed affinity toward a particular ideology or party identification

will immunize most voters from persuasive messaging (Zaller 1992). As such, only campaign activities that directly contacted individual potential voters will be assessed.

Chapter Two will begin the investigation by measuring relationships between various traditional field contact methods and turnout. The chapter will report on much of the previous research. However, this study uses partisan sources that can act as factors influencing potential voters. The literature review will suggest that several variations have not adequately been addressed in previous scholarship. Partisan source influences will also be reviewed.

Chapter Three expands the investigation of contact method by examining the correlations between contact timing and frequency on voting likelihood. The results support the argument that both factors correlate with voter turnout dependent on the contact method delivered by partisan messengers. Evidence demonstrates partisan sourced messages influence reaction among potential voters. The professionalism of the delivery source is also reviewed.

Chapter Four tests regionalism and population density impacts of partisan GOTV efforts. As Kansas' geographical size and population diversity are factors allowing for this examination, previous research on these variables will be applied to the 2014 KCC strategy. A similar program instituted in different locations and populations may have different results. The effects of contact method, timing, frequency, and message vary between urban, suburban, and rural voters when delivered in different sections of the state.

Chapter Five will conclude this dissertation with a summary of findings and suggestions for future research that may reveal further relationships between field tactics and contact methods with voting behaviors. In many cases, the nature of campaigns is changing from an effort to increase participation to one that may concentrate on depressing participation by the opponent's supporters. The compounding factor of relatively new communication methods

provided by mobile telephones, text messaging, social media, email, and other electronic communications has consequences that will require new studies of campaign effects in the future.

Chapter Two

The Relationships between Campaign Contact Methods and Voter Turnout

The atmosphere surrounding campaigns for elected office can generate excitement among parts of the population. While a campaign can harness supporter enthusiasm with volunteer activities to promote the candidate, major campaigns will also utilize other elements to achieve electoral victory. Understanding some modern campaign contact methods are significantly different now from even a decade ago, this study looks at traditional field efforts still in use. Campaign fieldwork seeks to communicate directly with voters at the individual level. While a professional communications team develops much of the message, a field team carries the message using volunteer or professional efforts via telephone, door-to-door canvassing, or other techniques to targeted potential voters.

Scholarship has investigated the value of various voter contact methods and their relationship on turnout. Most notably, Gerber and Green (2000) examined effects of contact methods on potential voters from a nonpartisan source during a municipal election cycle in New Haven, Connecticut. While the investigation provided valuable insight, there were limitations. Typically, successful campaign contacts deliver a heavily partisan message. Partisanship can have effects on message receivers. This partisan variable was not evaluated in the original Gerber and Green study. Understanding the effects of partisanship in any typical election cycle is important.

This chapter reports on specific contact methods traditionally used by campaigns. While this investigation uses variables similar to Gerber and Green's, the context will be much different. First, the data collected here are from a partisan source. Second, this study was conducted at a statewide level with a significant rural demographic. Instead of East Coast urban

populations, this investigation will look at Kansas during the 2014 election cycle. Third, these data were collected during the cell phone and Internet era, two changes that were absent in the original Gerber and Green study. Fourth, the data reviewed will analyze real-world efforts conducted by both volunteer activists and paid field workers.

Kansas has significant Republican single party dominance. Understanding partisan factors in campaign field work is important as minority party efforts work to achieve electoral success. This study empirically examines interpersonal interactions between a campaign's traditional field canvass and the electorate as it relates to voter turnout. Variables shown to have statistical significance in relationship to these various contact methods include professionalism of the campaign message deliverer, relevant location, region population density, and partisan affiliation of the potential voter. The findings suggest campaign field efforts do matter in terms of increasing voter turnout. Partisanship and contact professionalism play important considerations in understanding how effective a get out the vote (GOTV) effort may be. The relationship between party affiliation of the campaign volunteer and of the voter matters. Different partisan message receivers react differently to the contact method used and the professionalism of the contact. The results reported in this chapter reveal important findings that will be further investigated in subsequent chapters.

Previous study of contact method on voter turnout

Research on campaign activities is diverse, but many recent studies and models emphasize mobilizing voters through efforts conducted by activists and volunteers (Cox 2015; Enos and Hersh 2015). The effectiveness of traditional campaign voter engagement methods to increase persuasion and turnout using volunteer activists has consistent academic support. While overall turnout rates have fluctuated in the past, mobilization efforts by campaigns are not seen

to be the cause. The emphasis on contacting potential voters during this time period did not wane (Goldstein and Ridout 2002). Campaigns are still influential in their importance for voter mobilization, particularly at the local level (Holbrook and Weinschenk 2014; Alvarez, Hopkins, and Sinclair 2010). Volunteer phone banking at the state level has been shown to increase voter turnout (Gerber and Green 2001), but is more effective when calls are made by professional phone banks compared to volunteers (Nickerson 2007a). This signals that the quality of phone calls has a significant impact on effectiveness (Nickerson, Friedrichs, and King 2006). Door-to-door canvassing for campaigns at the local level consistently has the strongest relationship to voter turnout (Gerber and Green 2000; Arceneaux and Nickerson 2009). Such canvassing has the highest return on investment in cases where canvassers work in their own neighborhoods (Sinclair, McConnell, and Michelson 2013). The literature supports the argument that all traditional voter contact efforts, despite having varying returns, are essentially similar regarding their cost-benefit effectiveness (Nickerson, Friedrichs, and King 2006).

Despite the scholarship indicating positive influences campaigns can have on voter mobilization and participation in an election, concerns continue regarding effectiveness of activist volunteers. Social pressures increase the value of voting, balanced by the closeness of a race and involvement by voter's peers (Shachar and Nalebuff 1999; McClurg, 2004; Abrams and Soskice 2011). These engagement effects depend on the networks that a campaign's elite contact might activate (Cox 2015). This results in a situation where a candidate who faces a lower expectation of likely supporters from the outset must engage more voters through paid and media messaging efforts to be successful. The strategy is executed with the hope that primary engagement will then increase supporter involvement for volunteer contact situations, as

27

interpersonal contacts can have a higher impact than media engagement (Fowler 2005; Bond et al. 2012).

Campaigns are commonly at the mercy of activist "good will" to support their efforts. The ability to recruit highly effective volunteers can be limited. Where recruitment is active, a strong rational emphasis emerges to seek out volunteers who will remain dedicated to the campaign's efforts. Little consideration is given by the campaign to select volunteers who may be the most effective (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Volunteers utilized by a campaign tend to be more socially active and particularly partisan. Heightened partisanship may create challenges for activists who align with a candidate on a specific issue important to the individual activist, but not strongly enough to remain in step if a party de-emphasizes its position on that specific issue (Heaney 2017). This presents a narrow section of the population from which a campaign is likely to develop the volunteer pool (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). A rational campaign will seek out activists who are already engaged in social behavior and ask those who are likely to volunteer to participate as proxies due to their higher likelihood to mobilize and lower cost to activate. This is done even though the demographics of an electorate may more closely resemble inactive populations with whom inactive potential volunteers may share many common traits (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999; Lim 2010).

Activist contact elements have been discussed in studies using social mobilization theory. Highly engaged voters act as nodes who disperse the general campaign messaging through their network, with empirical effects noted among those situations. Comparative politics provides some points for reference, looking at socioeconomic status as a driver of participation (Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978), habitual and institutional obstructions (Blais and Rubenson 2013), and

measuring the effects of the social transmission of knowledge and values in a non-U.S. context (Finkel and Smith 2011). This relates directly to campaign mobilization strategies.

Campaign volunteer recruiting and activation for participation in traditional field efforts has been studied at the presidential level. Enos and Hersh (2015) reviewed the 2012 Obama presidential campaign as it operated in highly competitive swing states. Their findings suggested methods used by the campaign through activist volunteers distributed the Obama campaign's message to targeted voters were hampered by social and cultural differences between the non-local activists and local voters. Activists were likely to be from culturally different backgrounds than the local population, as the national campaign focused efforts on swing states and recruited volunteers from across the country to work in those targeted areas. This led to an activist population that was predominately white, male, educated, younger, and more ideologically liberal than the targeted voters they were engaging. While the activist volunteer effort was influential in mobilizing the vote, the conclusions reached by Enos and Hersh point to the argument that the efforts could have been more effective if the activist demographic more closely represented the targeted voter demographic.

The interaction between a volunteer activist from one party and an individual potential voter of another party has distinctive effects. Partisanship is a more important factor of consideration for voters than culture or race (Westwood et al. 2017). Rahn's (1993) work argues voters will rely on heuristic-based processing to draw conclusions about information when party stereotypes are available. This has a driving implication regarding whether a voter rationally considers the information presented by someone of an opposing party. The tendency to maintain an argument frame developed by sources from which a voter trusts will dominate new information. The number of Americans who report engaging in interpersonal persuasion during

an election cycle has increased over the past decade. This likely increases the amount of political information obtained by those who are less engaged. However, it may have resulted in polarizing opinions for and against candidates based on a person's party preference.

"Value matching" between the sender and receiver of a message promotes closer attention to the deliverer than the message, as dissonance increases the possibility for message rejection. This is particularly true when the message sender was of a rival political party and conjured unwelcomed values within the receiver (Nelson and Garst 2005). A conversation with an activist holding an opposing ideology is likely to solidify the views held previously by a message receiver (Thorson 2014). The effect may be compounded as volunteer activists who work on campaigns are more ideologically extreme than those who actively participate in other ways (Birkhead and Hershey 2017). People who live in relatively insular social networks and are not regularly exposed to diverse or opposing viewpoints lesser ability for sustaining for sustaining political tolerance and maintaining the democratic legitimacy needed for functional pluralistic participatory government (Mutz 2002).

What further investigation is needed?

Investigation of election behavior is based in a desire to comprehend the relationships between a candidate's attractiveness and methods used to persuade the electorate. Acting under the presumption that a two party competition will result in a 50%+1 voter return in the standard American "winner takes all" system, campaigns strategize to engage enough potential voters to reach this margin. After conducting preliminary prediction analysis that determines the likely number of constituents who will participate in a given election, campaign strategy will typically develop voter target modeling. This includes understanding the base percentage of likely supporters. Modeling determines an approach that will 1) engage the highest number of

supportive voters to mobilize and turn out for the election, and 2) engage undecided likely voters to encourage their support for a specific candidate when they go to the polls. Campaign contacts with these two groups may happen through primary and secondary engagement efforts. Primary engagement is a direct communication from campaign elites to targeted voters via methods such as professional canvassing and paid media. Secondary engagement is the contact between campaign volunteers and potential voters, and is done through the relaying of campaign messaging through the common course of their regular social interactions and volunteer field contact methods.

Campaign elites typically develop a centrist message in order to appeal to the Downsian median voter (1957). However, activist volunteers may shift the centrist message to a more extremist position when conducting field work. The message originally created by elites may play out like a game of telephone with a message modified each time it is repeated from one person to another. There is little doubt that campaign interaction through volunteer door-to-door canvassing and phone calling influences potential voters, but if the effects are more similar to a secondary interaction than primary, how does the personality of the campaign volunteer proxy affect the success of the campaign's overall field efforts? This study's first argument is direct campaign contact methods continue to matter in terms of influencing voter turnout in the modern electronic communication era.

A second question builds from the first consideration. A change in individual voting behavior is most likely to occur following an encounter with someone who is ideologically and demographically similar to themselves. Are partisan campaign volunteers therefore too divergent to have an impact in turning out an unlikely voter? Stronger links between the message deliverer

in both the telephone and face-to-face contact elements must be reviewed in order to understand how personal influences during campaign activities may affect potential voter behavior.

Developing academic understanding of how micro-targeting strategy affects voting behavior is highly important to developing a larger theory of electoral interactions. Previous assumptions must be analyzed in a new light, and they require new datasets in order to quantitatively define how targeting strategies affect individuals. Such developments could lead toward understanding the causation of hyperpartisanship among the electorate and office holders, as well as refining a broader understanding of public interactions.

Acknowledging technological and informational development has evolved over recent years, the question arises of if the relationship between various demographics has also evolved at the personal level. While traditional campaign outreach has been from one sender to a large number of receiving voters, the interaction of an activist volunteer with individual voters through field operations is important. How do various independent variables, such as ideology and demography of the volunteer, relate to the same variables found within the individual sending, receiving, and disseminating of that message? If campaigns are competing for the median voter, they will use a median message. However, an ideologically extreme volunteer may interact with a moderate potential voter in a way that is unappealing to that voter. This would produce a negative response toward the candidate. The importance for an individual campaign volunteer to relate to a potential voter must be clarified. How the electorate responds to campaign messaging summarizes the questions that arise under this first consideration. How effective is an individual who tends to be ideologically extreme and highly participatory to the point of donating time and effort on behalf of a campaign? How does that approach relate to a low turnout voter of moderate ideology?

This study argues the methods of volunteer door-to-door canvassing and phone banking efforts to micro-target potential voters through activist volunteer proxies are not as effective as other methods. This is due to the perceived ideological difference between the activist volunteer and potential voter. This does not mean that there is no impact at all, but that variables in messaging and volunteer delivery inhibit the full potential that interpersonal contact could provide. The argument is developed from academic and research evidence that points toward the heightened dispersion between the electorate and the activist proxies who contact them, resulting in a lower level relationship that results in ineffective outcomes. Furthermore, volunteers could be more effectively utilized if they themselves were organized into specific sets that targeted demographically similar voting groups.

The next set of arguments investigated focus on the trend found in the electorate where more registered voters declare themselves unaffiliated from a party rather than as active members of one party or another. The implications of self-declared independence may make a voter more receptive to messaging cues from either party. This relates directly to the framing of issues and the cognitive bias coming from a message receiver's attitude of the message source. I directly challenge that assumption, and seek to provide evidence that despite an "independent" affiliation, partisan bias is present.

Finally, much of the previous scholarship used "small n" data that were collected from a local environment. Studies that investigated voter mobilization questions used observations from municipal and/or urban situations. The ability to analyze large data sets from statewide general election conditions may reveal trends that are counter to previous investigation. As elections typically are based on popular support, the urban population centers have been a viable laboratory to review electoral conditions. However, a large study that reviews the differences

between urban and rural environments will add to our understanding of campaign contact and its relationship to voter turnout.

Methods

The data collected were assembled through efforts made by the Kansas Democratic Party during the 2014 general election cycle. Using a shared database that recorded voter contact information used throughout the state for partisan means, data were collected by volunteer and paid partisan operatives. The unique data analyzed for this chapter are only selected observations that were conducted on potential voters with a single Kansas Coordinated Campaign (KCC) attempted contact. This data set is distinctive, as it is developed from a real world situation. The state-wide level allows for a comparison of not only a regular election cycle, but the ability to analyze both urban and rural conditions.

The observations are constructed into subgroups. The first subgroup is the targeted voter's partisan affiliation. Kansas allowed for voters to register as affiliated with one of four groups in 2014: Republican, Democratic, Libertarian, or unaffiliated. This study has divided the population into three groups: voters registered as Democratic, voters registered as Republican, and voters registered as third party (Libertarian) or unaffiliated.

The second subgroup divides the target population into those who were successfully and not successfully contacted by the 2014 KCC. A successful contact is defined as one in which a targeted voter had an actual interaction with either a volunteer or a paid campaign worker. An unsuccessful contact is one in which the operative attempted to contact the potential voter but did not actually interact with the targeted voter. Contact methods included in this study are volunteer door-to-door contact, live volunteer telephone calling, postal mail cards, and voter identification efforts with paid canvassing teams.

While the first three contact methods are likely familiar to all readers, the final method of "paid ID" may not be as clear. In this case, paid contractors are hired by campaigns to perform a survey among the electorate. Their scripted contact may be performed either in-person at a potential voter's door or over the telephone. These scripts identify the occupants of a particular address or telephone number to verify the campaign's communication lists, and conduct a basic survey of where the potential voter stands on issues and candidate preference. Some scripts may also include a pro-candidate message as well as a request for the potential voter to volunteer or otherwise activate if a very supportive voter is identified. This action is typically performed to help refine a campaign's field targeting strategy, develop a micro-targeted messaging strategy for particular demographics or geographic regions, or fulfill other useful activities.

The population studied in this chapter are those who were targeted for contact only one time during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle. Targeted members of the electorate are typically not contacted just once. Because much of the previous research does not identify the frequency of contact as a variable of study, this has resulted in some misleading analysis of data. Strategic campaigns rarely contact a targeted voter only a single time, as an assumption exists that more contact between the campaign/persuader and voter/consumer will have a better result for the campaign. While this is likely true when focusing on the persuasion of a voter, it may not be so in terms of turnout. The data reported in this chapter relate to contact methods attempted one time only. This focuses analysis on the effects of a contact method in a single case. This provides the first element of evidence missing from previous studies. If campaigns attempt multiple contacts with their targeted voter population, research studies must look at how contact frequency relates to outcomes compared to a single contact. Understanding the differences between single and multiple contacts will be a focus of Chapter 3.

The message delivered to voter targets vary, and is held at a constant for this study. It is expected that the 2014 KCC used several different messages throughout the election cycle. The message was likely to have changed depending on the demographic of the voter targeted. The message delivered was also likely to change to one that was focused more on GOTV than persuasion if an attempted contact was made closer to Election Day. These factors are considered in Chapters Three and Four. Specific message content is not studied here.

The dependent variable throughout this study is if the person voted or not. This is reported as a binary variable (voted=1, did not vote=0). Independent variables initially considered are if the contact was successful or not (binary; successful contact=1, unsuccessful=0), gender (binary; male=1, female=0), age (continuous), years registered (continuous), if the targeted voter lives in an urban area (binary; yes=1, no=0), and if the targeted voter lives in a rural area (binary; yes=1, no=0).

The years registered variable is included as a metric for several considerations. This variable measures the length of time that a person has been registered to vote in Kansas. It can indicate many potential factors, including community affinity, duty, and previous voting history. As the data for previous voting history are not available in this set, the measure of how long a person has been registered to vote in the state allows for some conclusions to be drawn. Kansas law requires that people be removed from voting rolls if a person has not voted in two consecutive general elections (K.S.A. 25-2316c). Continued voter registration indicates a regular participation in previous elections.

Binary urban and rural population density variables are included for considering how distinctive geographical demographics react to partisan campaign contact. As many previous studies have studied only urban voter turnout, the variables allow for a review of existing

36

differences. A third population density group known as "urban cluster" is also considered in this

calculation. Urban clusters are typically small town and suburban census blocks (U.S.

Department of Commerce 2010). The variable is dichotomized at this point to simplify statistical

analysis. The unique relationship of each population density with campaign contact method and

turnout is categorically investigated further in Chapter Four.

Correlations between successful contact and voter turnout

The data's summary statistics are presented in Table 2.1. As described above, the

observations tested reflect the population targeted by the 2014 KCC for a single attempted

contact during the last 90 days of the 2014 Election Cycle.

Table 2.1 – Summary statistics of 2014 KCC target population turnout by party affiliation and contact.

	Did not vote		**Voted**		**Total**
	n	% of total	*n*	% of total	*n*
Targets registered as Democratic					
Not contacted	6,286	54.74%	5,198	45.26%	11,484
Contacted	1,660	40.93%	2,396	59.07%	4,056
All Democratic targets	7,946	51.13%	7,594	48.87%	15,540
Targets registered as Republican					
Not contacted	1,835	25.49%	5,364	74.51%	7,199
Contacted	579	11.43%	4,487	88.57%	5,066
All Republican targets	2,414	19.68%	9,851	80.32%	12,265
Targets registered as third party or unaffiliated					
Not contacted	5,081	56.07%	3,981	43.93%	9,062
Contacted	1,726	47.15%	1,935	52.85%	3,661
All third party/unaffiliated targets	6,807	53.50%	5,916	46.50%	12,723

Notes: Observations are limited to those whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact only one time. All attempted contacts were made during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014).

Table 2.1 presents some initial considerations. First is the rate of successful contact encountered by the 2014 KCC. Higher contact rates are observed among some partisan groups over others. Attempts to contact registered Republicans were much more successful than with the other two partisan groups. It is unclear at this point if this is due to the party affiliation of the targeted voter, the partisan approach of contact, a demographic aspect of the targeted voter, or another variable.

A second consideration of Table 2.1 is also found among the subgroup of registered Republicans. While the rate of voter turnout among targeted Democrats and third party or unaffiliated voters is roughly comparable to that of the entire population, targeted Republicans were much more likely to vote. This is found with both the contacted and not contacted Republican subgroups and is a reflection of the targeting strategy enacted by the 2014 KCC. The higher rate of targeted Republican voting indicates a high probability these voters were identified by the 2014 KCC as those who were most persuadable to voting for a candidate of the opposite party. This group of high-propensity voters likely received a message that focused on persuasion in support of the Democratic Party's candidates early in the election cycle. The message was likely to have changed to GOTV later in the cycle. Timing as a consideration of the relationship between voter contact and turnout is investigated further in Chapter Three.

The third aspect for consideration is the change in voter turnout between contacted and not contacted subgroups. In all cases, the contacted subgroup voted at a higher rate than those who were targeted but not contacted. This is consistent across all three partisan groups investigated. There is a positive correlation between a 2014 KCC contact and voting. This evidence supports the argument that partisan campaign contact does influence voter behavior.

The relationship between voter contact and turnout is an important finding, as the statistics suggest individual behavior may be influenced regardless of the message sender or receiver's partisan affiliation. While the predisposition to vote among targeted Republicans was initially higher to begin with, the evidence provided here indicates that any contact will increase the likelihood of voting.

Table 2.2 – Logit regressions by party affiliation of contact and change in voter turnout within 2014 KCC target population.

Variables	Model 1 Targets registered as Democratic		Model 2 Targets registered as Republican		Model 3 Targets registered as third party or unaffiliated	
	Voted		*Voted*		*Voted*	
	B	β	*B*	β	*B*	β
Contacted (yes)	0.476*** (0.0388)	0.209	0.980*** (0.0549)	0.483	0.456*** (0.0421)	0.206
Gender (male)	0.0167 (0.0343)	0.008	0.116** (0.0482)	0.058	0.181*** (0.0377)	0.091
Age (continuous)	0.0169*** (0.00110)	0.315	0.0280*** (0.00169)	0.475	0.0270*** (0.00131)	0.451
Years registered (continuous)	0.0352*** (0.00210)	0.364	0.0309*** (0.00305)	0.34	0.0403*** (0.00277)	0.33
Urban voter targeted (yes)	0.264*** (0.0408)	0.131	-0.0262 (0.0653)	-0.012	0.147*** (0.0489)	0.07
Rural voter targeted (yes)	0.255*** (0.0527)	0.098	0.304*** (0.0837)	0.114	0.334*** (0.0650)	0.119
Constant	-1.671*** (0.0631)		-1.018*** (0.101)		-2.198*** (0.0748)	
Observations	15,532		12,262		12,720	

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Models are not inter-comparable due to KCC 2014 targeting bias shown in Table 2.1. Observations are limited to those who the 2014 KCC attempted to contact only one time. All attempted contacts were made during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Dependent variable is if the targeted individual voted in the 2014 General Election or not. β coefficients are standardized along the independent variable (x-axis) only with mean = 0 and standard deviation = 1.

To investigate the importance of correlations between voter contact and turnout further, Table 2.2 presents results from three logit models. The dependent variable tested is whether the potential voters participated in the 2014 general election or not. Independent variables compare successful 2014 KCC contact and various demographic considerations. These variables are the same as those discussed in the *Methods* section above.

The variables are tested in three models. Model 1 reviews the registered Democratic targeted population. Model 2 reviews the registered Republican targeted population. Model 3 reviews the registered third party or unaffiliated targeted population. The targeted population for these models received only a single attempted contact by the KCC during the 2014 election cycle.

The logit models imply the importance of contact on voter turnout compared to other independent variables investigated. The models indicate support for the primary hypothesis of this study. Partisan campaign contact does in fact have an important relationship to voter turnout.

Campaign contact is important relative to the other variables. This is demonstrated by the standardized coefficients. The β coefficients are standardized along the independent variable only with mean = 0 and standard deviation = 1. These coefficients were developed to provide a more intuitive ability to analyze the variables within the models. As traditional influencers of voter turnout such as age have a strong relationship to turnout, the comparison allows for an important look at how significant campaign contact may be on turnout. The models show significance in the relationship between 2014 KCC contact and turnout across all three partisan target models. This finding indicates that the data here are aligned with previous studies, and are not unique to the KCC 2014 situation. With confidence, further investigation can proceed to determine how different contact methods influence voter participation.

40

An important distinction must be made at this point. The selective targeting enacted by the 2014 KCC focused on high-turnout Republicans. As reviewed in Table 2.1, targeted registered Republicans were more likely to vote than the other two partisan subgroups. As the dependent variable is voter turnout, the underlying higher turnout percentage reacts differently to the successful contact variable as the population reaches the 100% participation threshold. Table 2.2 shows 2014 KCC contact to registered Republicans significantly increased turnout despite their already high participation rate.

It is clear that the relationship between contact and turnout varies compared favorably to the other variables within the partisan groupings. Contact with registered Republicans correlated higher with voting than other investigated explanatory variables. The data here show contact made by the 2014 KCC had a higher correlation to if a voter participated in the election or not than the increasing age of the voter. 2014 KCC contact also had a higher correlation with participation than the length of time that the targeted voter was registered to vote in Kansas. These findings are interesting as Democratic and third party/unaffiliated voters did not react in the same way as Republican voters. Despite the partisan misalignment between sender and receiver, contacted Republican voters were more likely to turnout following contact than non-Republicans. There is no indication given of how Republican targets voted in the 2014 election, however. It is plausible for partisan campaign contact to increase a sense of partisan duty among contacted Republicans to vote *against* Democratic candidates. Again, message content is not analyzed in this study. Participation alone is reviewed, not persuasion.

Urban voters investigated in Models 2 and 3 can be seen as outliers in Table 2.2. Given the large sample sizes, the lack of statistical significance and low correlation may pique interest.

The low correlation indicates weak effectiveness of the 2014 KCC GOTV plan when targeting

non-Democratic urban voters. This is investigated further in Chapter Four.

Correlations between contact method and voter turnout

As any single successful contact by the 2014 KCC was likely to increase voter turnout,

the next question asks if any one of the contact methods correlate to voter turnout higher than

others. Table 2.3 investigates this relationship. While utilizing the same targeted population as

Tables 2.1 and 2.2, the sample for Table 2.3 is limited to those who were successfully contacted

only one time. The three models are divided into the same partisan groups as before. Contact

timing is limited to the post-primary period of the 2014 election cycle. Contact methods are

regressed as categorical variables, with postal mail contact held as the base as it resulted in the

lowest correlation between contact method and turnout within the successfully contacted sample

group.

The data provide evidence of important differences between the various successful

contact methods. The first is how different successful interaction methods correlate differently

with turnout. Turnout varies dependent on the contact type conducted by the 2014 KCC. While

this finding is relatively unsurprising, the data show that door-to-door contact is not always the

most highly correlated to voter turnout. The variation here is found in two different relationships:

1) along the targets' partisan registration, and 2) between volunteer and professional instances of

voter contact.

The modeling division along the targets' partisan affiliation shows the relative difference

between the correlation. Each group is shown to have a different level of ordinal correlation

within the categorical contact methods investigated. The volunteer door-to-door contact results in

the highest relationship with turnout among registered Republicans and third party or unaffiliated

voters. This is anticipated. However, among registered Democratic voters volunteer phone

calling results in the highest rate of turnout.

Table 2.3 – Logit regressions by party affiliation of contact method and change in voter turnout within contacted 2014 KCC target population.

Variables	Model 1 Targets registered as Democratic *Voted*		Model 2 Targets registered as Republican *Voted*		Model 3 Targets registered as third party or unaffiliated *Voted*	
	B	β	*B*	β	*B*	β
Contact method (categorical)						
Volunteer door-to-door	2.616***	1.222	0.232	0.098	2.793***	1.315
	(0.428)		(0.468)		(0.303)	
Volunteer phone call	2.957***	1.36	0.180	0.053	2.800***	1.109
	(0.430)		(0.479)		(0.310)	
Paid ID	3.253***	1.553	1.227***	0.579	3.645***	1.781
	(0.430)		(0.466)		(0.303)	
Gender (male)	0.120*	0.059	0.283***	0.141	0.212***	0.106
	(0.0697)		(0.0932)		(0.0749)	
Age (continuous)	0.0152***	0.301	0.0231***	0.427	0.0255***	0.451
	(0.00210)		(0.00296)		(0.00244)	
Years registered (continuous)	0.0202***	0.225	0.0313***	0.357	0.0247***	0.197
	(0.00389)		(0.00593)		(0.00561)	
Urban voter targeted (yes)	0.432***	0.21	-0.00135	-0.001	0.259**	0.11
	(0.0889)		(0.172)		(0.110)	
Rural voter targeted (yes)	0.224**	0.086	0.195	0.063	0.607***	0.192
	(0.110)		(0.217)		(0.153)	
Constant	-3.955***		-0.697		-4.661***	
	(0.445)		(0.501)		(0.334)	
Observations	4,036		4,935		3,631	

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$. Models are not inter-comparable due to KCC 2014 targeting bias shown in Table 2.1. Observations are limited to those whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact only one time, and that attempt resulted in an interaction. All contacts were made during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Dependent variable is if the targeted voter voted in the 2014 General Election or not. Variables for contact method are categorical. Postal mail contact held as baseline for contact method categorical variables. Data for contact method variables are binary. β coefficients are standardized along the independent variable (x-axis) only with mean = 0 and standard deviation = 1.

An explanation of this finding may be in the message content delivered to registered Democrats via volunteer telephone calling. This study looks at contact made at any time during the post-primary phase of the 2014 cycle. It is plausible that the message delivered by volunteer activists via telephone was focused on GOTV, particularly if the phone call was made closer to Election Day. Reason leads one to anticipate that the closer to Election Day, the more likely a campaign is to contact supportive partisan voters to get out and vote. The exact timing of the contact is not considered in the data here. However, the relationship between timing and turnout is investigated further in Chapter Three.

The second major finding is that different partisan groups show significantly unique relationships between successful contact method and turnout. Registered Republicans did not significantly change their likelihood to vote based on contact with a partisan volunteer. The change is only seen when a professional partisan contact is made. The data show that the professional and volunteer methods of communication are not similar. The target registered of the opposite party is more likely to vote following a professional partisan contact. The data here provide evidence that the effectiveness of a successful contact method varies widely among the partisan target groups. As argued, the professional paid ID elements of the KCC operation were more successful in increasing GOTV among all 2014 KCC targets than volunteer proxy activist contact methods. A fiscally constrained campaign relying heavily on volunteer activism can influence turnout through an active GOTV effort, but less than a professional program.

Registered Republican turnout among those who were contacted has shifted in Table 2.3 from where it was in Table 2.2. This does not indicate a contradiction. The sample of successfully contacted Republicans does show contact methods turning out at a statistically insignificant level when contacted by a professional field method. The attributes of a dedicated

44

campaign volunteer may not be the most effective field contact a campaign may use in GOTV with a non or anti-partisan target. If we assume that a campaign is a rational actor, then the campaign will engage with an anti-partisan for GOTV only when that anti-partisan individual has been identified as supportive. Despite the anticipated anti-partisan's support for a candidate, volunteer interaction has a lowered effect on that individual's likelihood of voting.

For a campaign strategy looking to utilize volunteer activism, door-to-door interaction remains the most effective for GOTV only among voters registered with the same party. This important fact is telling. A partisan volunteer activist is not the most effective deliverer of the message to opposition party voters. Individual in-person contact with a partisan volunteer will have lower effects on encouraging voter turnout than other methods. Professional campaign contacts with potential voters has a greater impact on increasing turnout when contacting anti-partisan targets.

The least effective contact method between the KCC and a potential voter was postal mail. Postal mail was held as the baseline for comparison among the categorically listed contact methods for this reason. While several of the methods of contact are similarly linked, the baseline point of the postal mail audience as presented in Table 2.3 indicates that the potential target was not as inclined to vote as other targeted groups. This may imply that the KCC strategically sent mail to lower propensity voting household as the unsuccessful audience voted at such a low rate. Regardless, the impact of postal mail on GOTV is important due to the receiver's responsive nature to the message. This has important practical applications as volunteer resources can be at a premium. If financial costs of mailed contacts are feasible to a campaign budget, they may be better expended on contact methods other than mail for turnout.

A final consideration from the findings presented in Table 2.3 is that of the similarities between contact methods as investigated in a statewide setting. While many previous studies have existed only at the local level, this investigation's unique ability to see the effects in the aggregate is telling. The audience's responsive nature deserves further review, and is a central component of Chapters Four's investigation.

This partisan finding may suggest that a savvy campaign with financial restrictions should limit volunteer contact to only same party or unaffiliated targets. Reserving paid field efforts for targeting anti-partisan targets provides a better cost-benefit result in turnout among the population.

Conclusion

Some may argue the findings presented in this chapter are not surprising. As discussed in the literature review above, a plethora of research has investigated the different contact methods as they relate to increasing levels of voter participation in elections. However, the unique comprehensive dataset of a partisan statewide operation provided a rare complete view free of sampling biases inherent to many studies.

The first argument of this chapter held. Campaign contact correlates with increased voter turnout. The difference between methods of contact remains consistent with some assumptions found in previous scholarship. However, some elements deserve further consideration when applying generalities to methods of voter contact for GOTV. The first is that the volunteer efforts have different outcomes than paid efforts. This is particularly notable when a campaign is engaging a targeted voter who is registered with a different party.

The selective nature of a campaign's targeting plan may have an influence on the effectiveness of each contact method. Targets varied in response to different partisan contact

methods. It is worth further research to investigate if similar contact methods conducted on

segments of the registered voting population have the same effects as others.

As was initially argued earlier in this chapter, previous studies on contact methods have

shortcomings. The evidence provided here supports the idea earlier research was limited by not

including factors that must be considered when looking at the larger picture of voting behavior.

Partisan registration and affiliation will result in variations of turnout. This is particularly

relevant in partisan campaign activities conducted in districts with a dominating partisan balance.

The study conducted in this chapter is however limited in several ways. First, the data

used here reflect only a universe that was contacted a single time by the 2014 KCC. Variation

may occur when a targeted individual is contacted multiple times. The second major

consideration not factored into the research presented in this chapter is the variable of timing. A

person who is contacted only days before an election may be more likely to vote than someone

who was contacted two or more months before an election. Finally, an important aspect to

consider in a case such as this is the regional effect. Kansas has a variety of regions, none of

which are accounted for in this aggregated review. The investigation of location as an effect on

how a potential voter reacts to a partisan message such as that carried out by the KCC is not

reviewed in this chapter.

Each of these will be important considerations in the chapters that follow. Chapter

Three will investigate the effects of timing and frequency of contact on the targeted population,

analyzing the impact that repeated contacts at various points in the election cycle have on

changing a voter's behavior. Chapter Four will take into consideration the importance of

regionalism in response to a common message and delivery type. As urban, suburban, and rural

populations all exist across Kansas' 82,277 square miles, understanding regional effects on voter participation is vital.

Chapter Three

Correlations between Contact Timing and Frequency on Voter Turnout

The study of campaign contact methods and their relationship to voter turnout typically investigates a single interaction between a campaign and a potential voter. Practical campaigning does not exist in a single attempted contact environment, however. Campaigns regularly use several get out the vote (GOTV) contact attempts to boost turnout in favor of a specific candidate. As more volunteers participate in campaigning as Election Day nears, the ability to contact potential voters through traditional methods increases. Despite this, little scholarship reviews the relationship between GOTV and timing or frequency of repeated contact attempts by a partisan campaign on individual potential voters.

This study attempts to further understand the relationship between practical campaign GOTV efforts and voter turnout. Utilizing real-world partisan observations collected during the 2014 election cycle in Kansas, these data provide unique insight into partisan campaign tactics and results. Strategic targeting combined with contact methods is not typically investigated.

The findings reveal several important associations between the timing and frequency of partisan campaign efforts and voter turnout. Various contact methods demonstrate higher or lower relationships with turnout relative to one other when executed at different points of the election cycle. Repeated campaign contact with a single individual is shown to correlate with an increased likelihood of voting. Each contact method significance is dependent on the partisan affiliation of the potential voter.

Chapter Two focused on the relationship between contact methods from a partisan source and the likelihood to vote. The study investigated individuals who encountered only a single contact attempt. This chapter expands the study by investigating two supplemental conditions: 1)

the timing within the election cycle when a single contact occurs and its relationship to voter turnout, and 2) the relationship between multiple contacts by a partisan source and an individual's likelihood to vote. While this study focuses only on voter turnout, arguments are developed from the literature of contact timing and frequency as it relates to persuasion. Data is then analyzed to reveal relationships between the timing and frequency of partisan contacts and the likelihood of voting.

Contact timing is an important consideration regarding a campaign's potential influence on voter behavior. Inference may lead one to think that the closer to the date of the actual election a person is contacted, the more likely they are to vote. Pervasive conjecture therefore states partisan campaigns should contact voters as close to Election Day as possible. This thought compounds with the idea that repeated contact with a potential voter will always result in a higher probability voting. While one instance of contact may not be enough to change the swing of voting from non-participation to active voter, repeated contact may encourage behavioral change. Traditionally accomplished with a "call to action," this message is a key part of any campaign outreach. This chapter asks if those traditional paradigms are true. Does more effort change a person's turnout behavior? By how much does it change? Which method works best when repeated? Is there a limit to how much contact should be made?

This investigation argues several points. First, both contact timing and frequency will change turnout levels among successfully contacted individuals. The likelihood of turnout does not always increase when contact is made closer to Election Day, however. Second, partisanship is a major factor in understanding contact timing and frequency importance. Third, campaign contact method correlation with voter turnout is conditional to when and how often contact occurs. Finally, I also argue the number of successful campaign contacts made with a potential

50

voter using different contact methods is not infinitely more likely to increase turnout. More is only better to a point.

Previous study of timing and frequency on voter turnout

The relationship between campaign contact timing and a person's decision of whom to vote for is relatively well documented. However, little research focuses on how the timing of a contact made by a partisan campaign source may affect turnout (Panagopolus 2010). Only a small district precinct-level analysis conducted during the 1980 primary election cycle focused on contact timing in terms of turnout (Miller, Bostis, and Baer 1981). Only one study investigated multiple telephone contact attempts its relationship to turnout (Michelson, Bedolla, and McConnell 2009). A recent literature review by Gerber and Green provided no indication of timing or frequency as a consideration when investigating contact impact and turnout (2017). Studies reviewing campaign contact timing only do so by comparing primary and general cycle turnout (Fridkin et al. 2017; Hill and Kousser 2016; Panagopolus 2010; Hughes et al. 2017).

The contact timing variable has been shown to correlate positively with individual level factors affecting when a person decides for whom to vote (Henderson and Hillygus 2016). Timing outcomes may vary based on competition levels found in a race and an individual's susceptibility to be persuaded (Nir and Druckman 2008). Evidence indicates a correlation between when a voter receives a persuasion-based message and when they decide for whom to vote. An assumption is typically made for a relationship also existing between campaign contact and voter turnout. This is particularly true as a campaign's persuasive influence is dynamic during an election cycle (Holbrook and Weinschenk 2014). Partisan media influences are most likely to influence potential voter preferences early in an election cycle (Smith 2016). The time of day and day of week can affect telephone-calling efficiency as well (Weeks, Kulka, and

Pierson 1987). Campaigns may hire professional firms to maximize the utility of a potential contact since volunteer efforts are dependent on individuals having time to commit to a campaign. Campaign contact ability is therefore likely to increase later in the election cycle as financial and volunteer resources are more available.

Professional field expenditures have effects on voter persuasion. Vote share is dependent on campaign spending and other factors that stem from fundraising, including candidate competition and campaign professionalism. This is found for both federal and state legislative campaigns (Davis and Southwell 2015; Hogan 2013; Gerber 2004). Financial strength may also have negative effects. A campaign with more resources to contact potential voters may fatigue a target population (Bowler, Donovnan, and Happ 1992). Multiple contacts with a potential voter, compounded by multiple campaigns attempting to increase participation during a particular election cycle, may result in lowered turnout.

Social network theory is an important consideration when investigating contact frequency on voter participation. Contacts with individuals may feel like "peer pressure" to participate in voting (Nickerson 2005a). *Change and Continuity in Elections* is an interesting analysis of how social factors may influence turnout, particularly as frequency of contact increases within engaged groups and their membership (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rhode 1998).

A second consideration for continued study of contact timing on turnout addresses how campaigns are changing focus of whom they target. Often, campaigns now focus on turning out the base as much as persuading swing voters (Panagopoulos 2016). This comes as the persuadable voter becomes increasingly scarce in the modern American political climate (Smidt 2017). The messaging a paid or volunteer messenger carries to the voter also changes. The paid media aspect of a campaign may very well focus on persuasion of a target set of particular swing

voters, but field efforts will focus on GOTV among the base to balance the Downsian curve as described in Chapter One. Targeting habitual voters may have contributed to lower turnout historically as lower performing individuals were not regularly targeted (Goldstein and Ridout 2002).

Research design and methodology

The data for this study come from the Kansas Democratic Party's Coordinated Campaign (KCC) effort in 2014. The data were initially reviewed in Chapter Two to study the relationships between contact method type and turnout among indivuals the 2014 KCC attempted to contact only once. However, the 2014 KCC effort logged not only singular instances of contact but also maintained a record of how, when, and how often a person was contacted.

The data are arranged here into various groups. The first division separates the sample into two: individuals the 2014 KCC attempted to contact one time, and individuals the 2014 KCC attempted to contact multiple times. The single attempted targeted group is the same as was reviewed in Chapter Two. The sample will be used again here to study contact timing. The single attempted contact group is then combined with the multiple contact attempt population to investigate the relationship between contact frequency and turnout in this chapter's second set of investigations.

Contact groups are further divided into sub-groups along partisan registration. Registrations are separated into three groups: registered Democrats, registered Republicans, and those registered as Libertarian (third party) or unaffiliated. This is the same set of subgroups used in Chapter Two.

Finally, the partisan sub-groups are separated by contact method. The contact methods investigated are also the same as in Chapter Two: volunteer door-to-door, volunteer telephone call, elite campaign composed postal mail, and paid ID.

To investigate the relationship between each set of groups and turnout, the data are subjected to two types of analysis. The first are logit regressions with a dependent variable of whether a person voted or not. This dependent variable is subjected to a comparison with several explanatory variables: gender (as a binary variable), age (as a continuous variable), and years registered to vote in Kansas (as a continuous variable). The population density of where an individual's residence is located is the final variable reviewed. Urban and rural populations are individually listed as binary variables. A comparison of predicted probabilities is also used to determine the differences found in the varying situations tested.

Contact timing is divided into four categorical periods: one week before election day, 8-21 days before Election Day, 22-60 days before Election Day, and 61-90 days before Election Day. Contact timing is considered as a categorical variable arranged into these groups to compensate for three potential factors. First is the messaging delivered to potential voters. As this study does not take into account message content, it is unknown if the contact is attempting to turn out or persuade a voter. Kansas elections allow for early voting to begin some three weeks before Election Day (K.S.A. 25-435). Therefore, it is likely most messaging during this final period was focused on GOTV and not persuasion. The second consideration is sample size. As demonstrated in Figure 3.1 below, the number of attempted contacts increases exponentially during the time period just before Election Day. This is due to an increase in proxy volunteer participation and 2014 KCC paid field efforts. The final consideration is only attempted contacts made during the final 90 days of the election cycle are examined. This is a consideration of the

primary election that occurs in early August during the election cycle. In analyzing only observations made after this point, the possibility of primary election GOTV and other nomination variables are avoided.

2014 KCC contact frequency is measured by the number of successful contacts a targeted individual received from the campaign. Investigating a single attempted contact can be done with a binary successful or unsuccessful outcome. Multiple attempted contacts could consider each successful or unsuccessful contact attempt. This would lead to many hundreds of successful and unsuccessful combinations that happen after every potential interaction. This would then be compounded with the additional variable of contact method. To simplify the analysis, this study will analyze only multiple contact situations attempts where every attempted contact was successful.

Results of contact timing and method on voter turnout

Figure 3.1 displays the number of all attempted contacts made each day by the 2014 KCC during the final three months of the 2014 election cycle using the four methods of contact investigated. The figure shows levels for the sub-group of individuals that were targeted only once during the entire 2014 election cycle compared to the entire targeted population. The timing of contact attempts is found to be cyclical, showing higher levels of attempted contact during the weekend period than during weekdays. This pattern is relatively unsurprising. The intensity is driven by two methods of contact: volunteer door-to-door and volunteer telephone calls. Spikes resulting from KCC paid ID and postal mail efforts during the last five weeks of the election cycle interrupt this pattern.

Figure 3.1 – Timing of 2014 KCC attempted contacts on target population
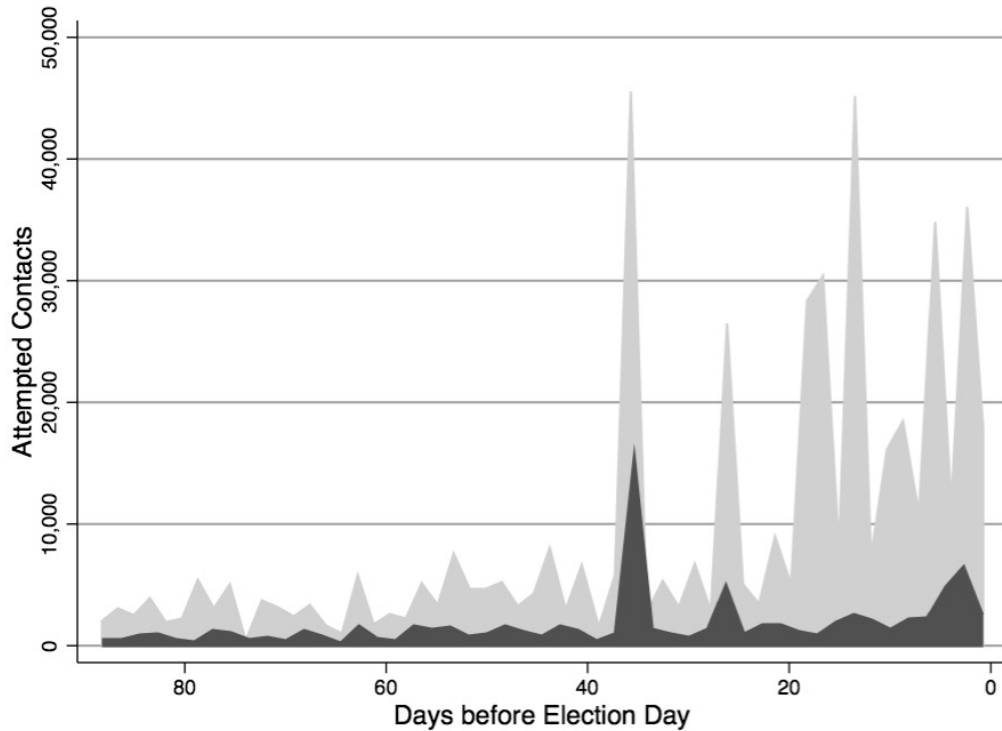
Note: Observations are limited to registered voters whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014).

Contact methods explain the overall contact attempt growth during the final three weeks of the election cycle. As the election drew nearer, volunteer interest and activation increased. The pressure from the 2014 KCC upon potential voters significantly increased as early voting began in Kansas 21 days before Election Day (K.S.A. 25-435). The lowest point of attempted contact occurred on a weekend some ten weeks before Election Day. This was likely due to the annual fall Kansas Democratic Party convention held each year. As many of the party elite, staff, and loyalists were likely at this event, the attempted contact rate was relatively non-existent.

Campaigns are frequently engaged in persuasion with targeted audiences. The 2014 KCC is no exception. This may account for the number of repeated attempts with the same target population instead of expanding the target universe to a new and previously uncontacted group.

Table 3.1 provides a summary of the timing the 2014 KCC implemented on single contact target population. The sample is limited to targeted voters who experienced only one attempted contact. The table is divided into categorical time periods introduced in the *Methods* section above. Partisan sub-groups are further cross-tabulated by successful or unsuccessful attempts against if the target voted or not.

The first finding of note is how the 2014 KCC shifted its partisan targets over time. During the 22-60 days before Election Day period, registered Republicans were the focus of attempted contact. As Election Day approached, the partisan targeting shifted to Democratic and third party or unaffiliated voters for increased GOTV efforts. While the total number of attempted contacts is higher during the first two time categories, the shorter period of time for the final two categories indicates an increased daily attempted contact rate.

Table 3.1 – Summary statistics of 2014 KCC target population and turnout by party affiliation and contact timing

	Contact attempted 61 – 90 days before Election Day			Contact attempted 22 – 60 days before Election Day			Contact attempted 8 – 21 days before Election Day			Contact attempted final 7 days of election cycle		
	Did not vote	Voted	Total	Did not vote	Voted	Total	Did not vote	Voted	Total	Did not vote	Voted	Total
Democratic Targets												
No contact	839	1,297	2,136	2,055	1,656	3,711	1,056	987	2,043	2,192	1,125	3,317
% of total	*39.28*	*60.72*		*55.38*	*44.62*		*51.69*	*48.31*		*66.08*	*33.92*	
Contacted	101	301	402	697	1,325	2,022	327	327	654	500	398	898
% of total	*25.12*	*74.88*		*34.47*	*65.53*		*50.00*	*50.00*		*55.68*	*44.32*	
All Democrats	940	1,598	2,538	2,752	2,981	5,733	1,383	1,314	2,697	2,692	1,523	4,215
% of total	*37.04*	*62.96*		*48.0*	*52.0*		*51.28*	*48.72*		*63.87*	*36.13*	
Republican Targets												
No contact	188	364	552	842	2,495	3,337	687	2,309	2,996	109	165	274
% of total	*34.06*	*65.94*		*25.23*	*74.77*		*22.93*	*77.07*		*39.78*	*60.22*	
Contacted	45	214	259	397	3,820	4,217	98	387	485	36	52	88
% of total	*17.37*	*82.63*		*9.41*	*90.59*		*20.21*	*79.79*		*40.91*	*59.09*	
All Republicans	233	578	811	1,239	6,315	7,554	785	2,696	3,481	145	217	362
% of total	*28.73*	*71.27*		*16.4*	*83.6*		*22.55*	*77.45*		*40.06*	*59.94*	
3rd Party/Unaffiliated Targets												
No contact	645	374	1,019	1,885	1,703	3,588	1,338	1,359	2,697	1,083	471	1,554
% of total	*63.3*	*36.7*		*52.54*	*47.46*		*49.61*	*50.39*		*69.69*	*30.31*	
Contacted	139	118	257	930	1,386	2,316	345	240	585	287	172	459
% of total	*54.09*	*45.91*		*40.16*	*59.84*		*58.97*	*41.03*		*62.53*	*37.47*	
All 3rd/unaffiliated	784	492	1,276	2,815	3,089	5,904	1,683	1,599	3,282	1,370	643	2,013
% of total	*61.44*	*38.56*		*47.68*	*52.32*		*51.28*	*48.72*		*68.06*	*31.94*	

Note: Observations are limited to those whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact only one time.

A second important finding from Table 3.1 is the dynamic turnout levels between those whom were contacted and not contacted in various subgroups. Republican voters successfully contacted by the 2014 KCC during the final week of the election cycle turned out at a lower rate than those who were not. The same is found with third party or unaffiliated voters who were contacted 8-21 days from Election Day. This may result from one of two factors. The first is messaging. It is possible the 2014 KCC engaged in messaging designed to lower voter turnout among these populations. The second possible explanation is that targeted voters in these subgroups are not similar to those who were targeted earlier in the cycle. As discussed in Chapter Two, the targeted Republican population was much more likely to vote than other targeted groups. The same situation may be observed here, as registered Republicans targeted during the final weeks of the election cycle were not as pre-disposed to voting as subgroups targeted at other points during the post-primary phase of the cycle.

Figure 3.2 – Difference in turnout between contact and no contact presented in Table 3.1

	61-90 days before Election Day	22-60 days before Election Day	8-21 days before Election Day	Final 7 days before Election Day
■ Democratic	14.16	20.91	1.69	10.4
■ Republican	16.69	15.82	2.72	-1.13
■ 3rd party or unaffiliated	9.21	12.38	-9.36	7.16
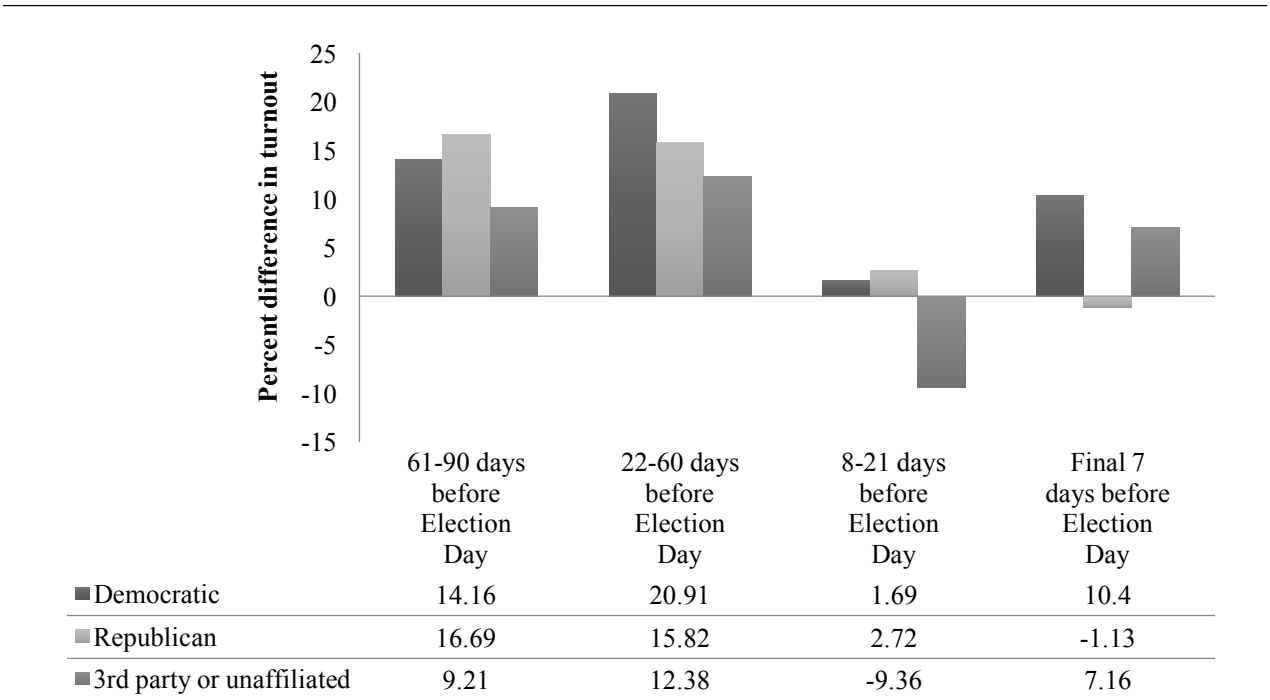
A successful 2014 KCC contact closer to Election Day does not always result in a higher likelihood of turnout. While most of the groups investigated here show an increased rate of voting, it is not always the case. Also, the time period closest to Election Day does not show the highest change in turnout between contacted and not contacted targets. With all groups, those who were targeted during the 22-60 days before the election period were most likely to change their voting behavior. This is despite the propensity that each partisan group had to vote regardless of contact.

These findings indicate strategic targeting differences conducted by the 2014 KCC partisan campaign effort. The findings in Table 3.1 also indicate a strong variation in turnout based upon the targeted voter's party registration. These differences are examined further in Figure 3.3. The situation is analyzed using predicted probability by contact method. These margins were developed from logit regressions presented in *Appendix Table A.1*.

Figure 3.3 shows a 2014 KCC targeted an individual's predicted probability of voting. The figure is divided up into rows by contact method. These rows review each of the three partisan subgroups. The x-axis represents when contact was attempted, and is placed against the predicted probability of the targeted individual voting along the y-axis. Successful contacts are represented with a dotted line, and unsuccessful contacts by a solid line. 95% confidence interval is shaded, but due to the large sample sizes the interval is narrow.

Chapter Two argued contact method correlates to voter turnout. Figure 3.3 demonstrates contact timing and method both correlate to turnout. The influence of each different method is dynamic across time, although slight. The curved nature of these lines indicates a varied response to the contact methods relative to the independent timing variable.

Figure 3.3 –Timing of 2014 KCC attempted contact and predicted probability of targeted voter turnout by party affiliation and contact method
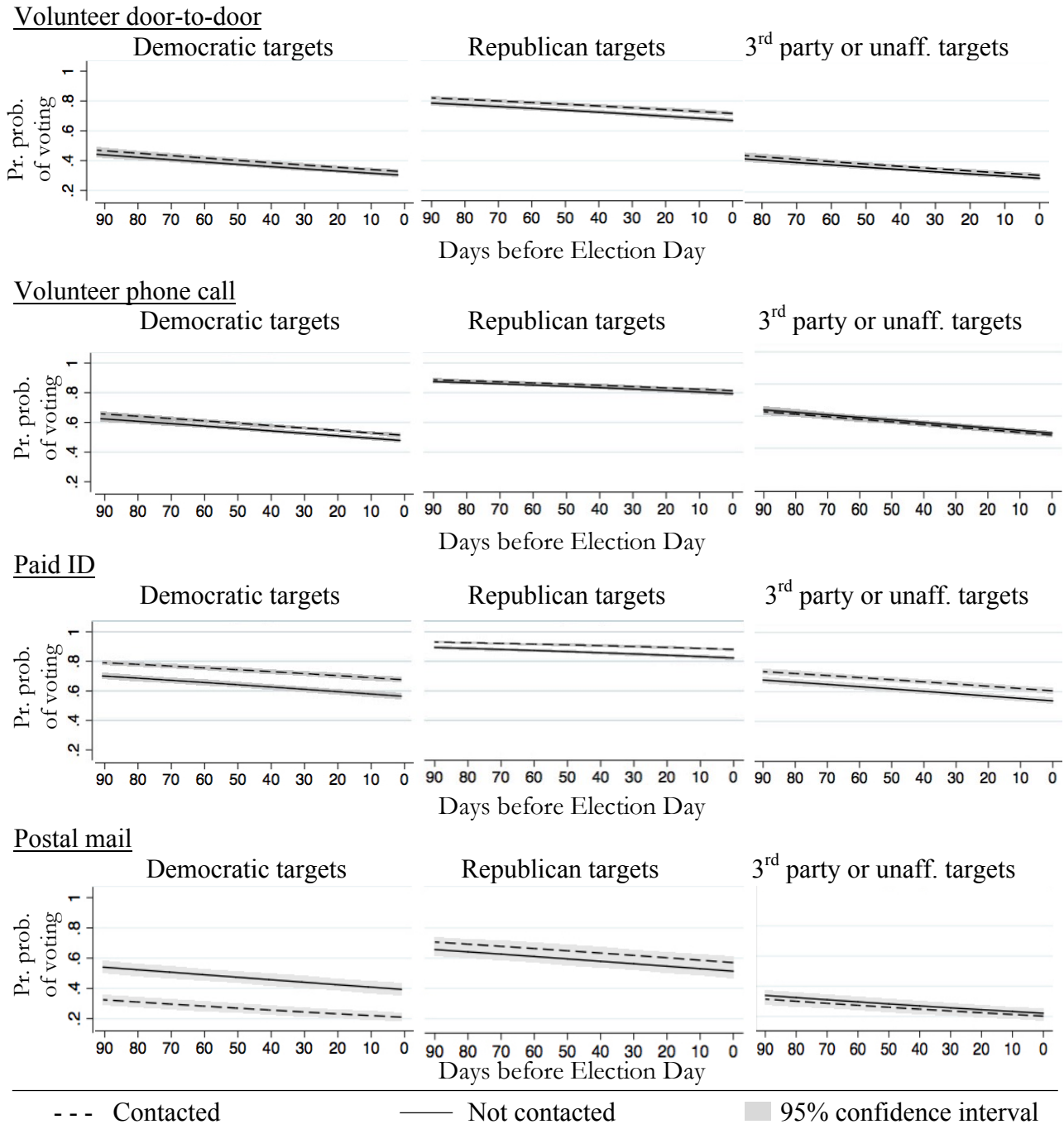
Notes: Observations are limited to registered voters whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Predicted probabilities (Pr. prob.) are developed from the logit regressions presented in *Appendix Table A.1*.

Voter turnout among contacted individuals increases compared to those whom were not contacted in all but three situations. The first is volunteer phone calls to unaffiliated or third party voters. The other two are found in the postal mail method. Both registered Democrats and unaffiliated or 3rd party voters reacted negatively to the contact. The result of negative response to contact indicates that these methods were not as effective for increasing turnout among these particular populations.

All contact methods have some influence on voter behavior. As discussed earlier, there is a common misconception that door-to-door contact is the best method to influence turnout. The results in Figure 3.3 support the argument that contact methods vary in their relative effectiveness for GOTV. A contact method's effectiveness is dependent on party affiliation and when the target is contacted.

The results show the dynamic nature each contact method has at different time periods. Engagement has an impact. This is expected, as was discussed in Chapter Two. However, this analysis shows the variation between different contact types as they exist over time, and their relative effectiveness compared to other forms of contact.

Another important takeaway from Figure 3.3 is the variation in efficiency between various contact methods. Indicators signal contacts made from a professional source (such as the paid ID) may be more effective than those conducted by a volunteer messenger. This evidence has impacts for strategic campaigning. A mixed methods approach targeting different groups and engaging them with either volunteer or paid efforts uniquely may result in the highest level of voter turnout. However, it is not likely to influence a campaign to forego volunteer participation in campaign activities. As the politics of an inclusive and grassroots campaign has excitement and appeal within a constituency and financial supporters, it is vital that a campaign continue to

include volunteer efforts. The realization that a volunteer-only driven campaign may not have results as effective as one that includes a high level of professionalism is important to any candidate or campaign.

Results of contact frequency and method on voter turnout

The investigation to this point has reviewed only samples of the population for whom contact was attempted once by the 2014 KCC in the post-primary period of the election cycle. This study now incorporates the entire targeted population to review the relationship of repeated partisan contact with a targeted population on voter turnout.

The high number of daily contact attempts made to the same set of voters as demonstrated in Figure 3.1 indicates the importance placed upon specific voters by the 2014 KCC. This supports the argument for reviewing contact methods over multiple attempts is as important as investigating a single successful campaign contact.

The 2014 KCC's strategy to engage a specific set of the electorate is clear. Targeting some voters repeatedly may indicate a presence of persuasion messaging, as marketing tactics recommend a campaign should repeat messaging exposure to earn a position. This study's focus on turnout rather than persuasion requires that these considerations be put aside for other investigations.

The high effort level by the 2014 KCC dedicated to repeat contact is most apparent in the final three weeks of the 2014 election cycle. This is due to the stabilization of the targeted population some three weeks before Election Day and may indicate a correlation to early voting.

Table 3.2 reviews all contacts attempted by the 2014 KCC during the final 90 days of the 2014 election cycle. 1,335,503 contact attempts were made on target population of 326,068 potential voters. The mean and median number of contact attempts a targeted potential voter

would have received is four. The number of attempted contacts a single targeted individual may

have received range from one to 24.

Table 3.2 – Summary of all 2014 KCC attempted contacts on individuals by party affiliation

Contact attempts received	Individual targeted voters registered as Democratic		Individual targeted voters registered as Republican		Individual targeted voters registered as 3rd party or unaffiliated		Total individuals targeted	Number of 2014 KCC attempts
	n	*% of total*	*n*	% of total	*n*	*% of total*		
1	15,540	*38.34*	12,265	*30.26*	12,723	*31.39*	40,528	40,528
2	17,024	*43.47*	10,095	*25.78*	12,040	*30.75*	39,159	78,318
3	16,443	*28.58*	23,603	*41.03*	17,486	*30.39*	57,532	172,596
4	14,086	*19.96*	35,938	*50.93*	20,536	*29.10*	70,560	282,240
5	10,755	*22.24*	23,324	*48.23*	14,281	*29.53*	48,360	241,800
6	8,149	*27.44*	12,865	*43.32*	8,684	*29.24*	29,698	178,188
7	5,409	*32.13*	6,371	*37.84*	5,055	*30.03*	16,835	117,845
8	3,770	*41.17*	2,752	*30.05*	2,635	*28.78*	9,157	73,256
9	2,409	*43.80*	1,490	*27.09*	1,601	*29.11*	5,500	49,500
10	1,928	*52.72*	751	*20.54*	978	*26.74*	3,657	36,570
11 - 15	2,787	*60.60*	597	*12.98*	1,215	*26.42*	4,599	56,140
16 - 20	332	*72.81*	37	*8.11*	87	*19.08*	456	7,910
21 +	27	*100.0*	0	*0.00*	0	*0.00*	27	612
All individuals	98,659	*30.26*	130,088	*39.90*	97,321	*29.85*	326,068	1,335,503

Notes: Observations are limited to registered voters whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Both successful and unsuccessful contact attempts are included. Contact attempts are not cumulative by column or row. Individuals are uniquely listed in each cell.

These multiple contacts are investigated in Table 3.3 as logit regressions. The models

compare successful contacts only. Success is defined not on the quality of the contact, but only if

the 2014 KCC was able to interact directly with the targeted potential voter. The binary

dependent variable in each case is whether the targeted registered voter actually voted in the

2014 general election. The models are arranged by targeted voter's partisan registration. The

timing variable that was investigated earlier in this chapter is not considered in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 – Logit regressions of number of successful contacts and change in voter turnout

Variables	Model 1 Targets registered Democratic		Model 2 Targets registered Republican		Model 3 Targets registered 3rd party or unaffiliated	
	Voted		*Voted*		*Voted*	
	B	β	B	β	B	β
Contacts attempted (continuous)	0.067*** (0.005)	0.185	0.014 (0.010)	0.027	0.093*** (0.007)	0.216
Gender (male)	0.079*** (0.028)	0.038	0.171*** (0.036)	0.085	0.222*** (0.029)	0.111
Age (continuous)	0.013*** (0.001)	0.239	0.019*** (0.001)	0.294	0.022*** (0.001)	0.365
Years registered (continuous)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.181	0.024*** (0.002)	0.288	0.025*** (0.002)	0.231
Urban voter targeted (yes)	0.341*** (0.038)	0.145	0.240*** (0.045)	0.117	0.211*** (0.040)	0.098
Rural voter targeted (yes)	0.399*** (0.056)	0.116	0.184*** (0.055)	0.074	0.395*** (0.053)	0.142
Constant	-0.662*** (0.056)		0.083 (0.080)		-1.372*** (0.062)	
Observations	27,336		30,833		22,786	

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Observations are limited to registered voters who were successfully contacted by the 2014 KCC during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Dependent variable is if the targeted individual voted in the 2014 general election or not. β coefficients are standardized along the independent variable (x-axis) only with mean = 0 and standard deviation = 1.

Table 3.3 shows trends in the aggregate, but does not provide evidence to support the

argument of a point when repeated attempted contact begins to lose its effectiveness. Figure 3.4

and Table 3.4 do support the claim by displaying the change in a voter's participation likelihood

after each repeated successful contact using one contact method.

Figure 3.4 is developed with calculations formulated from the logit regressions presented

in *Appendix Table A.2*. The x-axis represents the number of successful 2014 KCC contacts. The

y-axis is a measure of the change in predicted probability of voting after repeated successful

contacts. While the summary data presented in Table 3.2 show that some potential voters were

contacted up to 24 times during the final 90 days of the 2014 election cycle by the 2014 KCC,

the sample size becomes unusably small after 20 attempted 2014 KCC contacts.

Figure 3.4 – Multiple successful contacts of 2014 KCC targeted population and predicted
probability of voter turnout
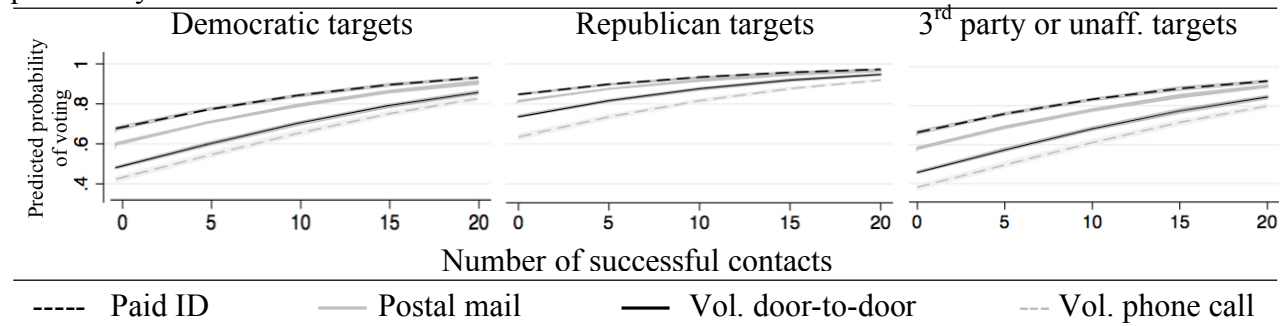
Note: Predicted probabilities are developed from logit regressions presented in *Appendix Table
A.2*.

Figure 3.4 demonstrates the relative effectiveness of repeated contacts to no contact. No

contact is reported at the far left end of the x-axis, with each successful attempt increasing the

likelihood of voter turnout from the baseline. However, the curvilinear increase suggests limits to

the effectiveness of repeated successful contact on a targeted voter. If the effects were

consistently effective as the number of successful contacts increases, the predicted probabilities

would be represented with straight lines.

There is the potential to study the optimal combination of successful contacts utilizing

different contact methods to estimate the highest probability of turnout for each partisan group.

However, calculating each potential contact with the four contact methods results in hundreds of

possible combinations. It is not useful to support the arguments made here. Instead, the results

presented in this study are for successive multiple successful contacts using a single contact

method only.

Table 3.4 - Change in predicted probability of voter turnout by party affiliation and number of successful contacts

	No successful contact	5 successful contacts		10 successful contacts		15 successful contacts		20 successful contacts	
	Pr. of voting (baseline)	Pr. of voting	Δ *from no contact*	Pr. of voting	Δ *from no contact*	Pr. of voting	Δ *from no contact*	Pr. of voting	Δ *from no contact*
Targets registered as Democratic									
Vol. door-to-door	0.481	0.597	*0.115*	0.702	*0.221*	0.790	*0.309*	0.857	*0.376*
Vol. phone call	0.601	0.706	*0.105*	0.793	*0.192*	0.860	*0.258*	0.907	*0.306*
Postal mail	0.424	0.540	*0.116*	0.652	*0.228*	0.749	*0.325*	0.826	*0.403*
Paid ID	0.677	0.770	*0.093*	0.842	*0.165*	0.895	*0.218*	0.931	*0.254*
Targets registered as Republican									
Vol. door-to-door	0.735	0.816	*0.081*	0.876	*0.141*	0.918	*0.183*	0.947	*0.212*
Vol. phone call	0.814	0.875	*0.061*	0.918	*0.103*	0.947	*0.132*	0.966	*0.152*
Postal mail	0.635	0.735	*0.100*	0.816	*0.181*	0.876	*0.241*	0.918	*0.283*
Paid ID	0.847	0.898	*0.051*	0.934	*0.087*	0.957	*0.110*	0.973	*0.126*
Targets registered as 3rd party or unaffiliated									
Vol. door-to-door	0.457	0.573	*0.116*	0.682	*0.225*	0.773	*0.316*	0.845	*0.388*
Vol. phone call	0.582	0.690	*0.107*	0.780	*0.198*	0.850	*0.267*	0.900	*0.318*
Postal mail	0.381	0.496	*0.114*	0.611	*0.229*	0.714	*0.333*	0.800	*0.418*
Paid ID	0.663	0.758	*0.095*	0.833	*0.170*	0.889	*0.226*	0.927	*0.264*

Notes: Observations are limited to registered voters who were successfully contacted by the 2014 KCC during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Predicted probabilities (pr. prob.) are developed from the logit regressions presented in *Appendix Table A.1.* Δ represents change from no contact

Table 3.4 represents the findings from Figure 3.4 in numeric form. Columns divide the

number of contacts into five categories. No successful contact is the baseline for comparison in

determining the relationship that increased contacts has with turnout. The difference in the predicted probability of turnout compared to the baseline is presented in the italicized right-hand column of each category. One successful contact compared to no successful contacts is not reviewed here, as they were the focus of study in Chapter Two.

Within each reviewed partisan subgroup and contact method, more successful contacts result in a higher probability of the target voting in the 2014 General Election. However, the rate of change (*Δ from no contact*) varies. The number of times a target is successfully contacted results in a different outcome from those where the target had only one successful contact.

The results find different conclusions based upon partisan affiliation. Targeted registered Republicans respond more favorably from increased postal mail compared to the other partisan sub-groups. This result may be due to the non-verbal cues and interactions Enos and Hersh (2015) found. Multiple contacts by the 2014 KCC to similarly aligned registered Democratic targets show that postal mail and volunteer door-to-door contact are similarly effective. Paid ID contacts are consistently the least effective form of repeated contact with registered Democratic targets.

Also shown here is a contradiction in contact frequency. More contact does not result in the same level of increased probability of voting. Four times as many successful contacts does not result in a target as being four times as likely to vote. The repeated contact does have higher levels of success with some methods and partisan targets, however. An example of this is found within the third party or unaffiliated subgroup. After five successful contacts, volunteer door-to-door contact is found to be most successful. However, after ten successful contacts, postal mail is more effective.

While the tables and figures above report the frequency aspect of this argument up to 20 attempts, the data that were investigated showed some potential voters contacted as many as 24 times during the final three months of the 2014 cycle. This repeated contact shows a lack of discipline or strategy in reaching out to the population by the 2014 KCC. This is particularly true when the resulting contacts are less successful. Frequency has a limit of returns to be considered. The conclusion here is repeated attempted contact may have increased returns on a GOTV effort, but there is a distinct limit of effort benefit. More is only better to a point, particularly when considering single contact attempt impacts. A strategic consideration may be to expand a target universe in a GOTV effort by a campaign, rather than dedicating financial and personnel resources to drive out the vote of a limited group.

Conclusion

This study analyzes how partisan contact timing and the number of successful contacts relate to voter turnout. The relationship between voter turnout and when the potential voter was contacted show the importance of these variables. Contact methods vary in their effectiveness for GOTV from when the targeted voter is contacted only a single time.

The relationship between repeated campaign contact and a specific set of potential voters to turnout was also shown to be significant. The effectiveness of GOTV efforts are decreased after several attempted contacts. The contact method and partisan affiliation of the targeted constituent altered this outcome. The ability for different contact methods to increase turnout did change with an increase of successful contacts. The variation in the correlation between contact method and turnout indicates that timing and frequency variables should be regularly taken into consideration for future GOTV efforts and study.

The dynamic reaction by 2014 KCC targets to contact timing and frequency demonstrates correlations with method had on driving a potential voter to the polls at a specific point in time. Variation in fact occurs as these independent variables change. The tables and figures provide a solid understanding of the relationships within each situation. This study quantifies the level of change between each contact method used and its effectiveness in a real statewide situation of potential voter turnout.

While a campaign in the field may shift its volunteer resources from door-to-door to a phone call bank, important variations exist. No static relationship is found with any contact method. It is foolhardy to assume that one method should be used exclusively over another when determining a method for driving potential voters to the polls. The considerations provided above have many practical applications when determining action by a campaign in the field.

The findings indicate the need for investigation into several conditions that may assist with explaining voter turnout behavior. First among these is a further understanding of how multiple repeated successful contacts correlate with voter turnout. This study did not investigate the effect of repeated unsuccessful contact attempts and voter turnout. Another consideration for future research are the methods used for these repeated contact attempts. Is there a combination of contact methods that may result in the optimal likelihood of a person voting? Continued study is needed.

A final consideration is the timing of elections themselves as indicators of voter turnout. Off-cycle elections have lower turnout, leading to the possibility of increased interest group influence on election results (Anzia, 2011). It is possible for lower turnout elections to see even greater variation in contact methods utilized by partisan campaign efforts. One may also consider how this is affected when studied in a district that allows early voting or voting by mail. The

timing of when people vote and the different procedure they use to vote may show to have some correlation with partisan contact timing.

Chapters Two and Three have reviewed the variation of method, timing, and frequency of contact on potential voters. The results provided evidence that each has a dynamic impact on the voting population. The examination was based on a sample that takes the entirety of the State of Kansas. Chapter Four will repeat some of the elements provided from Chapters Two and Three, but will this time apply them to specific regions within Kansas.

Chapter Four

Population Density and Regionalism as Variables
in the Relationship between Campaign Contact Method and Voter Turnout

Campaigning in a large district presents challenges for strategy development. The larger a district, the more diverse the electorate. Tactics and messaging may be generalized to appeal to the largest population possible, ignoring distinctions found among specific pockets of voters. Field campaigning applies these generalized efforts to targeted individuals. Unique populations within a large district are often not equally receptive to contact methods, however. Statewide campaigns are rarely nuanced enough to have specific contingencies for all of the variety that exist in a large population. This may result in less effective GOTV outcomes. Common contact methods delivering the same message will affect unique populations differently.

Earlier chapters focused on the variation between contact method, timing, and frequency from the 2014 Kansas Coordinated Campaign (KCC) and its correlation to getting out the vote (GOTV). This chapter focuses on understanding how a strategy implemented during the election cycle produced varying correlations with voter turnout in different regions and population densities across Kansas.

Campaigns target densely populated areas to maximize contact. This is based on the assumption that door-to-door contact method provides the highest return. The population concentration of volunteers and targeted voters in urban areas allows for a higher volume of attempted contacts when this method is implemented. This results in a strategy that will focus on urban voters. Without the time or ability to train activists in the nuances of different contact methods, a campaign may only utilize a finite set of methods during a campaign cycle.

Other contact methods do not require the same density. Telephone communication allows for a central phone bank based in a volunteer dense area to contact voters anywhere. The

financial cost of this method has dropped significantly as long-distance calls are now less expensive than in previous cycles. This lowered cost allows a campaign to use telephone contact methods more regularly, particularly into rural areas. Mail contact may be developed by elite campaign personnel and delivered to a potential voter at the same cost -- regardless of whether targeted household live in an urban or rural area.

This chapter investigates effects of the 2014 KCC plan across geographic regions at the congressional district level. Also examined are population densities across Kansas and within its congressional districts. The Kansas demographic provides an interesting diversity at the state level.

I begin with a review of previous studies on regionalism in political campaigns. Then, I develop an argument that contact methods affect turnout differently across diverse geographic areas and population densities. Utilizing data organized from 2014 KCC efforts, the findings demonstrate that developing a multi-layered strategy in a statewide GOTV campaign effort is worth the effort.

Regionalism and population density as a study of campaign effects

Interstate research investigating regional differences in voter persuasion or opinion is vast. Studies on turnout behavior are lacking, particularly at the intrastate level. Individual level voter persuasion dominates much of the behavior research. Investigation into group characteristics developed more recently. Understanding propensities to participate or not in governmental elections is important when attempting to recognize trends. Regional differences occur within a state when a common turnout effort is executed across a demographically and geographically diverse area.

Conceiving turnout as a factor of group behavior and not individual characteristics behavior has merit. Examining turnout at the individual level is incomplete, particularly as rational choice theory investigates voting as it happens in social and group context (Aldrich 1993).

Social network theory provides a baseline approach to understanding observed relationships. Social and group factors are as important as individual factors when determining political participation (Campbell 2013; Pietryka and DeBats 2017). Social pressures play a role in the Riker and Ordeshook (1972) sense of duty (Gerber, Green, and Larmier 2008). Increased political discussion and social interactions lead to higher participation (McClurg 2003). This may lead to greater turnout in areas that have more contact with partisan campaign efforts. However, people who are in the ideological minority -- at a neighborhood level -- are more likely to disengage from the political process than those in the majority (McClurg 2006). This is an important finding in a heavily partisan state such as Kansas.

Some field experiments have investigated individuals by group clusters rather than analyzing individual responses (Arceneaux 2005; Green and Vavreck 2008). These efforts used "matching" between similar populations in an effort to predict outcomes. These matching studies proved to be inaccurate, as standard ordinary least squares regressions better capture trends and tendencies (Arceneaux, Gerber, and Green 2006). This further indicates a need to investigate larger data sets that can more accurately present a comparative analysis of sub-state and regional effects.

Various GOTV efforts were not distributed across the electorate. The result is biased response among individuals who are more represented (Enos, Fowler, and Vavreck 2014). Areas with lower representation react differently to GOTV efforts than others. The issue is

compounded when considering factors such as regional differences in application of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Ansolabehere, Persily, and Stewart 2013). Party performance differs between regional and national level as well. The variation is likely due to regional divides between areas with distinct identities (Schakel 2011). This is significant, as individuals continue to relocate into regional areas that are more representative of their own personal values and ideology (Rentfrow 2010). As a consequence, higher turnout does not always help Democratic candidates. The ideological demographic of a certain area may lead to higher vote share for Republican candidates (Hansford and Gomez 2010).

U.K. election study considerations

Relatively little research conducted on intrastate regional effects studies GOTV efforts in the American context. Comparative political research does identify some causal factors to consider, particularly as U.K. correlations of GOTV to turnout have found similar results to U.S. studies (John and Brannan 2008). Investigations into British voter behavior have revealed that local identity and perceived importance of the local or regional legislature are key factors to consider when understanding potential voter's participation in elections (Henderson and McEwen 2014). Party mobilization efforts determine an individual's personal participation more clearly in candidate-based systems such as the U.S. than in proportional systems such as the U.K., however (Karp, Banducci, and Bowler 2007).

The divide between urban and rural populations in the United States mirrors this international condition. Literature on the urban-rural divide is vast, but not complete. Research focused on campaign contacts and persuasion, not the voter's decision to turn out or abstain.

Urban and rural considerations

Campaign contact may have varying impacts on specific populations -- especially if they live in an urban or rural population context. The implementation of policy and laws result in different effects on urban and rural populations. This includes environmental law (Anderson and Mizak 2006) and the implementation of the Help America Vote Act in 2002 (Creek and Karnes 2009). Rural administrative capacity in application of policy and development of new voter registration is a factor when studying voter turnout as well (Burden and Neiheisel 2013). The divide may be compounded by the digital divide that exists between urban and rural areas (Hale et al. 2010), although this disparity is now decreasing.

Continued diversity of political attitudes and voting patterns exist along the urban-rural continuum (Scala and Johnson 2017). Rural communities are becoming more economically and socially interdependent with urban populations (Lichter and Ziliak 2017). Internationally, the real or perceived bias against policies developed for urban populations may lead to rural insurgency against government either politically or through force (Pierskalla 2015). The same may be true in the American context.

The argument for this chapter is that community type will affect a partisan campaign effort to change voter turnout behavior. The relationship of partisan GOTV efforts to turnout must not only be considered in the aggregate, but by region and across the urban and rural divide. The KCC 2014 effort provides a unique opportunity to extend the literature on the effectiveness of sub-state turnout efforts across regions and population densities.

Variation of turnout by campaign contact method, voter target partisanship, and voter target congressional district

This study uses the same 2014 KCC data that were developed for Chapters Two and Three. It also utilizes many of the same processes presented earlier. Data is divided into sample

groups specific to the questions. The first division of the sample group is by Kansas'

congressional districts (see Figure 4.1 for geographical reference). Kansas' four congressional

districts are referred to by abbreviated shorthand names: KS-01, KS-02, KS-03, and KS-04. The

second division of the sample group is by population density. Figure 4.1 also provides a

reference for Kansas' urban, urban cluster, and rural population areas. This study utilizes

classifications provided from U.S. Census Bureau definitions. Urban areas are those where more

than 50,000 people reside in a census tract or block. Urban clusters are areas where between

2,500 and 50,000 people reside within a census tract or block. These are typically seen to be

suburban areas or small towns. Rural areas are all census tracts or blocks that are not classified as

an urban or urban cluster area (U.S. Department of Commerce 2010).

Figure 4.1 – Kansas Congressional Districts (2012-2022), urban population areas, and urban
cluster population areas.
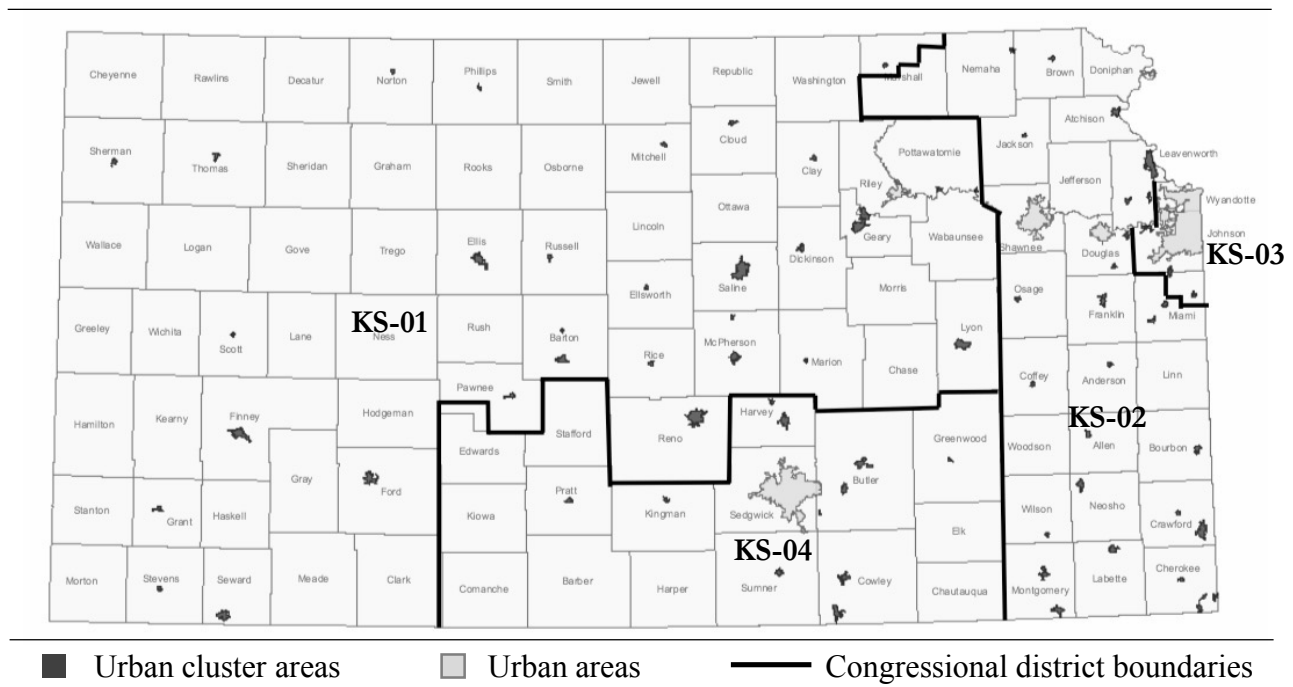
Notes: Base map sourced from KU Institute for Policy and Social Research. Population density
data are from the U.S. Census Bureau.

As shown in previous chapters, contact method, timing, and frequency correlate with different levels of turnout from the same exposure to 2014 KCC methodology. In dividing the study into these categories, elements of the 2014 KCC strategy was revealed. Different contact methods were applied in different locations at different times. However, this study will investigate only single contact attempts. Limiting the sample to only single attempted contact will isolate voter turnout variance to correlations with partisanship, contact method, regionalism, or population density and not contact frequency or timing.

Table 4.1 provides summary statistics of 2014 KCC attempted contacts by the targeted voter's partisan affiliation and congressional district of residence. The table is divided into those who were successfully and not successfully contacted, and again by those who did and did not vote.

Differences in 2014 KCC attempted contacts exist across the congressional districts. KS-03 (Kansas City and suburbs) had the largest sample. KS-01 (western, central, and northern Kansas) has the smallest. Barely more than one-third of attempted contacts were attempted in KS-01 compared to KS-03. As each congressional district has roughly the same number of registered voters and total population, this may be a signal of premeditated intent by the KCC. It may also be an indication of the Democratic Party's lower volunteer capacity in KS-01 compared to KS-03.

Table 4.1 – Summary statistics of 2014 KCC target population and turnout by party affiliation and congressional district

	KS-01			KS-02			KS-03			KS-04		
	Did not vote	Voted	Total	Did not vote	Voted	Total	Did not vote	Voted	Total	Did not vote	Voted	Total
Democratic Targets												
No contact	1,293	1,108	2,401	1,706	2,045	3,751	2,507	1,543	4,050	780	502	1,282
% of total	53.85	46.15		45.48	54.52		61.90	38.10		60.84	39.16	
Contacted	242	437	679	367	656	1,023	752	554	1,306	299	749	1,048
% of total	35.64	64.36		35.87	64.13		57.58	42.42		28.53	71.47	
All Democrats	1,535	1,545	3,080	2,073	2,701	4,774	3,259	2,097	5,356	1,079	1,251	2,330
% of total	49.84	50.16		43.42	56.58		60.85	39.15		46.31	53.69	
Republican Targets												
No contact	254	1,167	1,421	366	1,090	1,456	867	2,056	2,923	348	1,051	1,399
% of total	17.87	82.13		25.14	74.86		29.66	70.34		24.87	75.13	
Contacted	35	189	224	59	341	400	228	806	1,034	257	3,151	3,408
% of total	15.63	84.38		14.75	85.25		22.05	77.95		07.54	92.46	
All Republicans	289	1,356	1,645	425	1,431	1,856	1,095	2,862	3,957	605	4,202	4,807
% of total	17.57	82.43		22.90	77.10		27.67	72.33		12.59	87.41	
3rd party/unaffiliated Targets												
No contact	684	702	1,386	1,541	1,271	2,812	1,955	1,393	3,348	901	613	1,514
% of total	49.35	50.65		54.80	45.20		58.39	41.61		59.51	40.49	
Contacted	184	178	362	260	351	611	665	422	1,087	617	984	1,601
% of total	50.83	49.17		42.55	57.45		61.18	38.82		38.54	61.46	
All 3rd/unaffiliated	868	880	1,748	1,801	1,622	3,423	2,620	1,815	4,435	1,518	1,597	3,115
% of total	49.66	50.34		52.61	47.39		59.08	40.92		48.73	51.27	

Notes: Observations are limited to those whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact only one time during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014).

Within these targeted partisan groups, trends begin to emerge. The 2014 KCC generally targeted more registered Democrats than Republicans with the exception of KS-04. Successful contact with targeted voters consistently resulted in higher levels of participation. An exception is found among third party or unaffiliated voters in KS-01 and KS-03, where voter turnout decreased following successful 2014 KCC contact.

Figure 4.2 – Percentage difference in turnout between contacted and not contacted targets by partisan affiliation and congressional district

	KS-01	KS-02	KS-03	KS-04
■ Democratic	18.21	9.61	4.32	32.31
■ Republican	2.25	10.39	7.61	17.33
■ 3rd party or unaffiliated	-1.48	12.25	-2.79	20.97
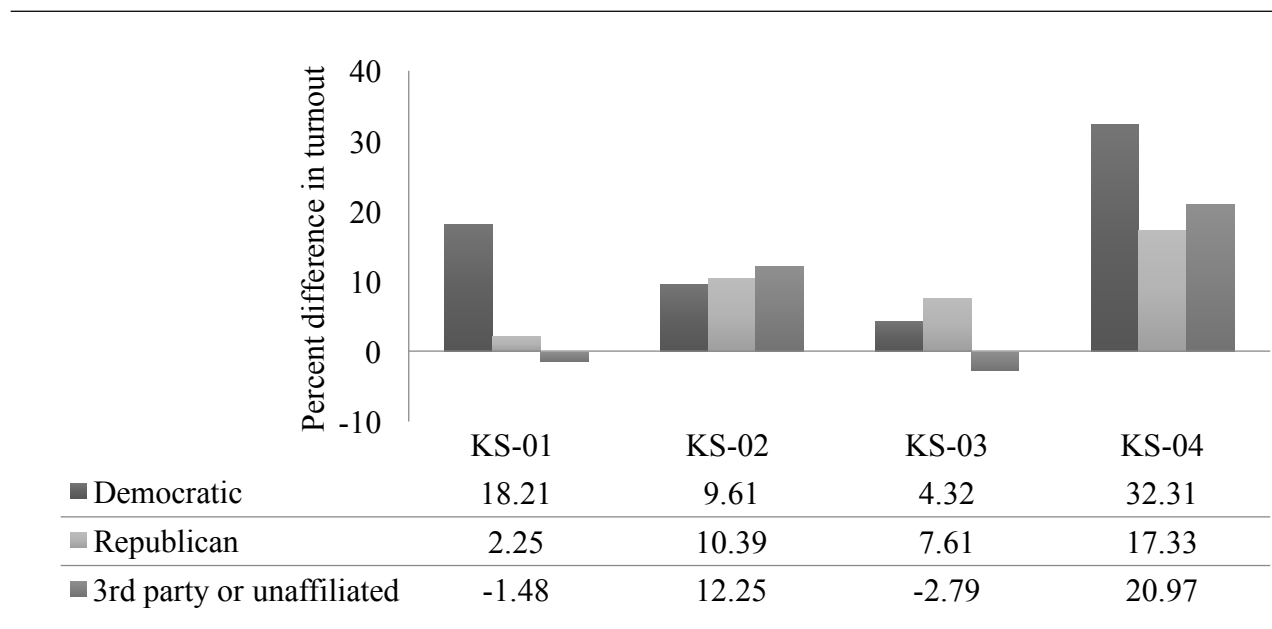
The increase in participation varies both by partisanship and by congressional district. As was found in earlier chapters, registered Republicans targeted by the 2014 KCC had a higher participation probability of voting before contact than those registered as Democratic or third party or unaffiliated. Despite this, the Republican change in participation increases at a level similar to those registered as Democratic. Third party or unaffiliated voters are consistently the group that responds at the lowest level to 2014 KCC contact.

Table 4.2 presents 12 logit models reporting the statistical significance of 2014 KCC contact on voter turnout. Models divide the 2014 KCC single attempted contact sample group into each of the three partisan subgroups divided by congressional district. Each model uses the relationship of successful contact (any type), gender (dyadic), age of targeted voter (continuous), the number of years the target has been registered to vote in Kansas (continuous), and population density (urban and rural, coded as dyadic) as variables regressed against the dependent variable if a targeted voter participated or not.

The results show successful contact is consistently significant among registered Democratic targets across all congressional districts. However, levels vary. Statistical significance changes among the partisan sub-groups as well. Where Democratic targets were all significantly and positively responsive to successful contact, 2014 KCC contact among Republican and third party or unaffiliated voters in KS-01, or unaffiliated voters in KS-03, did not significantly influence turnout. The negative influence of 2014 KCC successful contact on voter turnout among third party or unaffiliated voters in KS-01 and KS-03 is not found to be statistically significant, but is still noteworthy.

The standardized coefficients in Table 4.2 also indicate a variation among partisan targets in the various congressional districts. The partisan targets react differently to one another in different geographic areas. Contact results in the highest correlation with voting in KS-04, while greatly reduced in KS-01 and KS-03.

Table 4.2 – Logit regressions of successful contact and change in voter turnout by congressional district and party registration

Variables	Democratic				Republican				3rd party or unaffiliated			
	KS-01 voted	KS-02 voted	KS-03 voted	KS-04 voted	KS-01 voted	KS-02 voted	KS-03 voted	KS-04 voted	KS-01 voted	KS-02 voted	KS-03 voted	KS-04 voted
Contacted	0.600***	0.361***	0.191***	1.273***	0.192	0.533***	0.351***	1.384***	-0.053	0.539***	-0.042	1.178***
	0.249	*0.148*	*0.082*	*0.634*	*0.066*	*0.206*	*0.154*	*0.629*	*-0.022*	*0.206*	*-0.018*	*0.589*
	(0.095)	(0.077)	(0.067)	(0.095)	(0.199)	(0.162)	(0.091)	(0.095)	(0.130)	(0.097)	(0.074)	(0.084)
Gender (male)	-0.035	0.087	0.028	-0.138	-0.043	0.099	0.192**	0.0846	0.112	0.181**	0.162**	0.226***
	-0.017	*0.043*	*0.014*	*-0.068*	*-0.021*	*0.091*	*0.077*	*0.092*	*0.056*	*0.091*	*0.081*	*0.113*
	(0.078)	(0.064)	(0.059)	(0.092)	(0.132)	(0.118)	(0.096)	(0.042)	(0.104)	(0.074)	(0.064)	(0.079)
Age	0.015***	0.019***	0.019***	0.009***	0.013***	0.030***	0.038***	0.017***	0.030***	0.030***	0.021***	0.029***
	0.279	*0.364*	*0.300*	*0.176*	*0.194*	*0.515*	*0.590*	*0.307*	*0.486*	*0.515*	*0.332*	*0.503*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Years registered	0.036***	0.032***	0.034***	0.024***	0.022***	0.028***	0.038***	0.038***	0.052***	0.044***	0.035***	0.058***
	0.409	*0.353*	*0.267*	*0.246*	*0.258*	*0.376*	*0.392*	*0.408*	*0.466*	*0.376*	*0.279*	*0.436*
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Urban	1.193***	0.999***	-0.402**	0.0141	0.168	0.678***	-0.343	-0.321*	1.093***	0.884***	-0.406*	-0.677***
	0.297	*0.493*	*-0.078*	*0.007*	*0.040*	*0.438*	*-0.060*	*-0.132*	*0.288*	*0.438*	*-0.082*	*-0.278*
	(0.168)	(0.076)	(0.202)	(0.118)	(0.285)	(0.150)	(0.319)	(0.187)	(0.209)	(0.088)	(0.213)	(0.149)
Rural	0.345***	0.197**	0.024	0.254*	0.145	0.441***	0.218	-0.122	0.205***	0.427***	-0.014	-0.139
	0.156	*0.090*	*0.003*	*0.097*	*0.071*	*0.182*	*0.028*	*-0.044*	*0.097*	*0.182*	*-0.002*	*-0.047*
	(0.088)	(0.080)	(0.285)	(0.147)	(0.138)	(0.139)	(0.440)	(0.208)	(0.114)	(0.101)	(0.301)	(0.177)
Constant	-1.581***	-1.749*	-1.331***	-1.172***	0.312	-1.322***	-1.436***	-0.134	-2.282***	-2.615***	-1.414***	-1.976***
	(0.129)	(0.112)	(0.222)	(0.161)	(0.290)	(0.214)	(0.344)	(0.229)	(0.188)	(0.137)	(0.236)	(0.196)
Obs.	3,079	4,768	5,355	2,330	1,645	3,420	3,957	4,807	1,748	3,420	4,435	3,115

Notes: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, *$p<0.1$. Standardized β coefficients are in italics. Standard errors are in parentheses. Observations are limited to registered voters who were targeted one time by the 2014 KCC during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Dependent variable is if the targeted individual voted in the 2014 general election or not. β coefficients are standardized along the independent variable (x-axis) only with mean $= 0$ and standard deviation $= 1$.

82

Table 4.3 categorically investigates the correlation of different successful contact methods on voter turnout. The results in Table 4.3 indicate while any contact is typically significant across partisan groups and congressional district, the contact method used is not as significant. The trend across Table 4.3 shows that contact method may not be important with every potential voter. The location and partisanship of the targeted voter has a correlation with the most effective contact method.

KS-04 shows consistent statistical significance with every contact method used among targeted Democratic and third party or unaffiliated voters. Among these groups, door-to-door contact does not always have the highest rate of significance among the standardized variables, however. The method is found to have the lowest correlation among registered Democrats, and second lowest among registered 3rd party or unaffiliated voters, on voter turnout.

To investigate this variation, the unique population characteristics of KS-01 must be understood. Most conspicuously among these is the difference in population density found in KS-01 compared to other Kansas congressional districts. As Figure 4.1 demonstrated, the geographic area of KS-01 is vastly larger than the other three Kansas congressional districts. The population density demographic reflects the geography. The relationships between population density and contact method are investigated next.

Table 4.3 – Logit regressions of contact method and change in voter turnout among contacted targets by congressional district

	Democratic				Republican				3rd party or unaffiliated			
Variables	KS-01 voted	KS-02 voted	KS-03 voted	KS-04 voted	KS-01 voted	KS-02 voted	KS-03 voted	KS-04 voted	KS-01 voted	KS-02 voted	KS-03 voted	KS-04 voted
Contact Method (categorical)												
Volunteer door-to-door	0.684 *0.259* (1.437)	0.115 *0.052* (0.210)	0.263 *0.129* (0.163)	3.072*** *0.987* (0.619)	0.441 *0.176* (0.605)	0.259 *0.129* (0.943)	0.925*** *0.337* (0.281)	0.500 *0.077* (0.627)	0.188 *0.092* (0.332)	-0.436 *-0.217* (1.315)	0.531*** *0.264* (0.181)	2.722*** *0.772* (0.370)
Volunteer phone call	0.450 *0.224* (1.424)	0.466*** *0.232* (0.172)	0.007 *0.004* (0.190)	4.626*** *1.666* (0.636)	0.462 *0.229* (0.477)	0.737 *0.350* (0.969)	0.099 *0.028* (0.373)	0.473 *0.097* (0.622)	0.519*** *0.253* (0.306)	0.132 *0.061* (1.317)	-0.109 *-0.048* (0.217)	2.882*** *0.736* (0.401)
Paid ID	0.467 *0.226* (1.426)	- -	-	5.650*** *2.708* (0.615)	-	0.240 *0.065* (1.019)	-	1.659*** *0.430* (0.570)	-	-0.556 *-0.202* (1.319)	-	4.327*** *2.044* (0.333)
Gender (male)	-0.106 *-0.053* (0.167)	0.185 *0.091* (0.142)	0.0921 *0.043* (0.126)	-0.042 *-0.020* (0.173)	0.111 *0.055* (0.395)	0.085 *0.042* (0.315)	0.257 *0.128* (0.171)	0.330** *0.165* (0.134)	0.312 *0.156* (0.236)	0.089 *0.044* (0.180)	0.164 *0.080* (0.141)	0.200 *0.100* (0.133)
Age	0.006 *0.003* (0.005)	0.019*** *0.365* (0.004)	0.018*** *0.306* (0.004)	-0.008 *-0.168* (0.005)	0.022 *0.370* (0.014)	0.036*** *0.651* (0.011)	0.039*** *0.656* (0.007)	0.010** *0.189* (0.004)	0.026*** *0.462* (0.008)	0.037*** *0.018* (0.007)	0.019*** *0.289* (0.005)	0.020*** *0.368* (0.004)
Years registered	0.016* *0.008* (0.008)	0.010 *0.118* (0.007)	0.033*** *0.278* (0.008)	0.009 *0.102* (0.009)	0.012 *0.234* (0.021)	0.029 *0.378* (0.018)	0.044*** *0.489* (0.011)	0.024*** *0.262* (0.008)	0.055*** *0.510* (0.016)	0.009 *0.004* (0.014)	0.042*** *0.328* (0.010)	0.030*** *0.224* (0.011)
Urban	1.298* *0.691* (0.355)	1.255*** *0.612* (0.189)	-0.360 *-0.068* (0.448)	0.713*** *0.312* (0.264)	0.975 *0.217* (1.128)	0.408 *0.201* (0.368)	0.130 *0.006* (1.454)	-0.526 *-0.185* (0.471)	0.880** *0.276* (0.394)	0.694*** *0.344* (0.215)	-0.403 *-0.064* (0.514)	-0.799** *-0.272* (0.369)
Rural	0.320" *0.170* (0.190)	0.459* *0.215* (0.172)	0.109 *0.015* (0.600)	-0.043 *-0.015* (0.301)	0.190 *0.091* (0.435)	0.059 *0.025* (0.420)	-	-0.322 *-0.106* (0.496)	0.221 *0.102* (0.279)	0.422 *0.209* (0.262)	0.411 *0.041* (0.803)	0.185 *0.055* (0.425)
Constant	-0.671 (1.431)	-1.505*** (0.289)	-1.324*** (0.488)	-3.804*** (0.677)	-0.527 (0.806)	-1.357 (1.066)	-2.569*** (1.481)	0.373 (0.746)	-2.587*** (0.507)	-1.631 (1.345)	-1.695*** (0.564)	-3.545*** (0.518)
Obs.	677	1,012	1,300	1,045	193	369	983	3,381	354	600	1,078	1,598

84

Table 4.3 notes: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standardized β coefficients are in italics. Standard errors are in parentheses. Observations are limited to registered voters who were targeted one time and successfully contacted by the 2014 KCC during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Dependent variable is if the targeted individual voted in the 2014 general election or not. β coefficients are standardized along the independent variable (x-axis) only with mean = 0 and standard deviation = 1. In places where postal mail was not available as a categorical baseline, Paid ID was used (-).

Variation of turnout by campaign contact method, voter target partisanship, and voter target population density

Regionalism has a relationship on the effectiveness of various successful contact methods. The next aspect of this investigation is to determine how voters in different population densities react to various contact methods. As Kansas contains urban, suburban, small towns, and rural populations, the sample allows for direct comparisons between these population densities.

To investigate population density as an independent variable, this study utilizes classifications provided from U.S. Census Bureau definitions. Again, urban areas are those where more than 50,000 people reside in a census tract or block. Urban clusters exist where between 2,500 and 50,000 people reside within a census tract or block. These are typically suburban areas or small towns. Rural areas are all census tracts or blocks that are not classified as an urban or urban cluster area (U.S. Department of Commerce 2010). Of the entire 2012 Kansas population of 2,853,118, there were 1,431,424 (~50.2 %) who lived in an urban area, 685,537 (~24%) who lived in an urban cluster area, and 736,157 (~25.8%) who lived in a rural area (U.S. Department of Commerce 2012).

Table 4.4 presents summary statistics of 2014 KCC single contact attempts arranged by partisanship and population density of the targeted voter. The table is again divided into those voters who were successfully or not successfully contacted, and if those people voted or not.
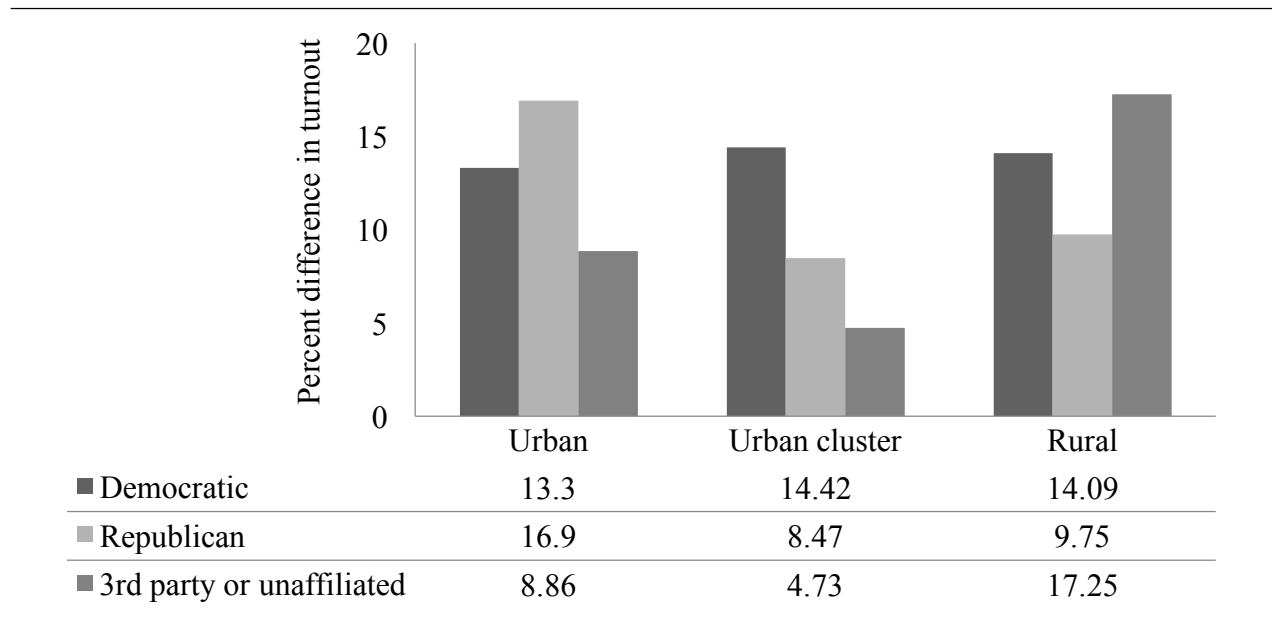
Table 4.4 – Summary statistics of 2014 KCC target population and turnout by party affiliation and population density

	Urban			Urban Cluster			Rural		
	Did not vote	*Voted*	*Total*	*Did not vote*	*Voted*	*Total*	*Did not vote*	*Voted*	*Total*
Democratic Targets									
No contact	3,513	2,826	6,339	1,684	1,190	2,874	974	1,070	2,044
% of total	*55.42*	*44.58*		*58.59*	*41.41*		*47.65*	*52.35*	
Contacted	1,053	1,447	2,500	322	407	729	247	489	736
% of total	*42.12*	*57.88*		*44.17*	*55.83*		*33.56*	*66.44*	
All Democrats	4,566	4,273	8,839	2,006	1,597	3,603	1,221	1,559	2,780
% of total	*51.66*	*48.34*		*55.68*	*44.32*		*43.92*	*56.08*	
Republican Targets									
No contact	1,166	2,959	4,125	347	1,048	1,395	284	1,205	1,489
% of total	*28.27*	*71.73*		*24.87*	*75.13*		*19.07*	*80.93*	
Contacted	467	3,639	4,106	52	265	317	56	545	601
% of total	*11.37*	*88.63*		*16.40*	*83.60*		*9.32*	*90.68*	
All Republicans	1,633	6,598	8,231	399	1,313	1,712	340	1,750	2,090
% of total	*19.84*	*80.16*		*23.31*	*76.69*		*16.27*	*83.73*	
3rd party/unaffiliated Targets									
No contact	3,183	2,336	5,519	1,127	761	1,888	685	784	1,469
% of total	*57.67*	*42.33*		*59.69*	*40.31*		*46.63*	*53.37*	
Contacted	1,356	1,422	2,778	227	186	413	124	298	422
% of total	*48.81*	*51.19*		*54.96*	*45.04*		*29.38*	*70.62*	
All 3rd/unaff.	4,539	3,758	8,297	1,354	947	2,301	809	1,082	1,891
% of total	*54.71*	*45.29*		*58.84*	*41.16*		*42.78*	*57.22*	

Notes: Observations are limited to those whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact only one time during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014).

Table 4.4 shows the 2014 KCC effort on urban populations. Urban populations represent roughly half of the population of Kansas, and a balanced approach by the KCC would have focused half of their efforts in these areas. This is not the case. Some two-thirds of the 2014 KCC's efforts were directed toward urban areas in the case of single contact.

Figure 4.3 – Percentage difference in turnout between contacted and not contacted targets by partisan affiliation and population density

	Urban	Urban cluster	Rural
Democratic	13.3	14.42	14.09
Republican	16.9	8.47	9.75
3rd party or unaffiliated	8.86	4.73	17.25

Differences exist between the population densities. Targeted Democratic voters are seen to have a relatively consistent change in turnout regardless of their population density. Urban Republicans seem more likely to turnout following a successful KCC 2014 contact than rural Republicans, however. Rural third party or unaffiliated targets exhibit the largest percentage change in turnout following KCC 2014 contact.

Table 4.5 presents logit regressions reporting the significance of 2014 KCC successful contact on turnout. Here, the sample population for each model is divided by the target's partisan affiliation and population density.

Contact remains statistically significant across all population densities and partisan groups. However, the urban cluster populations consistently show a lower level of importance across all partisan groups. This is particularly true among the Republican and third party or unaffiliated targets.

Table 4.5 – Logit regressions of successful contact and change in voter turnout by party affiliation and population density.

Variables	Registered Democratic			Registered Republican			Registered 3rd party or unaffiliated		
	Urban	Urban cluster	Rural	Urban	Urban cluster	Rural	Urban	Urban cluster	Rural
	voted	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*
Contacted	0.491***	0.459***	0.523***	1.046***	0.492***	0.905***	0.417***	0.275**	0.864***
	0.221	*0.184*	*0.231*	*0.523*	*0.191*	*0.410*	*0.197*	*0.106*	*0.360*
	(0.050)	(0.087)	(0.092)	(0.063)	(0.170)	(0.158)	(0.049)	(0.119)	(0.124)
Gender (male)	0.047	-0.065	0.099	0.170***	0.164	-0.138	0.181***	0.087	0.248**
	0.023	*-0.032*	*0.050*	*0.085*	*0.082*	*-0.069*	*0.090*	*0.043*	*0.124*
	(0.046)	(0.071)	(0.079)	(0.059)	(0.121)	(0.122)	(0.046)	(0.092)	(0.098)
Age	0.020***	0.014***	0.009***	0.029***	0.030***	0.022***	0.026***	0.034***	0.023***
	0.361	*0.256*	*0.163*	*0.501*	*0.506*	*0.330*	*0.426*	*0.576*	*0.346*
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Years registered	0.045***	0.028***	0.029***	0.035***	0.029***	0.020***	0.039***	0.048***	0.040***
	0.429	*0.292*	*0.328*	*0.381*	*0.347*	*0.214*	*0.298*	*0.392*	*0.365*
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Constant	-1.67***	-1.38***	-0.93***	-1.19***	-1.09***	-0.07	-1.96***	-2.58***	-1.96***
	(0.069)	(0.111)	(0.139)	(0.103)	(0.222)	(0.243)	(0.077)	(0.156)	(0.077)
Obs.	8,836	3,602	2,776	8,231	1,711	2,088	8,297	2,299	8,297

Notes: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standardized β coefficients are in italics. Standard errors are in parentheses. Observations are limited to registered voters who were targeted one time by the 2014 KCC during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Dependent variable is if the targeted individual voted in the 2014 General Election or not. β coefficients are standardized along the independent variable (x-axis) only with mean = 0 and standard deviation = 1.

Table 4.6 utilizes logit modeling to investigate the significance of different contact methods on voter turnout. Divided by target partisan subgroup and population density, the contact methods of volunteer door-to-door, volunteer telephone call, postal mail, and paid ID are examined. Postal mail is the baseline for categorical variables, with paid ID taking its place when not enough postal mail observations were available within a particular subgroup. As was discussed earlier in this dissertation, the paid ID contact method was regularly found to be the most effective form of 2014 KCC GOTV contact.

Table 4.6 – Logit regressions of contact method and change in voter turnout by party affiliation and population density.

Variables	Registered Democratic			Registered Republican			Registered 3rd party/unaffiliated		
	Urban	Urban cluster	Rural	Urban	Urban cluster	Rural	Urban	Urban cluster	Rural
	voted	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*	*voted*
Contact Method (categorical)									
Volunteer door-to-door	3.166***	0.174	0.701	0.124	2.451**	-0.768	2.973***	-0.340	-0.457
	1.572	*0.720*	*0.162*	*0.053*	*1.208*	*-0.209*	*1.405*	*-0.170*	*-0.151*
	(0.593)	(0.216)	(1.459)	(0.555)	(1.041)	(0.489)	(0.331)	(1.330)	(0.345)
Volunteer phone call	3.512***	-0.199	0.737	-0.017	2.708***	-1.201***	2.758***	0.252	-0.539**
	1.475	*-0.099*	*0.356*	*-0.004*	*1.354*	*-0.456*	*1.003*	*0.114*	*-0.259*
	(0.598)	(0.175)	(1.428)	(0.574)	(1.026)	(0.340)	(0.341)	(1.331)	(0.251)
Paid ID	4.097***	-	0.658	1.147**	2.363**	-	3.908***	-0.488	-
	1.868		*0.326*	*0.529*	*0.721*		*1.918*	*-0.189*	
	(0.597)		(1.426)	(0.553)	(1.120)		(0.330)	(1.337)	
Gender (male)	0.240**	-0.222	0.131	0.354***	0.303	-0.358	0.224**	0.252	0.515**
	0.116	*-0.109*	*0.066*	*0.177*	*0.152*	*-0.178*	*0.111*	*-0.110*	*0.258*
	(0.094)	(0.154)	(0.159)	(0.104)	(0.337)	(0.293)	(0.087)	(1.331)	(0.229)
Age	0.019***	0.011**	-0.004	0.023***	0.049***	0.012	0.025***	0.025***	0.031***
	0.384	*0.206*	*-0.064*	*0.434*	*0.859*	*0.211*	*0.435*	*0.012*	*0.499*
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.003)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Years registered	0.037***	-0.003	0.020***	0.031***	0.016	0.057***	0.025***	0.047***	0.019
	0.377	*-0.029*	*0.243*	*0.351*	*0.196*	*0.588*	*0.188*	*0.023*	*0.176*
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.015)
Constant	-4.565***	-0.211	-0.218	-0.625	-4.048***	1.252**	-4.531***	-1.520	-0.956***
	(0.604)	(0.290)	(1.442)	(0.562)	(1.286)	(0.487)	(0.344)	(1.387)	(0.416)
Obs.	2,489	725	729	4,040	280	569	2,765	409	408

Notes: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standardized β coefficients are in italics. Standard errors are in parentheses. Observations are limited to registered voters who were targeted one time and successfully contacted by the 2014 KCC during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Dependent variable is if the targeted individual voted in the 2014 General Election or not. β coefficients are standardized along the independent variable (x-axis) only with mean = 0 and standard deviation = 1. In places where postal mail was not available as a categorical baseline, Paid ID was used (-).

The first finding to note from Table 4.6 is the negative coefficients found in some of the contact methods among various subgroups. It is worth remembering at this point that these negative coefficients do not mean that the contact resulted in lowering turnout among these subgroups. Rather, it refers to a smaller positive correlation to turnout compared to the baseline

contact method variable used. As postal mail was not always used as the baseline for comparison among the subgroups, the logit regressions for three of these models are compared against the paid ID contact method. The negative coefficients in Table 4.6 provide more evidence, supporting the position that volunteer door-to-door and volunteer telephone calls are not as effective in turning out the vote as paid ID. The exception to this is urban cluster Democratic voters, although it is found to not be statistically significant.

As demonstrated earlier, variations occur across each subgroup. Targets in urban and rural sample subgroups behave similarly to the whole, as paid ID contacts correlate more with turnout than other methods. However, the urban cluster subgroup does not. Urban cluster Republicans respond at higher levels to volunteer telephone calls. While the other urban cluster partisan subgroups do not show statistical significance to the various contact methods, the trend of positive correlations is seen with the third party or unaffiliated partisan subgroup to phone calls as well. The lack of statistical significance is also notable among the urban Republican subgroup, where only the paid ID contact is significant.

Variation of turnout by successful campaign contact, contact method, partisanship, congressional district, and population density

Successful contact and contact method vary in their level of correlation when investigated by partisan group, congressional districts, and population density. In order to provide a fully satisfying investigation, the sample populations should be considered across all three subdivisions simultaneously.

This is particularly true as the percentage of the population living in particular population densities varies across congressional districts. KS-01 is heavily rural and urban cluster. The only defined urban area within KS-01 is the city of Manhattan. KS-02 is balanced between all three types of population density. KS-03 has a largely urban population based upon urban and

suburban areas surrounding Kansas City. KS-04 has a diverse set of population densities, with the population strongly concentrated in urban areas centered on Wichita.

Table 4.7 – Summary statistics of all 2014 KCC attempted contacts by population density, congressional district, and party affiliation

	KS-01	**KS-02**	**KS-03**	**KS-04**	*Total*
Democratic Targets					
Urban	709	17,524	34,540	22,101	*74,874*
Urban cluster	6,390	4,802	372	1,752	*13,316*
Rural	2,582	4,690	440	1,626	*9,338*
Total	*9,681*	*27,016*	*35,352*	*25,479*	*97,528*
Republican Targets					
Urban	1,691	14,109	35,009	26,172	*76,981*
Urban cluster	11,579	7,166	568	4,365	*23,678*
Rural	8,584	10,606	962	6,227	*26,379*
Total	*21,854*	*31,881*	*36,539*	*36,764*	*127,038*
3rd party/unaffiliated Targets					
Urban	886	12,542	28,046	22,619	*64,093*
Urban cluster	6,883	5,651	595	2,178	*15,307*
Rural	4,573	6,885	983	3,869	*16,310*
Total	*12,342*	*25,078*	*29,624*	*28,666*	*95,710*

Notes: Observations are limited to those whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014).

Table 4.7 shows the number of attempted contacts made by the 2014 KCC by target partisan affiliation, congressional district, and population density subgroup. A comparison between successful contact and voter turnout is not presented as all of these subgroups have been shown to result in higher voter turnout following contact. Table 4.7 is presented to demonstrate the variation found in 2014 KCC strategy across the various subgroups across the state. Despite the relatively similar populations of each congressional district, 2014 KCC efforts did not consistently target the same levels of partisans or population densities. The variation is likely due to the demographics of each district. While targeting certain subgroups with different contact

methods may result in differing levels of voting, the reality of the demographic considerations do not always allow for the most optimal targeting to occur by a strategic campaign operation.

Table 4.8 is a presentation of calculations taken from the logit models presented in *Appendix A.3.* The data are developed as odds ratios before listed as predicted probabilities of voting. Figure 4.4 graphically displays the difference in odds ratios between successful and unsuccessful contacts by contact method. Contact methods are compared by congressional district and population density in order to assess the differences between these independent variables among the sample subgroups.

Correlations between contact method and turnout across congressional districts and population densities are not relatively similar. There are differing results to each method across each unique area. Most notable among these is an indication that door-to-door may not always be the universally most effective contact method. It becomes apparent that GOTV volunteer telephone calls correlate more with turnout than door-to-door contact in urban clusters. This is particularly noticeable in KS-03 and KS-04. This finding is key to the thesis of this entire dissertation.

The essential point of discussion is that no one contact method is universally better than others across all populations. Population density and region have correlations with the level of turnout based on the contact method utilized, with all other variables held at their means. The dynamic nature of these unique populations has significant effects on strategy development for campaigns to consider.

Table 4.8 – Change in predicted probability of voting between contacted and not contacted targets by congressional district, population density, target party registration, and contact method

			Volunteer door-to-door	Volunteer phone call	Postal mail	Paid ID
KS-01	Urban	Democratic	8.76%	8.17%	6.38%	6.39%
		Republican	9.23%	7.78%	-	9.34%
		3rd party/unaf	8.79%	8.61%	-	8.31%
	Urban Cluster	Democratic	8.44%	8.46%	5.50%	6.96%
		Republican	8.05%	7.57%	8.48%	6.91%
		3rd party/unaf	8.54%	8.46%	8.43%	7.29%
	Rural	Democratic	8.87%	7.98%	4.94%	6.10%
		Republican	8.35%	7.66%	3.08%	7.14%
		3rd party/unaf	8.71%	8.27%	4.60%	7.19%
KS-02	Urban	Democratic	8.32%	7.61%	-	7.72%
		Republican	8.33%	8.26%	9.03%	6.54%
		3rd party/unaf	8.02%	7.96%	7.97%	6.75%
	Urban Cluster	Democratic	7.56%	7.50%	-	5.07%
		Republican	8.29%	7.47%	6.67%	6.47%
		3rd party/unaf	8.04%	7.74%	7.26%	6.98%
	Rural	Democratic	8.56%	8.29%	-	8.65%
		Republican	8.60%	8.40%	8.36%	7.78%
		3rd party/unaf	8.66%	8.19%	9.28%	7.51%
KS-03	Urban	Democratic	8.61%	8.80%	6.65%	8.22%
		Republican	-	8.47%	-	7.22%
		3rd party/unaf	8.85%	8.65%	-	6.67%
	Urban Cluster	Democratic	8.17%	7.78%	4.12%	7.81%
		Republican	9.32%	7.98%	-	-
		3rd party/unaf	8.01%	8.39%	-	8.92%
	Rural	Democratic	8.70%	8.57%	7.17%	8.28%
		Republican	9.10%	8.73%	-	3.99%
		3rd party/unaf	8.62%	8.37%	-	8.14%
KS-04	Urban	Democratic	8.77%	8.10%	8.98%	6.05%
		Republican	8.67%	8.24%	9.47%	5.52%
		3rd party/unaf	8.72%	8.27%	-	5.84%
	Urban Cluster	Democratic	8.56%	7.84%	7.89%	5.84%
		Republican	9.50%	7.64%	8.69%	7.38%
		3rd party/unaf	8.43%	-	-	6.42%
	Rural	Democratic	8.86%	8.51%	9.10%	7.57%
		Republican	9.15%	8.20%	9.03%	5.02%
		3rd party/unaf	8.73%	8.49%	-	7.48%

Notes: Predicted probabilities developed from logit regression presented in *Appendix Table A.3*. Percentages developed from difference of successful and unsuccessful contact predicted probabilities.

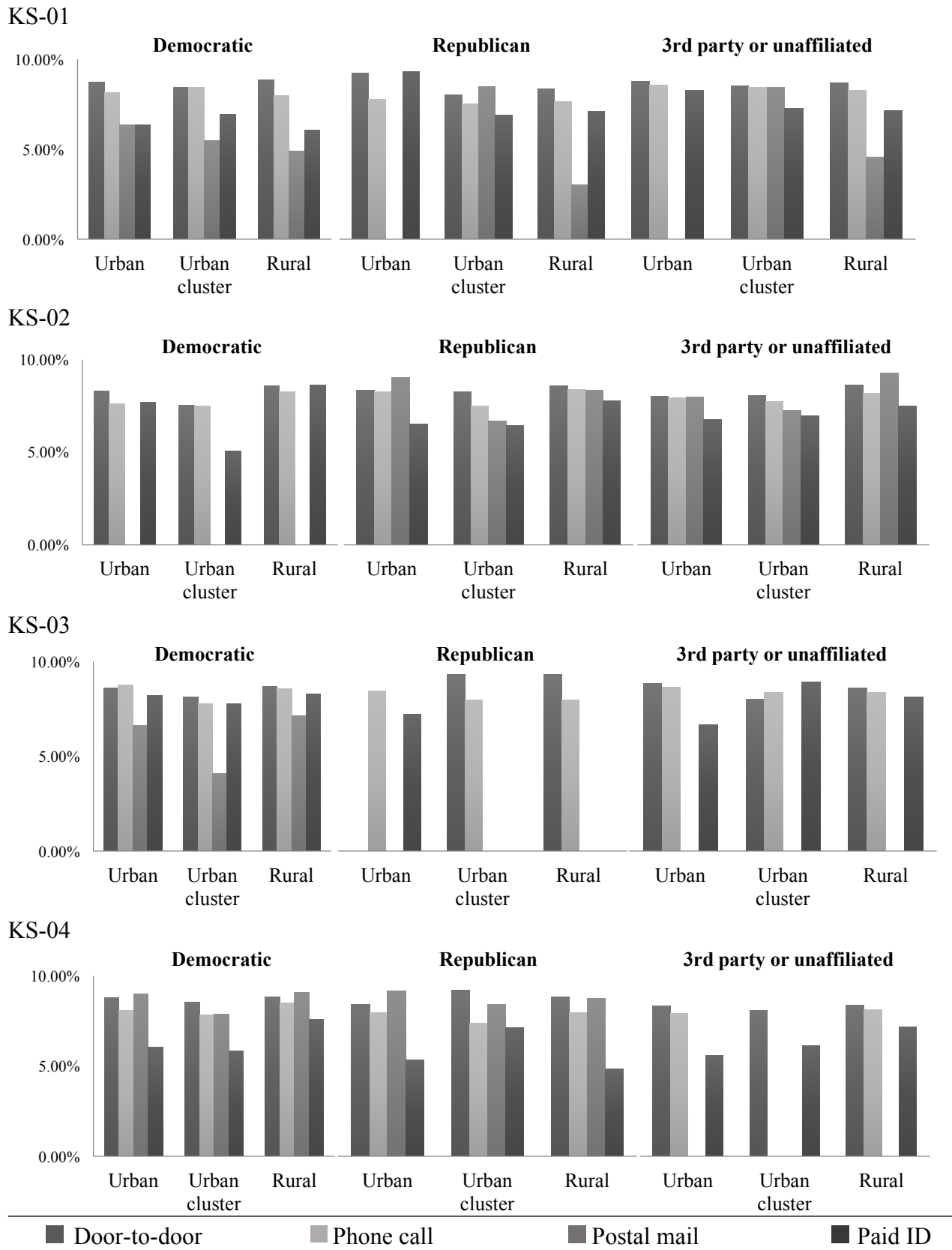**Figure 4.4** – Graphic representation of predicted probabilities of voting presented in Table 4.8

KS-01

KS-02

KS-03

KS-04

■ Door-to-door   ■ Phone call   ■ Postal mail   ■ Paid ID

Figure 4.4 note: Missing histogram bins represent no data available from Table 4.8.

Conclusion

This chapter investigated relationships between geographical region and population density to turnout as possible significant influencers on the effectiveness of 2014 KCC GOTV efforts. The results provide evidence of these two factors influencing the likelihood of how an individual respond to a large-scale GOTV operation. The impact demonstrates previous research may have reached conclusions that are not applicable to every situation. Also found is the need for understanding differences between populations. Effective studies should not be conducted in a single geographical area. The distinctive regions, populations, and time experience generate unique correlations with voter turnout.

The results found here are not intended to be an absolute statement on effectiveness of a campaign strategy. They are evidence for including these considerations when reviewing various aspects of voter behavior, campaign strategy, or regional political effects. A large-scale effort attempting to provide a blanket statement from a small region to a large, or a large region onto a small one, are likely inaccurate. Differences in region and population are unique, resulting in varying effects.

A second major point concerns differences in the relationship between repeated contact attempts and a single attempt. The diminishing returns presented in this chapter and in Chapter Three demonstrate the best answer to increasing voter turnout may not be simply contacting a targeted voter more times during a cycle, but expanding the scale of the targeted universe to include those who may not have been previously contacted with a contact method suitable to their situation. This would seem to be the case in an operation such as the one reviewed here in

95

which a significant percentage of the overall effort was focused on repeated contacts with the same population of voters.

The need for continued study in this area is apparent. While this investigation provides some evidence, there are likely differing effects in other unique regions of the United States. Continued understanding of the relationship between urban and rural populations is needed. These findings may have an influence in policy diffusion and other political investigations as well. The effects in this study are not a measure of 2014 KCC persuasion ability, but simply its influence in affecting participation.

How an undecided voter is persuaded by campaign efforts is beyond the scope of this investigation. However, in an era of increasing hyperpartisanship and rigid ideological determination, the time and effort a campaign works to GOTV those who are unlikely to vote but support their candidate may be as valuable as any struggle to persuade an undecided likely voter.

The impact this may have on national level efforts should not be understated. GOTV strategy should vary by region. National campaigns must understand their universal strategies may not produce similar results. The difficulty in a large population such as the entire United States makes this a daunting task. A strategy that diversifies to allow local regions and populations to develop their communities best may result in the most effective effort.

The final chapter of this study reviews various components of the entire investigation and areas needing further investigation. It is key to understand that the methods investigated here are not the limit of a campaign's ability to connect with the public. New technologies, such as cell phone and text messaging, social media, and other electronic communication, are an entire aspect of campaign communications that are now utilized and deserve more investigation.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This dissertation reviewed the impact of the Kansas Coordinated Campaign's (KCC) efforts during the 2014 election cycle on voter turnout. The dependent variable of whether a voter cast a ballot in the 2014 general election was subject to numerous independent variables, such as campaign contact method, contact timing, how many times a potential voter was contacted using campaign contact methods, partisanship, and geographical factors. While similar studies have investigated some of these issues, the advantage of using "real world" data from a statewide operation allowed a unique analysis.

This chapter reviews the data and methodology used, summarizes the arguments and conclusions that were reached, and recommends further studies. Future topics for investigation include elite messaging, volunteer messaging, how contact may influence early voting, and how targeted potential voters may receive partisan messages. This chapter concludes with a discussion about expanding the study of partisan campaign influences on voter turnout. Expansion would include tools already used by campaigns to decrease turnout. Often the goal is to create a favorable electorate for particular candidates. In some instances, this may mean less, not more, participating voters.

A review of the data and methodology

The data collected for this dissertation were accessed from the Kansas Democratic Party's (KDP) 2014 KCC. This included races for six statewide offices (U.S. Senate, Gubernatorial and Lieutenant Governor as a ticket, Kansas Secretary of State, Kansas Attorney General, Kansas Treasurer, and Kansas Insurance Commissioner) as well as dozens of state

legislative and county level seats. The KDP organized a cohesive effort to combine resources to exert the greatest impact at the state level.

The KDP (and many elements of the Democratic National Committee) use a common online system known as VoteBuilder, a proprietary "front-end" application that allows various Democratic campaigns and efforts to have access to voter files and other pertinent information. This application also provides an ability to organize and document attempted contacts with voters. With the permission and access provided by the KDP, the data used here were exported from the Vertica database. As the back-end warehouse of all data collected by the KDP and its elements, the Vertica files provided the information developed for this study.

After rigorous cleaning, the data were applied to a series of tests. Voter turnout was used as the dependent variable throughout the investigation. Independent variables, including attempted contact by the 2014 KCC, successful contact by the 2014 KCC, attempted contact method, attempted contact timing, frequency of attempted contact, age, party registration of the targeted voter, and more were tested using logit regressions.

However, the application of logit regressions was not enough. Two concerns arose leading to different methods for analyzing the data. The first issue was that of the non-linear nature of logit calculations and resulting coefficients. The coefficients produced were potentially misleading as they were not entirely intuitive and did not provide adequate coverage of the disparate results of turnout. The second concern related to the targeted universe established by the 2014 KCC. As the targeted voters did not adequately represent the percentage of the voting public, the impacts of each unique method of contact might have produced false positives as the targeted universe was already predisposed to vote or not.

To compensate for these issues, the logit regressions included standardized coefficients providing a consistent point for comparison. Additionally, odds ratios were calculated to evaluate the relationship between certain variables. The resulting predicted probabilities were set against each set of independent variables as a successful contact or not. The differences between each set of independent variables were then presented in the tables throughout the dissertation.

An overview of the arguments and research conclusions

This dissertation challenges previous scholarship on campaign effectiveness and contact method as they get out the vote (GOTV). Previous studies indicate the contact method used will have varying effects on a potential voter's propensity to participate. These studies regularly argue door-to-door contact between a campaign's volunteer and potential voter has the highest net effect on turnout.

I raised concerns about the previous research, as much of it was conducted at a local level on urban communities in coastal locations. These studies typically do not take into account the elements of timing, partisanship, regionalism, or contact frequency. The goal of this investigation was to determine the effects that these independent variables have on GOTV.

The conclusions reached through my research indicate each unique variable has a quantifiable effect on GOTV among different populations. Partisanship, geographic area, the population density (urban, urban cluster, or rural), and the frequency of contact by a partisan campaign (such as the 2014 KCC) all affected voter turnout. Door-to-door contact, while typically a best option for campaigns with volunteer power, is not always the best method that a partisan campaign may use to increase turnout. Individual considerations must be taken into account by strategic partisan campaigns based on the financial and volunteer resources that the campaign may (or may not) have.

Contact timing and frequency also affect the level of increase in voter turnout. The same contact method utilized at different points in the cycle result in different turnout levels. While 2014 KCC contact rate grew as Election Day drew near, results indicated those who were contacted closer to Election Day were not more likely to vote than those contacted earlier in the cycle. A similar result emerged with 2014 KCC contact frequency. More contacts from the 2014 KCC does not always result in evenly increased turnout. More is often better, but only to a point.

This study also examined differences in turnout between urban and rural populations following successful 2014 KCC contact. The 2014 KCC effort did not focus effort equally across the Kansas urban and rural populations. This is perhaps due to partisan affiliation differences. Despite the smaller rural sample size, correlation levels were strong enough to show a lower level of turnout between those contacted by the 2014 KCC, regardless of partisanship.

Effects from successful campaign contact and method used are unique in each of Kansas' four congressional districts. The relationship of partisanship and population density to voter turnout also varies. Contact methods that are effective in one situation are not in others. The relationship between geographic location and population density results in differing effects following partisan campaign contact.

A campaign's ability to see non-marginal effects from operations supports the argument that campaign activity is important and influences turnout levels. This effect pushes for the continuing development of investigating the effects of campaign activities and the ability to influence the electorate through selective engagement with particular messaging, delivered at specific times, and with strategic frequency. The question now is not *if* a campaign can influence turnout but *how effectively* a campaign may influence an election utilizing its resources with the greatest efficiency.

This dissertation does not simultaneously calculate the correlations for all investigated variables of partisanship, timing, frequency, population density, and regionalism. Some readers may find this unsatisfying. Such calculations become less valid as variable combinations reach a point where the statistical confidence interval becomes too large to permit meaningful data interpretation. This research investigated variables individually to support the argument that each has unique and important correlations to voter turnout.

Areas for further research in the era of social confirmation bias

Do campaigns matter? The answer is a resounding "yes." The development of rational choice theory provides a framework from which elements of campaign effects on voter turnout and behavior can be studied. As this research is ongoing, there are particular holes that must be filled in order to solidify the implications that are only just beginning to be fully understood.

American society continues to physically self-segregate into ideologically similar geographic regions and groups. Communities are increasingly homogenized along ideological lines. This results in a situation that individuals are not exposed to neighbors or coworkers who have differing perceptions (Putnam 2000).

In the era of "if you are not the customer, then you are the product,"[1] individually tailored social media and online preference selections surpass partisan traditional media. This compounds the complexity between partisan campaigns and individual targeted voters. Online algorithms are developed to select content and advertisements that appeal to specific consumers. The result is limited objectivity. Increasingly, individuals do not experience anything that is not designed to fit their preconceived ideological preferences. The subsequent effects for individual psychology are the development of a social confirmation bias. Every previously held individual perception,

---

[1] An original and verified quotation attribution is not available.

opinion, and ideological position is confirmed through continual reinforcement. Future study of partisan GOTV contact requires an understanding of how these social-psychological dynamics aspects affect the impact of a campaign message.

Modern campaigns can now enhance their abilities to contact individual potential voters by stylized messages online rather than solely relying on messaging distributed through television, radio, or print media. However, the effectiveness of online interaction with potential voters has not yet been conclusively shown. Nickerson (2007b) admitted that email, while inexpensive, was not a cost-effective manner to drive turnout compared to traditional postal mail engagements. Email is also ineffective with voter registration efforts (Bennion and Nickerson 2012). Other online engagements through advertising and news media help to develop political knowledge and persuasive campaign messaging (Shah et al. 2007).

The 96 nuns problem

Research indicates micro-level individual targeting by campaigns results in the ability to influence turnout more than ever. However, segments of the population are likely never to encounter any campaign activity directly. Analyzing how secondary interactions with potential voters affect behavior is a gap in current literature.

This aspect is referred to in some practical campaign circles as the "96 nuns problem." The anecdote is based on the idea that a large amount of campaign contact occurs at the household level. A door-to-door or telephone canvasser talks to whoever answers. A postal mail piece may only be read by whoever collects the mail for a household. Not all potential voters in the household may be contacted by the campaign. This leads to a discussion on the secondary effects campaign contact has on the micro-social group: the household. If a convent receives only one piece of mail, door canvass, or phone call, do all 96 nuns in the household react in some

way or is it only the individual who directly received the contact? What factors play a role in how individuals within a household react to different forms of contact? Further investigation into this situation is needed.

Volunteer message variation

Another promising area of future research is the levels of disconnect between proxies and targeted potential voters. The current assumption is that message wording and inflection is delivered exactly it is developed by elite campaign teams. However, anecdotal evidence indicates this may not always be the case. Campaign staff provides scripts to activists to be disseminated, but the discussion itself that occurs during an interaction may vary widely depending on the ideology and issue interest of both the volunteer and targeted potential voter. How the proxies modify elite developed centrist messages to targeted voters must be understood. Preliminary investigation includes the priming and framing effects by the elite messengers to the masses, but individual interactions would need to be intensively examined. Developing an understanding of how proxy-modified messages delivered to low-information and persuadable voters may result in establishing an unintended consequence for anti-candidate voting. While volunteers are more cost-effective, interpersonal contact through these secondary methods may actually decrease turnout among votes the campaign needs to win an election.

This path requires more discussion to solidify implications. Studies show messaging cues from party elites will effectively influence issue attitude among those who have previously aligned ideologically. As time progresses, the relationship between party cue and voter is solidified to the point where the cue framing is nearly automatically accepted by the voter, and any message delivered by the opposition party is rejected. This suggests that regardless of the

partisan identification of the proxy activist, or voter who is contacted by that activist, links to demographic or issue-based similarity will more strongly connect the activist to the voter.

This hypothesis suggests the activists' contact with a voter is different from the elite driven mass media message delivered by the campaign's central staff. While the campaign tries to deliver a centrist message that will have the widest appeal, contact may encourage intentions not the aim of the campaign effort. While central campaign elites do have influence and guidance on a proxy activist, it is not in absolute control of the actual message that is delivered. Also, the campaign elite are not able to control for the numerous non-verbal interactions and perceptions relayed from the activist to the voter.

A new model should be considered when reviewing the field efforts of a campaign as it relates to individual level mobilization and persuasion. Where much of the previous literature establishes that proxy message delivery is the same as the core campaign message delivered, this thesis takes the position that proxy activists are not symbiotic with elite campaign staff. Rather, they are essentially second level contacts who are similar to persuadable voters contacted by the core campaign elites directly. Proxy activists act as second level mobilizers due to the relative lack of control that a campaign has over the communication with the constituency. The relative lack of sophistication of an activist may affect overall candidate campaign strategy. As a campaign likely has very little choice in the volunteers recruited, the volunteer activist proxy becomes a second level player in the game of "telephone" as the campaign's message is delivered from core elite staff to individual voter. This establishes the volunteer proxy as little more than an ideologically hyper-partisan activist sent to contact a voter who is likely to be very different ideologically and demographically, establishing unintended effects upon the voter from the campaign.

To understand this further, another investigation would center its attention on how campaigns recruit or hire proxy activists for their field program, and the demographic attributes of those proxies. As campaigns are commonly at the mercy of relying on the "goodwill" of activists to support their efforts, the ability to recruit highly effective volunteers is limited. Where recruitment is active, there is a strong rational emphasis to seek out volunteers who will participate. However, it is done so in a widespread manner with little strategy given by the campaign to select those activist volunteers who may be the most effective in their interactions with potential voters (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). As discussed in Chapter Two, a rational campaign is likely to recruit socially active volunteers, due to their likelihood to mobilize (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Asking inactive participants to volunteer because the demographics of an electorate closely represents inactive populations does not happen, despite the greater impact that it may have on the inactive potential volunteer group (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999; Lim 2010).

While the activist volunteer effort can be influential in mobilizing the vote, the conclusions reached by Enos and Hersh (2015) indicate that the efforts were not as effective as they could have been if the activist demographic more closely represented the demographic of the targeted voter. The relationship between volunteers, a campaign's recruiting processes, and the interactions between volunteer proxies and targeted individuals all deserve additional study.

The timing of voter turnout

Finally, the aspect of early voting is one that is not considered directly in this dissertation. As many jurisdictions are open to vote before Election Day, campaigns have adapted their strategies to encourage voters to do so. The strategy allows for campaigns to "bank" voters and let their efforts focus on the remainder of the population. As the universe of potential voters

dwindles, a savvy campaign may allocate its remaining resources on the more finite outstanding targets. While this dissertation indicates that repeated contact might not have the best results, campaigns that re-structure their targeted universe could diversify to previously unconsidered individuals. Conjecture tells us that this strategy is already occurring, and the added data that display not only *if* an individual votes, but *when* those individuals vote based on contact timing, method, and frequency could develop interesting results in future research.

The future of American campaign GOTV practice and study

This section presents three main factors scholars should consider investigating to better understand the effects strategic efforts on voter turnout and GOTV. While this dissertation provides insight into some aspects of modern campaign efforts, it is not comprehensive. At worst, there is the real potential for studies such as this to be out of date. This concern stems from several factors of modern campaigning that are not taken into account in this study, including electronic communications, cell phone versus landline communication, text messaging, social media, and a campaign strategy centered around lowering voter turnout instead of increasing it.

Electronic campaign communications

While there is an emerging literature on the influence of electronic communications on campaigning, this area must be considered in any comprehensive study on the effects of a modern campaign within the public. The ability to communicate electronically exists within social media, email, and text messaging, and has produced interesting results. While text messaging is relatively new, having only developed as a campaign tool in the 2016 general election. However, special elections in 2017 (including the special congressional election in KS-04) and early 2018 campaigns have already utilized these tools. This tool will become as

common as the stump speech in mobilizing supportive members of a constituency to engage in the voting process.

Research must study how candidates and their campaign volunteers electronically interact with the public on a personal, micro-targeted level. Sometimes referred to as "retail politics," this individual connection between a campaign and the electorate is increasingly important. American culture values individualism and personalized interaction. Messages are sent out to a targeted (or micro-targeted) audience, dissected individually by receivers, and shared on social media in real time. Data collected by campaigns from these interactions are not analyzed in a scholarly way, but simply mined to provide maximum utility for a campaign that exists in a limited time frame. This strategic communications method is significantly changing the way in which a population gets its news, and is affecting free and earned media strategies a campaign uses to connect with potential voters and volunteers. Reception of a specific and targeted message is shared at scale and responded to on an individual level. Campaigns respond by modifying their traditional mass media messaging to be supplemented with historical methods such as postal mail outreach. Campaigns are now increasingly developing methods to include cost-effective online interactions through ever-growing data sets that are mined by campaigns and strategists. Identifying potential voters electronically via IP address allows for targeted messaging with an individual household in an effort to influence them toward a particular electoral outcome.

Negative turnout campaigning

The other major limitation of this dissertation is its bias to only investigate campaign methods in terms of increasing voter turnout and participation. As a campaign has a singular aim to "win" with one more vote than its opponents, the zero-sum mentality of this strategic

107

operation means that a campaign may not have to encourage unlikely voters who may support their candidate to participate. Rather, a rational actor campaign may encourage likely voters who do not support their candidate to not vote at all. This rather craven thought of campaign politics has not been fully investigated, but there are indications of campaigns and organizations utilizing such tactics in recent years.

The first aspect of a "negative turnout campaign" are the policies enacted in several states that discourage voter participation. Much of American political history reflects various issues of voting, voter eligibility, access to the polls, and the development of legal and cultural institutions to become more inclusive. As such, political science literature widely discussed the impacts of various social behaviors, costs, and factors to be considered when investigating the voting participation patterns of the public. With a massive amount of effort, time, and money spent by various groups to encourage election participation and persuasion for candidates, there is little surprise that a large cannon of scholarship developed that investigates conditions surrounding individual voting behavior.

How does a new governmental policy created in an effort to restrict non-legal voting behavior impact the participation of eligible citizens from participating in the election process? How are partisan mobilization activities affected as a consequence of this new policy? This question directly affects the findings found in this dissertation. In 2011 Kansas experienced changes in their voting laws. With bipartisan support in the Kansas Legislature, the Kansas Secure and Fair Elections (S.A.F.E.) Act passed and significantly altered state statute regarding voter registration and voting policy. Among these changes were sections that affected both the registration requirements for potential voters, as well as an identification card for display at the voting booth (Election Assistance Commission 2015). The list of documentation that must be

provided in order to register to vote for the first time in Kansas is stringent, and must include one

of the following: birth certificate that verifies U.S. citizenship, U.S. passport (may be expired),

U.S. naturalization documents or the number of the certificate of naturalization, Bureau of Indian

Affairs card number, tribal treaty number or tribal enrollment number, U.S. hospital record of

birth indicating place of birth in the U.S., or U.S. military record of service showing the

applicant's name and U.S. birthplace (Kansas Secretary of State 2014). Acceptable forms of

identification that may be shown when voting include: Driver's License, Non-driver ID Card,

Concealed Carry Handgun License, U.S. Passport, Government Employee ID, U.S. Military ID,

Kansas College ID, Government Public Assistance ID, or Indian Tribe ID (ibid.).

The second aspect of a "negative turnout campaign" again centers on modern electronic

communications. These are similar to how negative advertising has previously been show to

lower turnout (Clinton and Lapinski 2004). Texting, email, and social media are all in

development. Their ability to be negative influences on voter turnout has already been reported

widely in the press. One such instance is the role that Cambridge Analytica may have played in

the ability for Donald Trump to win the presidency and the U.K.'s 2016 "Brexit" vote. As

Facebook is now a publicly traded company with responsibility to shareholders, it has developed

advanced methods for advertising -- in the effort to increase its earnings. As such, Facebook has

allowed potential advertisers to target individual users based on a number of selected factors:

age, location, pages and other content the user "likes," and more. Papers of record have

determined groups like Cambridge Analytica can target specific potential voters who are regular

Facebook users and ensure the user sees advertising driving potential voters not towards voting

for a particular candidate, but to not to vote at all (Russon 2017). As a "negative turnout

strategy," the ability to persuade a person to abstain from voting allows a campaign to shift the

balance of a district's ideological position. This is similar to the argument presented in Figure 1.1. The emerging strategy has some disturbing consequences for several factors of common democratic thought, as participation is a core component of an inclusive government. It also allows for the potential of non-domestic entities to influence the outcome of an election covertly.

A final thought

One of the great challenges of social science research is that the findings it reaches are rarely permanent, but dependent on the situation. Simple questions are subject to a wide variety of factors and influences that can significantly change the outcomes observed. This dissertation is no different, and is subject to such challenges. While the case study presented here may accurately reflect the situation as it was in Kansas -- for this specific effort during the 2014 cycle, findings may not hold when applied to future election cycles. Chapter One discussed some of the variations experienced in the unique setting investigated here, and the possibility these factors may play important roles in the outcomes observed. However, it is also possible this set of outcomes is only observed in a single instance.

This dissertation was not written with the goal of changing the way that campaigns or political strategists conduct their campaign, or in how partisan operations utilize their dedicated volunteers in an election cycle. Rather the dissertation makes one consider that campaigns are an evolving construct and will never look the same from one cycle to the next. No single point of investigation should be taken as permanent fact. Diversity, regionalism, population densities, and more all play a factor in the effects that individuals have on a given message. As the political climate changes, and communications technology evolves, so too will the ability for campaigns to influence the public in novel ways.

The climate in recent years has been discouraging as hyperpartisanship increases. Politics will never be entirely civil, as individual dedication to ideology, personality, and partisan organization will continue to inspire passionate actions. However, a fair and just democratic republic must support many opposing voices to defend majority and minority rights. Open activist and voter participation protects individual security. As pro and anti-turnout campaign strategies evolve, academic study must also evolve. Regularly updated investigations are needed to study partisan contact influences on participation among various demographic, geographic, and ideological populations.

Bibliography

Abramson, Paul R., John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rhode. 1998. *Change and Continuity in the 1996 Elections.* Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly.

Abrams, Samuel, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice. 2011. "Informal Social Networks and Rational Voting." *British Journal of Political Science* 41(2): 229–57.

Adams, Willam C., and Dennis J. Smith. 1980. "Effects of Telephone Canvassing on Turnout and Preferences: A Field Experiment." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 44(3): 389-95.

Aldrich, John H. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science,* 37(February): 246-78.

Aldrich, John H. 2011. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Party Politics in America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Alvarez, R. Michael, Asa Hopkins, and Betsy Sinclair. 2010. "Mobilizing Pasadena Democrats: Measuring the Effects of Partisan Campaign Contacts." *Journal of Politics* 72(1): 31-44.

The American National Election Studies. (ongoing). *The ANES Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies.

Anderson, William L., and Daniel A. Mitzak. 2006. "Politics of Environmental Law: Political Ideology, Elitism or Urban-Rural Interests?" *Public Choice* 129(1): 131-57.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Nathaniel Persily and Charles Stewart III. 2013. "Regional Differences in Racial Polarization in the 2012 Election: Implications for the Constitutionality of Section Five of the Voting Rights Act." *Harvard Law Review Forum* 126(April):205-20.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, and David M. Konisky. 2006. "The Introduction of Voter Registration and its Effect on Turnout." *Political Analysis* 14: 83-100.

Anzia, Sarah F. 2011. "Election Timing and the Electoral Influence of Interest Groups." *Journal of Politics* 73(2): 412-427.

Arceneaux, Kevin. 2005. "Using Cluster Randomized Field Experiments to Study Voting Behavior." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 601(September): 169-79.

—. 2007. "I'm Asking for your Support: The Effect of Personally Delivered Campaign Messages on Voting Decisions and Opinion Formation." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 2(1): 43-65.

Arceneaux, Kevin, Alan S. Gerber, and Donald P. Green. 2006. "Comparing Experimental and Matching Methods using a Large-scale Voter Mobilization Experiment." *Political Analysis* 14(1) 37-62.

Arceneaux, Kevin, Thad Kousser, and Megan Mullin. 2012. "Get Out the Vote by Mail? A Randomized Field Experiment Testing the Effects of Mobilization in Traditional and Vote by Mail Precincts." *Political Research Quarterly* 65(4): 882-94.

Arceneaux, Kevin, and David W. Nickerson. 2009. "Who is Mobilized to Vote? A Re-analysis of Eleven Randomized Field Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(1): 1-16.

Bennett, W. Lance. 2012. "The Personalization of Politics: Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation." *The American Academy of Political and Social Science* 644(1): 20-39.

Bennion, Elizabeth A., and David W. Nickerson. 2012. "Cheap, but Still Not Effective: An

    Experiment Showing that Indiana's Online Registration System Fails to Make Email an

    Effective Way to Register New Voters." *Indiana Journal of Political Science* 14: 39-51.

Berelson, Bernard R., Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee. 1954. *Voting.* Chicago:

    University of Chicago Press.

Bergan, Daniel E., Alan S. Gerber, Donald P. Green, and Costas Panagopoulos. 2005.

    "Grassroots Mobilization and Voter Turnout in 2004." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 69(5):

    760-77.

Birkhead, Nathaniel A., and Marjorie Randon Hershey. 2017. "Assessing the Ideological

    Extremism of American Party Activists." *Party Politics* (forthcoming). DOI:

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068817730721

Blais, Andre. 2000. *To Vote or Not to Vote? The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory.*

    Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press.

Blais, Andre, and Daniel Rubenson. 2013. "The Source of Turnout Decline: New Values or New

    Contexts?" *Comparative Political Studies* 26(1): 95-117.

Bond, Robert M., Christopher J. Fariss, Jason J. Jones, Adam D.I. Kramer, Cameron Marlow,

    Jamie E. Settle, and James H. Fowler. 2012. "A 61-million-person Experiment in Social

    Influence and Political Mobilization." *Nature* 489(September): 295–98.

Bowler, Shaun, Todd Donovan, and Trudi Happ. 1992. "Ballot Propositions and Information

    Costs: Direct Democracy and the Fatigued Voter." *The Western Political Quarterly* 45(2):

    539-68.

Brady, Henry E., Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba. 1999. "Prospecting for Participants: Rational Expectations and the Recruitment of Political Activists." *American Political Science Review* 93(1): 153-68.

Burden, Barry C., and Jacob R. Neiheisel. 2013. "Election Administration and the Pure Effect of Voter Registration on Turnout." *Political Research Quarterly* 66(1): 77-90.

Calderia, Gregory A., Aage R. Clausen, and Samuel C. Patterson. 1990. "Partisan Mobilization and Electoral Participation." *Election Studies* 9(3): 191-204.

Campbell, David E., 2013. "Social Networks and Political Participation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16(May): 33-48.

Campbell, Angus, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Cardy, Emily Arthur. 2005. "An Experimental Field Study of the GOTV and Persuasion Effects of Partisan Direct Mail and Phone Calls." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 601(September): 8-40.

Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. 2007. "A Theory of Framing and Opinion Formation in Competitive Democracies." *Journal of Communication* 57: 99-118.

Clinton, Joshua D., and John S. Lapinski. 2004. "'Targeted' Advertising and Voter Turnout: An Experimental Study of the 2000 Presidential Election." *Journal of Politics* 66(January): 69-96.

Coate, Stephen, Michael Conlin, and Andrea Moro. 2008. "The Performance of the Pivotal-voter Model in Small-scale Elections: Evidence from Texas Liquor Referenda." *Journal of Public Economics* 92(April): 582-96.

Coppock, Alexander, and Donald P. Green. 2016. "Is Voting Habit Forming? New Evidence

   from Experiments and Regression Discontinuities." *American Journal of Political Science*

   60(4): 1044-62.

Cox, Gary W. 2015. "Electoral Rules, Mobilization, and Turnout." *Annual Review of Political

   Science*. 18(May): 49-68.

Creek, Heather M., and Kimberly A. Karnes. 2009. "Federalism and Election Law

   Implementation Issues in Rural America." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 40(2): 275-

   95.

Dahlgren, Peter. 2009. *Media and Political Engagement: Citizens, Communication, and

   Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dale, Allison, and Aaron Strauss. 2009. "Don't Forget to Vote: Text Message Reminders as a

   Mobilization Tool." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4): 787-804.

Davis, Matthew, and Priscilla Southwell. 2015. "Closing the Gap in State Legislative Races: The

   Effect of Campaign Spending in Ballot Drop-off." *Journal of Politics and Law* 8(2): 118-25.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper Publishing.

Druckman, James N., and Donald P. Green. 2013. "Mobilizing Group Membership: The Impact

   of Personalization and Social Pressure e-Mails." *SAGE Open* 3(2): 1-6.

   DOI: 10.1177/2158244013492781

Druckman, James N., Martin J. Kifer, and Michael Parkin. 2009. "Campaign Communications in

   U.S. Congressional Elections." *American Political Science Review* 103(3): 343-66.

United States Election Assistance Commission. 2015. *2014 Statutory Overview Report*.

   Washington, D.C.: Election Assistance Commission.

Enos, Ryan D., Anthony Fowler, and Lynn Vavreck. 2014. "Increasing Inequality: The Effect of GOTV Mobilization on the Composition of the Electorate." *Journal of Politics* 76(1): 273-88.

Enos, Ryan D., and Eitan Hersch. 2015. "Party Activists as Campaign Advertisers: The Ground Campaign as a Principal-Agent Problem." *American Political Science Review* 108(2): 252-78.

Finkel, Steven E., and Amy Erica Smith. 2011. "Civic Education, Political Discussion, and the Social Transmission of Democratic Knowledge and Values in a New Democracy: Kenya 2002." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 417-35.

Fiorina, Morris P. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Fowler, James. 2005. "Turnout in a Small World." In *The Social Logic of Politics: Personal Networks as Contexts for Political Behavior*, ed. Alan S. Zuckerman. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 269–87.

Fridkin, Kim, Patrick Kenney, Amanda Wintersieck, and Jill Carle. 2017. "The Upside of the Long Campaign: How Presidential Elections Engage the Electorate." *American Politics Research* 45(2): 186-223.

Garcia-Bedolla, Lisa, and Melissa R. Michelson. 2012. *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate through Get Out the Vote Campaigns*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Gerber, Alan S. 2004. "Does Campaign Spending Work?" *American Behavioral Scientist* 47(5): 541-74.

Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Direct Mail, and
Telephone Contact on Voter Turnout: a Field Experiment." *American Political Science
Review* 94(3): 653-63.

—. 2001. "Do Phone Calls Increase Turnout?" *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 65(Spring): 75-85.

—. 2005a. "Correction to Gerber and Green (2000), Replication of Disputed Findings, and a
Replay to Imai (2005)." *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 301-13.

—. 2005b "Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout?: An Update." *Annals of the Academy of
Political Science* 601(September): 142-54.

—. 2012. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation.* New York: W.W. Norton.

—. 2017. "Chapter 9 – Field Experiments on Voter Mobilization: An Overview of a Burgeoning
Literature." In *Handbook of Field Experiments, volume 1,* eds. Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee
and Esther Duflo. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 395-438.

Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Matthew Green. 2003. "Partisan Mail and Voter Turnout:
Results from Randomized Field Experiments." *Electoral Studies* 22: 563-79.

Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and
Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science
Research* 102(1): 33-48.

—. 2010. "An Experiment Testing the Relative Effectiveness of Encouraging Voter Participation
by Inducing Feelings of Pride or Shame." *Political Behavior* 32(3): 409-22.

Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and David W. Nickerson. 2003. "Getting out the Vote in
Local Elections: Results from Six Door-to-Door Canvassing Experiments." *Journal of
Politics* 65(4): 1083-96.

Goldstein, Kenneth M., and Travis N. Ridout. 2002. "The Politics of Participation: Mobilization and Turnout Over Time." *Political Behavior* 24(1): 3-29.

Gimpel, J.G., and J.E. Schulznecht. 2003. "Political Participation and the Accessibility of the Ballot Box." *Political Geography* 22(5): 471-88.

Green, Donald P., and Alan S. Gerber. 2008. *Get Out the Vote! How to Increase Voter Turnout (2nd ed.)*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press.

Green, Donald P. and Lynn Vavreck. 2008. "Analysis of Cluster-randomized Field Experiments: A Comparison of Alternative Estimation Approaches." *Political Analysis* 16(2): 138-52.

Green, Donald P., Alan S. Gerber, and David W. Nickerson. 2003. "Getting Out the Vote in Local Elections: Results from Six Door-to-door Canvassing Experiments." *Journal of Politics* 65(4): 1083-96.

Greene, Kenneth F. 2011. "Campaign Persuasion and Nascent Partisanship in Mexico's New Democracy." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 398-416.

Greenwald, Anthony G., Catherine G. Carnot, Rebecca Beach, and Barbara Young. 1987. "Increasing Voting Behavior by Asking People if They Expect to Vote." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 72(2): 315-18.

Ha, Shang E., and Dean S. Karlan. 2009. "Get Out the Vote Phone Calls: Does Quality Matter?" *American Politics Research* 37(2): 353-69.

Hale, Timothy M., Shelia R. Cotten, Patricia Drentea, and Melinda Goldmer. 2010. "Rural-Urban Differences in General and Health Related Internet Usage." *American Behavioral Scientist* 53(9): 1304-25.

Hansford, Thomas G., and Brad T. Gomez. 2010. "Estimating the Electoral Effects of Voter Turnout." *American Political Science Research* 104(2): 268-88.

Heaney, Michael T. 2017. "Activism in an Era of Partisan Polarization." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 50(4): 1000-3.

Henderson, Michael, and D. Sunshine Hillygus. 2016. "Changing the Clock: The Role of Campaigns in the Timing of Vote Decision." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80(3): 671-70.

Henderson, Ailsa, and Nicola McEwen. 2014. "Regions as Primary Political Communities: A Multi-Level Comparative Analysis of Turnout in Regional Elections." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 45(2): 189-215.

Hill, Kim Quaile, and Jan E. Leighley. 1993. "Party Ideology, Organization, and Competition as Mobilizing Forces in Gubernatorial Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 42(4): 1158-78.

Hill, Seth J., and Thad Kousser. 2016. "Turning Out Unlikely Voters? A Field Experiment in the Top-two Primary." *Political Behavior* 38(2): 413-32.

Hogan, Robert E. 2005. "Gubernatorial Coattail Effects in State Legislative Elections. *Political Research Quarterly* 58(4): 587-597.

—. 2013. "Campaign Spending and Voter Participation in State Legislative Elections." *Social Science Quarterly* 94(3): 840-64.

Holbrook, Thomas M. and Aaron C. Weinschenk. 2014. "Campaigns, Mobilization, and Turnout in Mayoral Elections." *Political Research Quarterly* 67(1): 42-55.

Hooge, Marc, Sara Vissers, Dietlind Stolle, and Valerie-Anne Makeo. 2010. "The Potential of Internet Mobilization: An Experimental Study on the Effect of Internet and Face-to-face Mobilization Efforts." *Political Communication* 27(4): 406-31.

Hughes, D. Alex, Justin Levitt, Seth J. Hill, and Thad Kousser. 2017. "The Impact of GOTV

Depends upon Campaign Context: A Field Experiment in the 2014 California Primary."

California Journal of Politics and Policy 9(2): 1-24.

Imai, Kosuke. 2005. "Do Get Out the Vote Calls Reduce Turnout? The Importance of Statistical

Methods for Field Experiments." *American Political Science Research* 99(2): 283-300.

Issenberg, Sasha. 2012. *The Victory Lab: The Secret of Winning Campaigns.* New York: Crown.

Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News that Matters.* Chicago: University of

Chicago Press.

John, Peter, and Tessa Brannon. 2008. "How Different are Telephoning and Canvassing? Results

from a Get Out The Vote Field Experiment in the British 2005 General Election." *British

Journal of Political Science* 38(3): 565-74.

Karp, Jeffrey A., Susan A. Banducci, and Shaun Bowler. 2007. "Getting out the Vote: Party

Mobilization in a Comparative Perspective." *British Journal of Political Science* 38(1): 91-

112.

Kansas Secretary of State, Office of the. 2014. *Kansas Voter Registration Instructions.* Topeka:

Kansas Secretary of State.

Kansas Statutes Annotated Code § 25-2316(c).

Kansas Statutes Annotated Code § 25-435.

Katosh, John P., and Michael W. Traugott. 1981. "The Consequences of Validated and Self-

reported Voting Measures." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 45(4): 519-35.

Key, V.O. 1966. *The Responsible Electorate.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Kushin, Matthew James, and Masahiro Yamamoto. 2010. "Did Social Media Really Matter? College Students' Use of Online Media and Political Decision Making in the 2008 Election." *Mass Communication and Society* 13(5): 608-30.

Kramer, Gerald H. 1970. "The Effects of Precinct-level Canvassing on Voting Behavior." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 34(Winter): 560-72.

Lichter, Daniel T. and James P. Ziliak. 2017. "The Rural-Urban Interface: New Patterns of Spatial Interdependence and Inequality in America." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 672(July): 6-25.

Lim, Chaeyoon. 2010. "Mobilizing on the Margin: How Does Interpersonal Recruitment Affect Citizen Participation in Politics?" *Social Science Research* 39(2): 341-55.

Lupfer, Michael, and David E. Price. 1972. "On the Merits of Face-to-face Campaigning." *Social Science Quarterly* 53(December): 534-43.

McClurg, Scott D. 2003. "Social Networks and Political Participation: The Role of Social Interaction in Explaining Political Participation." *Political Research Quarterly* 56(4): 449-64.

—. 2004. "Indirect Mobilization: The Social Consequences of Party Contacts in an Election Campaign." *American Politics Research* 32(4): 406-43.

—. 2006. "Political Disagreement in Context: The Conditional Effect of Neighborhood Context, Disagreement and Political Talk on Electoral Participation." *Political Behavior* 28(4): 349-66.

McNulty, John E. 2005a. "Phone Based GOTV - What's on the Line? Field Experiments with Varied Partisan Components, 2002-2003." *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* 601(September): 41-65.

—. 2005b. *Sensitivities of Voter Turnout: Field Experiments Exploring a Variety of Treatments.*

Ph. D. Dissertation: University of California, Berkeley.

Michelson, Melissa R., Lisa Garcia Bedolla, and Margaret A. McConnell. 2009. "Heeding the

Call: The Effect of Targeted Two-round Phone Banks on Voter Turnout." *The Journal of

Politics* 74(4): 1543-1563.

Miller, Roy E., David A. Bostis, and Denise L. Baer. 1981. "Stimulating Voter Turnout in a

Primary: Field Experiment with a Precinct Committeeman." *International Political Science

Research* 2(4): 445-60.

Mutz, Diana C. 2002. "Cross-cutting Social Networks: Testing Democratic Theory in Practice."

American Political Science Review 96(1): 111-26.

Nagel, Jack H., and John E. McNulty. 1996. "Partisan Effects of Voter Turnout in Senatorial and

Gubernatorial Elections." *American Political Science Research* 90(4): 780-93.

Nelson, Thomas E., and Jennifer Garst. 2005. "Values-based Political Messages and Persuasion:

Relationships among Speaker, Recipient, and Evoked Values." *Political Psychology* 26(4):

489-515.

Nickerson, David W. 2005a. *Measuring Interpersonal Influence.* Ph.D. Dissertation: Yale

University, New Haven.

—. 2005b. "Partisan Mobilization Using Volunteer Phone Banks and Door Hangers." *The

Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 601(September): 10-27.

—. 2006. "Volunteer Phone Calls can Increase Turnout: Evidence from Eight Field

Experiments." *American Politics Research* 34(3): 271-92.

—. 2007a. "Quality is Job One: Professional and Volunteer Voter Mobilization Calls." *American

Journal of Political Science* 51(2): 269-82.

—. 2007b. "Does Email Boost Turnout?" *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 2(4): 369-79.

—. 2015. "Do Voter Registration Drives Increase Participation? For Whom and When?" *The Journal of Politics* 77(1): 88-101.

Nickerson, David W., Ryan D. Friedrichs, and David C. King. 2006. "Partisan Mobilization Campaigns in the Field: Results from a Statewide Turnout Experiment in Michigan." *Political Research Quarterly* 59(1): 85-97.

Nickerson, David W., and Todd Rogers. 2010. "Do You Have a Voting Plan?: Implementation Intentions, Voter Turnout, and Organic Plan Making." *Psychological Science* 21(2): 194-99.

Nir, Lilach and James N. Druckman. 2008. "Campaign Mixed-message Flows and Timing of Vote Decision." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 20(3): 326-46.

Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Panagopoulos, Costas. 2008. "The Calculus of Voting in Compulsory Voting Systems." *Political Behavior* 30(4): 455-67.

—. 2010. "Affect, Social Pressure and Prosocial Motivation: Field Experimental Evidence of the Mobilizing Effects of Pride, Shame and Publicizing Voting Behavior. *Political Behavior* 32(3): 369-86.

—. 2011a. "Is Timing Everything? Primacy and Recency Effects in Voter Mobilization Campaigns." *Political Behavior* 33(1): 79-93.

—. 2011b. "Thank You for Voting: Gratitude Expression and Voter Mobilization." *Journal of Politics* 73(3): 707-17.

—. 2013. "Positive Social Pressure and Pro-social Motivation: Evidence from a Large-scale Field Experiment on Voter Mobilization." *Political Psychology* 34(2): 265-75.

—. 2016. "All About that Base: Changing Campaign Strategies in U.S. Presidential Elections."

Party Politics 22(2): 179-90.

Pierskalla, Jan H. 2015. "The Politics of Urban Bias: Rural Threats and the Dual Dilemma of

Political Survival." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 51(3): 286-307.

Pietryka, Matthew T., and Donald A. DeBats. 2017. "It's Not Just What You Have, but Who

You Know: Networks, Social Proximity to Elites, and Voting in State and Local Elections."

American Political Science Review 111(2): 360-78.

Popkin, Samuel, John W. Gorman, Charles Phillips, and Jeffrey A. Smith. 1976. "What Have

You Done for Me Lately? Toward an Investment Theory of Voting." *American Political

Science Review* 70(3): 779-805.

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Rahn, Wendy M. 1993. "The Role of Partisan Stereotypes in Information about Political

Candidates." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(2): 472-96.

Rentfrow, Peter Jason. 2010. "Statewide Differences in Personality: Toward a Psychological

Geography of the United States." *American Psychologist* 65(6): 548-58.

Riker, William H., and Peter C. Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting.*"

American Political Science Review* 62(1): 25-42.

Rosenstone, Steven J., and John Mark Hanson. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation and

Democracy in America.* New York: MacMillian Publishing Company.

Russon, Mary-Ann. 2017. "Political Revolution: How Big Data Won the U.S. Presidency for

Donald Trump." *International Business Times* (January 23). DOI:

http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/political-revolution-how-big-data-won-us-presidency-donald-

trump-1602269.

Scala, Dante J., and Kenneth M. Johnson. 2017. "Political Polarization along the Rural-Urban Continuum? The Geography of the Presidential Vote, 2000-2016." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 672(July): 162-84.

Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. *The Semi-sovereign People: A Realists' View of Democracy in America.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Schakel, Arjan H. 2011. "Congruence between Regional and National Elections." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(5): 631-62.

Shachar, Ron, and Barry Nalebuff. 1999. "Follow the Leader: Theory and Evidence on Political Participation." *American Economic Review* 89(3): 525-47.

Shaw, Daron R., Donald P. Green, James G. Gimpel, and Alan S. Gerber. 2012. "Do Robotic Calls from Credible Sources Influence Voter Turnout or Vote Choice? Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment." *Journal of Political Marketing* 11(4): 231-45.

Shah, Dhavan V., Jaeho Cho, Seungahn Nah, Melissa R. Gotlieb, Hyunseo Hwang, Nam-Jin Lee, Rosanne M. Scholl, Douglas M. McLeod. 2007. "Campaign Ads, Online Messaging, and Participation: Extending the Communication Mediation Model." *Journal of Communications* 57(4): 676-703.

Silver, Brian D., Barbara A. Anderson, and Paul R. Abramson. 1986. "Who Overreports Voting?" *The American Political Science Review* 80(2): 613-24.

Sinclair, Betsy, Margaret McConnell, and Melissa Michelson. 2013. "Local Canvassing: The Efficacy of Grassroots Voter Mobilization." *Political Communication* 30: 42-57.

Smidt, Corwin D. 2017. "Polarization and the Decline of the American Floating Voter." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(2): 365-81.

Smith, Glen. 2016. "The Timing of Partisan Media Effects During a Presidential Election." *Political Research Quarterly* 69(4): 655-66.

Thorson, Emily. 2014. "Beyond Opinion Leaders: How Attempts to Persuade Foster Political Awareness and Campaign Learning." *Communication Research* 41(3): 353-74.

United States Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. 2010. *2010 Census Urban and Rural Classification and Urban Area Criteria.* DOI: https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/urban-rural-2010.html

United States Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. 2012. *Kansas: 2010. Population and Housing Unit Counts.* July. Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce.

Verba, Sidney, and Norman H. Nye. 1972. *Participation in America.* New York: Harper and Row.

Verba, Sidney, Kay L. Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Volunteerism in American Politics.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Verba, Sidney, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-on Kim. 1978. *Participation and Political Equality*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Wattenberg, Martin P. 2008. *Is Voting for Young People?* New York: Pearson Longman.

Weeks, Michael F., Richard A. Kulka, and Stephanie A. Pierson. 1987. "Optimal Call Scheduling for a Telephone Survey." *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 51(4): 540-49.

Westwood, Sean J., Shanton Iyengar, Stefaan Walgrave, Rafael Leonisio, Luis Miller, Oliver Strijbis. 2017. "The Tie that Divides: Cross-national Evidence of the Primacy of Partyism." *European Journal of Political Research* (forthcoming). DOI: 10.1111/1475-6765.12228

Wielhouwer, Peter W., and Brad Lockerbie. 1994. "Party Contacting and Political Participation." *American Journal of Political Science* 38(February): 211-29.

Wolfinger, Raymond E., and Steven J. Rosenstone. 1980. *Who Votes?* New Haven: Yale

    University Press.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion.* Cambridge: Cambridge University

    Press.

Zaller, John, and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response." *American*

    Journal of Political Science 36(3): 579-616.

Appendix

Table A.1 – Logit regression of contact timing, partisan registration, and contact method as variables on voter turnout.

Variables	*Voted*
Days contacted before election (continuous)	0.00660*** (0.000514)
Party registration (categorical)	
Republican	1.137*** (0.0300)
3rd party/unaffiliated	0.0353 (0.0258)
Contact method (categorical)	
Volunteer door-to-door	0.379*** (0.0786)
Volunteer phone call	0.864*** (0.0779)
Paid ID	1.434*** (0.0828)
Gender (male)	0.0933*** (0.0227)
Age (continuous)	0.0205*** (0.000763)
Years registered (continuous)	0.0318*** (0.00147)
Urban voter targeted (yes)	0.261*** (0.0290)
Rural voter targeted (yes)	0.209*** (0.0369)
Constant	-2.638*** (0.0907)
Observations	40,226

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$. Observations are limited to registered voters whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Dependent variable is if the targeted individual voted in the 2014 General Election or not. Democratic registration held as baseline for Party Registration categorical variable. Postal mail held as baseline for contact method categorical variable.

Table A.2 – Logit regression of successful contact frequency, partisan registration, and contact method as variables on voter turnout.

Variables	*Voted*
Number of successful contacts (continuous)	0.0934*** (0.00187)
Party registration (categorical)	
Republican	0.852*** (0.0105)
3rd party/unaffiliated	-0.0241** (0.00971)
Contact method (categorical)	
Volunteer door-to-door	0.231*** (0.0312)
Volunteer phone call	0.558*** (0.0302)
Paid ID	0.871*** (0.0325)
Gender (male)	0.133*** (0.00821)
Age (continuous)	0.0109*** (0.000287)
Years registered (continuous)	0.0244*** (0.000498)
Urban voter targeted (yes)	0.173*** (0.0109)
Rural voter targeted (yes)	0.195*** (0.0143)
Constant	-1.382*** (0.0344)
Observations	325,378

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$. Observations are limited to registered voters whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Dependent variable is if the targeted individual voted in the 2014 general election or not. Democratic registration held as baseline for party registration categorical variable. Postal mail held as baseline for contact method categorical variable.

Table A.3 – Logit regressions of correlations between contacted and not contacted targets, population density, target party registration, and contact method by congressional district

Variables	KS-01 *voted*	KS-02 *voted*	KS-03 *voted*	KS-04 *voted*
Contacted	0.550***	0.633***	0.301***	0.584***
	(0.0887)	(0.0658)	(0.0457)	(0.0902)
Party registration (categorical)				
Republican	1.486***	1.040***	1.081***	1.229***
	(0.0817)	(0.0699)	(0.0495)	(0.0695)
3rd party/unaffiliated	0.249***	-0.0442	0.0700	0.0837
	(0.0673)	(0.0505)	(0.0438)	(0.0658)
Contact Method (categorical)				
Volunteer Door-to-door	-2.611***	1.046***	-1.579***	2.298***
	(0.269)	(0.331)	(0.300)	(0.223)
Volunteer Phone call	-2.056***	1.623***	-1.270***	3.119***
	(0.253)	(0.330)	(0.300)	(0.226)
Paid ID	-2.356***	0.999***	-2.245***	4.006***
	(0.289)	(0.348)	(0.312)	(0.214)
Gender (male)	0.0277	0.122***	0.167***	0.0866
	(0.0583)	(0.0454)	(0.0382)	(0.0532)
Age (continuous)	0.0151***	0.0211***	0.0225***	0.0126***
	(0.00198)	(0.00155)	(0.00139)	(0.00165)
Years registered (continuous)	0.0314***	0.0308***	0.0342***	0.0290***
	(0.00344)	(0.00289)	(0.00261)	(0.00360)
Population density (categorical)				
Urban cluster	-1.074***	-0.900***	0.412**	0.0483
	(0.123)	(0.0555)	(0.172)	(0.0903)
Rural	-0.843***	-0.721***	0.320**	0.0342
	(0.130)	(0.0599)	(0.136)	(0.0746)
Constant	1.576***	-2.408***	-0.510*	-4.236***
	(0.300)	(0.339)	(0.307)	(0.237)
Observations	6,088	9,780	13,599	10,086

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Observations are limited to registered voters whom the 2014 KCC attempted to contact one time during the post-primary phase of the 2014 election cycle (August 6, 2014, to November 4, 2014). Dependent variable is if the targeted individual voted in the 2014 general election or not. Democratic registration held as baseline for Party Registration categorical variable. Postal Mail held as baseline for Contact Method categorical variable. Urban population density held as baseline for Population density categorical variable.