

Campaigning for the Future: Voter Turnout and the Effectiveness of Campaigns

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Voter turnout has declined in presidential and congressional elections since the 1970s. This essay researches how traditional campaign tactics and emerging methods will affect turnout within the youngest demographic (adults aged 18-39). Traditional campaign tactics include canvassing, phone banking, and leafletting; numerous studies have demonstrated that such tactics stimulate turnout. Additional studies have shown that peer groups, preregistration laws, and social media sites can increase political participation amongst emerging voters. After conducting a logistic regression on eligible voters in the Election of 2016, which measured the effects of canvassing, social media, and internet usage across generations, internet usage increased the probability of voting whereas canvassing and social media did not have significant effects.

Political campaigns have recently turned back to utilizing traditional methods of campaigning such as door-to-door canvassing. Experiments done by political scientists have shown that canvassing efforts are effective in increasing turnout in elections (Green and Gerber 2000; Medvic 2005; Green et al. 2003). While canvassing efforts have been able to increase turnout amongst older voters, youth turnout has still been lower than other age groups. Several methods of increasing youth turnout have been proposed: civic engagement peer groups, preregistration laws, and accessible information (Bogard et al. 2008; Holbein and Hillygus 2016; Shea and Harris 2006; Ulbig and Waggener 2011). While previous research has focused on how to increase turnout in the contemporary political environment, it is important to note that the electorate ages and new generations of voters take their place – with the experiences and viewpoints of their era. Thus, in an age where Millennials and Gen. Zer's will soon dominate the workforce and electorate, it is imperative to understand whether traditional campaign methods will continue to be effective for these groups.

The most common field campaign tactics are door-to-door canvassing, phone banking, and leafletting. Some of the new tactics that have emerged in the last decade include social media campaigns, campaign websites, and voter databases. This essay will compare the effectiveness of traditional campaign tactics (such as door-to-door canvassing) and emerging campaign tactics (such as social media and internet campaigns) on their ability to mobilize young people to vote in Presidential elections. I hypothesize that canvassing will have a stronger effect on older generations (ages 40+) in mobilizing them to vote, whereas social media and internet campaigns will have a stronger effect in mobilizing younger voters (ages 18-39). What I found was that canvassing and social media platforms were not significantly related to increases in turnout across generations. However, internet campaigns increased turnout slightly which might signal political consultants to incorporate informative candidate websites in future campaigns.

Review of Literature

While some in the field of politics believe elections are too predictable and campaigning has no effect on the results, campaigns can alter outcomes and public opinion on key issues and candidates (Holbrook 1996). Stephen Medvic upholds traditional field campaign tactics (canvassing, phone banking, and leafletting) in stimulating interest and turnout in elections (Medvic 2010). Thus, campaigns remain vital to the electoral framework of the U.S. and help increase participation in politics.

Turnout has lagged since the 1970s and political scientists have been researching tactics and policies that stimulate interest in voting amongst the voting-age population. Some political scientists theorize that turnout has lagged because of the increase in impersonal methods of campaigning versus personal. Impersonal methods include television ads, radio ads, and commercialized phone banks (Gerber and Green 2015). Such methods can inform voters of elections, but they lack the personal element of inviting voters to the polls. One of the fundamental issues that parties and candidates try to address is how to increase voter turnout among their supporters through personal methods such as door-to-door canvassing and volunteer phone banking. Additionally, non-partisan, Get Out The Vote (GOTV) groups have worked to increase registration and participation among young voters.

One of the pressing issues of the GOTV effort is that the youngest generation is not as engaged as their parents' and grandparents' generations in politics. Youth turnout has ranked lower than older demographics for decades and scholars have attempted to explain why and what can be done to improve it (Dalton 2016, 61; Davis et al. 2002; 10). A study on the voting behaviors of young people during the Election of 1956 demonstrates how political attitudes of young people have changed over the last six decades. Noguee and Levin found that young voters were heavily influenced by their parents' voting choices and the majority preferred the Democratic Party in the election (Noguee and Levin 1958). While several factors make this study outdated, it still demonstrates that young voters behave similarly across generations. Some scholars are concerned that voter turnout may continue to decrease over time, but it is possible that as young people age they may become more engaged in politics and naturally turn to voting. However, research shows that youth turnout in presidential and congressional elections has decreased since the 1960s and scholars are focusing on efforts to increase participation amongst emerging voters (Dalton 2016, 65).

Recent studies have shown multiple ways in which non-partisan efforts can help GOTV. One such tactic that has effectively increased voter turnout is inducing social pressure on nonvoters. Alan Gerber and others conducted a field experiment where mailers were sent to various registered voters within a district; one group received a typical get-out-the-vote mailer, the other received a mailer that suggested their voting record would be published for their neighbors to see (Gerber et. al 2008). The result led to a significant increase in turnout for the latter group by about 5%-8%, demonstrating that social pressure has a significant effect on turnout. Another study found that variety in voting options can lead to an increase in turnout. Examining the Election of 2008 in Colorado, where voters have the most options to exercise their

right, Stein and Vonnahme discovered how proper access to polling locations – including timing and the option to vote in multiple locations – improved voter performance (2012). Some precincts within states offer voting-by-mail rather than traditional polling so that voters can submit ballots at their own time and pace. The issue with voting-by-mail precincts is that personal canvassing is not effective amongst voters as they do not see the social benefit of voting at a booth (Arceneaux et al. 2012). While political scientists tend to focus on field methods of campaigning, devoting the effort to better equip voters on Election Day may encourage them become habitual voters. Furthermore, habitual voting occurs when voters are induced to vote in one election and have a positive experience from voting (Coppock and Green 2016). Consequently, voters may be disincentivized to vote if they have a negative experience voting or when the election is uncontested. Coppock and Green suggest that social pressure may be an effective tool in inducing voters to turnout. Additionally, they argue that when voters have a positive experience in competitive elections they are more likely to become habitual voters.

While aiming to improve the quality of voting to increase turnout may be effective, the majority of GOTV efforts are conducted through traditional campaigns. The most frequent methods that political consultants use for candidates include: door-to-door canvassing, phone banking, and leafletting. Door-to-door canvassing encompasses knocking on voters' doors to gauge their opinions on a candidate or public policy and persuade them to vote for their candidate. Some of the limitations of this method include voter absence – as most voters work normal hours (9-5) they are usually not home for canvassing. Another issue is that people living in apartments, condominiums, and retirement homes are not canvassed because of the difficulty of approaching these voters and trespassing laws (Green and Gerber 2015, chap. 3). The second most frequently utilized field method, phone banking, has volunteers or paid staffers canvass voters through phone calls. Phone banks are typically aimed at simply informing voters of a candidate and asking them for their support since people are less engaged over a phone. While phone banking is more efficient, most voters do not answer as they may be overwhelmed and annoyed with political calls or think the canvasser is scamming them since it is an unknown number (Green and Gerber 2015, chap. 6). Lastly, leafletting can range from leaving brochures or pamphlets on voters' doors or mailing literature to them on the candidate. This method is one of the least effective because it does not directly engage voters and most people discard the literature whether they get it through mail or on their door (Green and Gerber 2015, chaps. 4-5).

In recent decades, political scientists have begun to analyze the effects of traditional campaign methods. Prior to the experiments of Donald Green and Alan Gerber in the late 1990s, few political scientists conducted field experiments on the effectiveness campaign tactics. One of the most notable early methods on canvassing was through Harold Gosnell who found that directly speaking with non-voters helped increase their interest in voting and registration (1926, 874). Door-to-door canvassing has recently been validated as the leading campaign method in increasing turnout. Green and Gerber (2000) conducted one of the earliest experiments on the

effectiveness of canvassing and found that it can increase voter turnout by 8.7%. Their research validated the claim that inter-personal methods of campaigning have a more significant effect on turnout than impersonal methods such as television ads, radio commercial ads, and even commercial phone banking. In further studies by Green and Gerber, their results bolstered the effectiveness of canvassing with an increase in turnout by 7% (2003). While canvassing has been proven to have a significant effect on increasing voter turnout, additional factors need to be considered to ensure its success. Voter propensity measures the reliability of a voter depending on how many elections they turn out for. Arceneaux and Nickerson (2009) found a unique connection between the competitiveness of the election and the propensity to vote. Canvassing had trivial effects on high propensity voters in competitive elections as they were already motivated to vote. Likewise, low propensity voters were not influenced by canvassers in less competitive elections. The impact of competitive elections on canvassing effectiveness is furthered by Bergan and others (2005) who found that the Election of 2004 saw a spike in turnout by 6.1%. This spike was not attributed predominantly to the canvassing efforts of campaigners but because of the candidates themselves – George W. Bush and John Kerry (Bergan et. al 2005). Therefore, campaign managers must take voter propensity and electoral competitiveness into account for their campaigns. Otherwise, canvassing efforts may be overutilized or ineffective in producing votes for a candidate.

The research on phone banking has consistently shown that it is costly and ineffective in increasing votes. An older study on commercial phone banks showed that calls may increase turnout rates on Election Day, but it does not translate into new votes for the caller's candidate (Adams and Smith 1980). In more recent studies, relying on a phone bank campaign may only increase turnout by 1.2% at a cost of \$107 per vote (Cardy 2005, 39). Furthermore, when implementing various scripts for making calls voter turnout rates lag; varying between partisan and nonpartisan scripts fails to produce significant turnout levels (Gerber and Green 2005; McNulty 2005; Panagopoulos 2009). One of the reasons phone banking is becoming inept is that telemarketers and commercial phone banks have turned people away from unknown calls. Another negative aspect is that multiple campaigns may be running phone campaigns and so voters may be overwhelmed and annoyed when they hear another political call in their voicemail (Green and Gerber 2015, 64). Fortunately, the science behind phone bank campaigns has vastly improved and political scientists can see just how effective phone banking truly is. David Nickerson found that partisan phone banks were equally effective as non-partisan ones; overall, the study found phone banks increased turnout by 3.2% (Nickerson 2005). While Nickerson's study finds phone banking to be effective compared to door-to-door canvassing, its results have not been replicated in many other studies and the increasing prevalence of mobile phones may diminish the number of reachable voters. Hence, the usage of phone banking as a primary campaign tactic may become less effective over time and campaign managers will need to restructure their strategy to better contact voters.

The various forms of leafletting (literature drops, mailers, and even yard signs) are highly employed amongst political campaigns despite their ineffectiveness

compared to canvassing and phone banking. Leafletting is a simple method for campaigns to garner votes across a vast electorate. Thus, it is reasonable for national campaigns to employ such a method with millions of voters to canvass, whereas in small, low-salience election it is more effective to canvass voters (Green and Gerber 2015, chap. 4). Direct mailers differ from leaflets in that they are delivered to voters through the postal service rather than volunteers. Furthermore, mailers require less labor for campaigners and are less likely to be ignored since they are placed in a voter's mailbox rather than stuck in their door.

How literature is distributed to voters is important, but the content of such literature is of greater importance. Doherty and Adler ran an experiment in which partisanship, negativity, and continuity were observed. They discovered that partisan mailers were just as effective as nonpartisan ones and were only effective when mailed continuously during an election cycle (Doherty and Adler 2014). Negative campaign mailers in which a candidate or issue was criticized produced negative effects. Voters were stimulated to turn out but rather for the opposite candidate. Thus, political campaigns and GOTV efforts produce the same results when they utilize mailers. Furthermore, they should refrain from harshly criticizing or even insulting the opposing candidate or issue. Lastly, yard signs while being a staple of local campaigns have seldom received extensive study. The purpose of signage is to demonstrate a campaign's viability and name recognition. Another effect is that it shows who in the neighborhood supports a specific candidate, further study would need to assess the positive or negative results of this. What political scientists have learned about yard signs is that they can increase the percentage of voting shares for a candidate by 1% (Green et. al 2016, 149). Furthermore, signs were less effective when displaying party labels and ideological cues. Thus, leafletting is an effective solution to massive campaigns but may not be as significant for smaller ones. The effects of mailers and signs may need more study to see if they are cost-effective and significant in stimulating turnout.

More recently, scholars have found that what deters young people from voting is the lack of information and engagement with the political system. Cynthia Bogard and others argue that one of the reasons young people are not urged to register and vote when they turn eighteen is that they are unfamiliar with the process (2008). Few people in their demographic are experienced voters and thus would not be able to learn voter registration information from their friends. Furthermore, young people feel they do not know what to vote when they get to the polls since they do not know where candidates and parties stand on issues. Bogard's solution included a panel provided by professors at Hofstra University in which multiple political perspectives were presented to the students. The result encouraged more voting participation amongst the students, signifying that trusted information is key to stimulating young voters. Moreover, Shea and Harris established peer-to-peer programs on politics and voting to increase youth participation. The peer group, *Why Bother?* was effective in increasing youth turnout and demonstrates how young people are more motivated to vote when they see people their own age engaged in politics (Shea and Harris 2006). Another principal element to increasing youth turnout is the ease of voter

registration. Some states have seen success with pre-registration laws where young people can register while enrolled in high school and be added to the voting roster once they turn eighteen. A study on pre-registration laws found that turnout rates increased by 8% as a result on Election Day, offering state governments the opportunity to increase turnout at the institutional level (Holbein and Hillygus 2016). Furthermore, college campuses that offer information on voter registration have proven to increase voter-turnout. Easily visible brochures at peer-led tables had a significant effect on young people, demonstrating the importance of youth involvement in increasing youth turnout (Ulbig and Waggener 2011). Many scholars have argued that the family is one of the key assurances of voter turnout amongst youth. Thus, Michael Sances analyzed whether the increase in divorced households contributed to a decrease in youth turnout. His research found that growing up in a divorced household does not lead to lower turnout later in life. Rather, political socialization in adolescence helps determine participation (Sances 2013). Political socialization can be bolstered in adolescence when there is strong competition in state and local elections (Pacheco 2008). Some organizations such as Kids Voting USA have attempted to engage young people at a much earlier age. Such groups can increase political socialization in children that increases parents' political participation as well (Linimon and Joslyn 2002). Hence, when competition is evident young people become more engaged in politics which helps encourage voting in future elections.

The work of various political scientists promotes the effectiveness of traditional campaign tactics such as canvassing, phone banking, and leafletting. However, youth turnout still lags compared to older demographics which begs the question: what emerging campaign tactics can help boost youth turnout? One avenue that campaign managers have increasingly employed is a strong social media campaign. Young people are heavily invested in the internet and social media sites like Twitter and Facebook where online political ads can channel their engagement. Catherine Shaw found that most Americans received information about the 2016 Presidential Election through social media, and with 69% of adults using social media it is hard to ignore the prominence it plays in campaigns (Shaw 2018, 131). Internet usage has increased exponentially since its inception. In 1999 nearly 80 million Americans used the internet, since then that number has grown to over 211 million (Hollihan 2009, 200). The best way that the internet and social media sites can be used by campaigns is by providing information on their candidates. Since most Americans are beginning to rely on the internet and social media for information, it is efficient for voters if they have access to candidate information through their most utilized news source (Eshbaugh-Soha 2015). For campaign managers, the type of information released to voters online is crucial. In a study by Richard Lau and David Redlawsk, voters focused on researching the *candidates* during primary season and focused on the candidates' *stances* regarding the most pressing issues during the general election (2006, 48). Moreover, voters did not focus on endorsements or partisan ideologies. Thus, an effective social media campaign would emphasize the candidates' stances on the prominent issues close to the general election and not so much on endorsements or party affiliations.

Another emerging tactic that most campaigns utilize is data interpretation. The use of data in campaigns has become crucial to effectively allocating a campaign's resources. Sasha Issenberg writes how the Obama Campaign of 2008 was one of the first Presidential campaigns to effectively utilize data to target supporters for canvassing (2016, 245). This method of pre-polling potential voters has proven effective on multiple campaigns in terms of reducing overall costs (Murray et al. 2009). After canvassing a massive portion of the electorate, Obama was able to determine what issues were most pressing to voters which included affordable healthcare. Ultimately, Obama's campaign tactics showed how the combination of data interpretation and canvassing can effectively connect with voters and increase support for Election Day (Herrnson 2010, 205). Obama's campaign was also notable for garnering funds through sites such as Facebook which allowed a whole new demographic to help a campaign that previously may have only been accomplished through a few wealthy donors (Panagopoulos 2009). Thus, databases and online funding campaigns are unique in connecting candidates with more voters. Since the low turnout amongst youth is partly attributed to a lack of engagement, methods such as data interpretation and online funding may help reach young voters and include them in the campaign process.

While the rise of mobile devices has made phone banking difficult, reaching voters through text messages gives campaign managers a new opportunity. Allison Dale and Aaron Strauss found that utilizing text messages for simply reminding people vote was effective in increasing turnout (2009). The experiment increased turnout by about 4% which demonstrates how texting can be employed to reach young voters (Dale and Strauss 2009, 802). Most young people do not respond to phone calls or even emails that come from political campaigns. Text messages, however, are less likely to be ignored and when in the format of a simple reminder to vote people are more responsive. This study was conducted in 2006 and is one of the only studies on the role text messages can play in campaigns. Thus, further research is needed to fully analyze the impact and cost such a tactic would have on a political campaign.

Research Question

Encouraging youth turnout is important for the future of democracy as the younger generation will one day make up most of the electorate. What political scientists must consider is whether traditional methods such as canvassing, phone banking, and leafletting will be effective in stimulating turnout amongst emerging voters? The question that previous studies on voter-turnout, effective campaign strategies, and youth turnout have neglected to ask is how will emerging voters respond to various campaign methods in the future? At one time, newspaper and magazine ads were common for political campaigns, today they seldom focus on newspaper ads. Thus, it is highly possible that other methods of campaigning may become obsolete with innovative technologies. Catherine Shaw argues that with an increase in mobile phone users and a decline in landlines phone banking operations will only be able to reach the elderly demographics (Shaw 2018). Ultimately, the question that this essay

will answer is how will traditional methods of campaigning (such as personal canvassing) effect voter-turnout amongst emerging voters (ages 18-39) and what new methods (such as social media and internet campaigns) will generate turnout for this demographic.

Design

The data for this study came from the American National Election Survey in the 2016 Time Series Study. The population included U.S. citizens aged 18 or older living in the 50 states or DC (for the Internet Sample) or in the 48 states or DC (for the face-to-face sample). Respondents in the sample consisted of U.S. eligible voters aged 18 or older with two waves of interviews – pre-election and post-election. 4,271 pre-election interviews consisting of 1,181 face-to-face and 3,090 online were conducted, and 3,649 post-election re-interviews consisting of 1,059 face-to-face and 2,590 online (DeBell et al. 2018). Respondents were chosen randomly based on data from the United States Postal Service. Since the majority of the population lives at residences where USPS delivers mail, most of the population could be observed utilizing addresses from the USPS data.

My study examines the effectiveness of canvassing, social media, and the internet in mobilizing different age groups to vote. Accordingly, the dependent variable is a nominal, dummy variable indicating whether respondents voted in 2016 or not (*voteturnout16*).¹ Because the dependent variable is nominal, binary logistic regression analysis is the appropriate statistical test. Binary logistic regression allows researchers to assess the probability of the dependent across multiple independent variables or covariates.

The independent variables include a measure for personal contact (*votercontact*), time spent on social media researching the election (*socialmedia*), and time spent on the internet researching the election (*internet*).² *Votercontact* is a nominal, dummy variable indicating whether an individual was contacted in person about voting. *Socialmedia* and *internet* are both ordinal variables with values ranging from none

¹ The dependent variable, coded as *voteturnout16*, was recoded from the ANES variable V162031 which asked respondents if they voted in the Election of 2016. The original values of 1, 2, 3, were recoded into one value (0) since they all referred to respondents who did not vote. Value 4 was recoded (1) in *voteturnout16* and measured everyone who responded yes. Values -1, -6, -7, and -8 were removed from the new variable since they were inapplicable. The dependent variable was coded this way because logistic regression requires a binary nominal variable and I wanted to measure the likelihood of voting in the Election of 2016.

² The first independent variable, *votercontact*, was coded from the ANES variable V162009 which asked respondents if anyone contacted them about registering or getting out the vote. Value 2 (No) was recoded as 0 and Value 1 (Yes) was left the same so that the regression would read an increase in the dependent variable as an increase in voter contact. Values -6 and -7 were deleted because they were inapplicable. The second independent variable, *socialmedia*, was recoded from the ANES variable V161495 which asked respondents how many days a week they use social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. Values 0-7 coincided with the number of days a week a respondent used social media and were kept the same. Values -5 and -9 were deleted from the new variable because they were inapplicable. The third independent variable, *internet*, was recoded from the ANES variable V162004 which asked respondents how many times they viewed information on the Election of 2016 on the internet. Values 1-4 were recoded as 0-3 with 0 being “None,” 1 being “Just one or two,” 2 being “Several,” and 3 being “A good many” since they best measured the range of internet usage. Values -9, -7, and -6 were deleted because they were inapplicable.

to seven days and none to a good many, respectively. Although social media and internet are not direct measures of campaign tactics, they do provide insight into the different ways that voters received information about campaigns. Furthermore, they can measure whether traditional campaign tactics are still effective or if they are obsolete.

To measure the effectiveness of traditional and emerging campaign tactics across generations, I entered a conditional variable, *agegroups*, into the regression.³ Three age groups were measured: 18-39, 40-59, and 60+. I focused on these groups because 18-39 best represents the Millennial and Gen Z generations, 40-59 best represents Gen X, and 60+ best represents Baby Boomers and beyond.

Four control variables were included in the regression so that the independent variables could be compared with other factors that influence voter turnout. The variables were *previousturnout*, *educationlevel*, *gender*, and *race*.⁴ *Previousturnout* measures respondents' past voting behavior, specifically in the Presidential Election of 2012. *Educationlevel* measures respondents' highest level of education ranging from less than high school to doctorate. *Gender* and *race* were coded as binary nominal variables with *gender* measuring male and female and *race* measuring white and non-white. The reason for this is because logistic regression measures the probability of a value across a spectrum. Since gender and race are not ordinal or interval variables, they cannot have more than two values.

The logistic regression was performed through SPSS where the conditional variable (*agegroups*) was entered as the selection variable and a regression was performed for each age group. The independent variables were then measured together as covariates with the dependent variable of *voterturnout16*.

As to the results of the regression I have three hypotheses. First, that voter contact will have a stronger effect on the two older groups (40-59 and 60+) in determining their decision to vote in the Election of 2016. Second, that social media and internet resources for campaigns will have a stronger impact on the youngest age group (18-39) in mobilizing them to vote. Third, that previous turnout of respondents may confound the results of assessing the effectiveness of campaign tactics habitual voters are more likely to respond to canvassers.

³ *Agegroups* was recoded from the ANES variable V161267x which measured the respondent's age group. Values 1-5 were recoded as 1 (18-39), values 6-9 were recoded as 2 (40-59), and values 10-13 were recoded as 3 (60+). Value -1 was removed from the variable because it was inapplicable. I chose to recode the variable this way because it made it easier to measure cross-generational differences in the regression analysis.

⁴ *Previousturnout* was recoded from the ANES variable V161005 which asked respondents whether they voted in the Presidential Election of 2012. Value 2 (No) was recoded as 0 and Value 1 (Yes) was kept the same so that the regression would measure having voted in the election rather than vice versa. Values -8 and -9 were removed because they were inapplicable. *Educationlevel* was recoded from the variable V161270 measuring respondents' highest level of education. Values that were less than high school were recoded as 1 to have a more coherent analysis. *Gender* was recoded from the variable V161342 and *race* was recoded from the variable V161310x. Both were recoded as binary control variables so that they could be measured in a logistic regression.

Results

Tables 1-3 in the Appendix show the detailed results of the regression. Table 1 displays the results of the first age group (18-39) which produced the model:

$$\text{Logged odds (voting (agegroup (1)))} = -.705 + .089(vcont) + .032(socmed) + .259(int) + .845(preterturn) + .209(educ) + .172(gen) - .249(race)$$

Four of the independent variables measured were not significant as they had a *P*-value that was greater than .05. These variables were *votercontact*, *socialmedia*, *gender*, and *race*. Therefore, contact, social media, race, and gender cannot determine the likelihood of voting in the 2016 Election. The three independent variables that did report a *P*-value less than .05 were *internet*, *previousturnout*, and *educationlevel*. Not surprisingly, the previous turnout variable had the highest odds ratio of 2.328 which means that respondents who voted in the Election of 2012 were 2.328 times more likely to vote in the Election of 2016 than those who did not. Interestingly, time spent researching on the internet was slightly more predictable of voting behavior than education level. The internet variable reported an odds ratio of 1.296 and education level reported an odds ratio of 1.233. From this step in the regression, I cannot conclude whether personal contact or social media usage mobilizes younger generations to vote but internet research increases the likelihood of voting. Further study would need to be done on the correlation between researching campaigns on the internet and voting patterns to validate this.

Table 1: Impact of Contact Methods on Individual Turnout of Young People

Regression Results (Ages 18-39)			
Variables	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Voter Contact	.089	.602	1.093
Social Media	.032	.300	1.033
Internet	.259	.006**	1.296
Previous Turnout	.845	.000***	2.328
Education Level	.209	.000***	1.233
Gender (M/F)	.172	.311	1.187
Race (White/Non-White)	-.249	.147	.780
Constant	-.705	.032*	.494
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test	.564		
Chi Square	80.727		
Degrees of Freedom	7		
-2 Log Likelihood	928.571		
Nagelkerke R Square	.123		
Percentage Correct	79%		

Source: ANES 2016 Dependent Variable: Voted in 2016 Election Time Series

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

The results for the second age group (40-59) are displayed in Table 2. The logistic model for this group can be written as:

$$\text{Logged odds (voting (agegroup (2)))} = -.042 - .036(\text{vcont}) - .012(\text{socmed}) + .271(\text{int}) + 1.469(\text{preturn}) + .152(\text{educ}) - .244(\text{gen}) - .269(\text{race})$$

The same variables from the first age group that failed the test of significance also failed for this age group: *votercontact*, *socialmedia*, *gender*, and *race*. Similar patterns were seen with the three variables *previousturnout*, *internet*, and *educationlevel* as was seen with the first group. The previous turnout variable reported the highest odds ratio of 4.346, the internet variable reported an odds ratio of 1.311, and education level reported an odds ratio of 1.164. Thus, 40-59-year-olds who voted in the Election of 2012 were 4.346 times more likely to vote in the Election of 2016 than those who did not. The significance of this odds ratio is that is nearly twice that of same variable for 18-39-year-olds. The reason for this could be that there are more habitual voters in the second age group. Additionally, the internet variable had a slightly higher odds ratio than the first age group. However, since the difference is only .015 it is safe to conclude that internet usage was equally probable of predicting voting patterns for the first two age groups.

Table 2: Impact of Contact Methods on Individual Turnout of Middle-Aged People

Regression Results (Ages 40-59)			
Variables	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Voter Contact	-.036	.855	.965
Social Media	-.012	.713	.988
Internet	.271	.006**	1.311
Previous Turnout	1.469	.000***	4.346
Education Level	.152	.018*	1.164
Gender (M/F)	-.244	.226	.784
Race (White/Non-White)	-.269	.199	.764
Constant	-.042	.898	.958
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test	.613		
Chi Square	85.336		
Degrees of Freedom	7		
-2 Log Likelihood	734.954		
Nagelkerke R Square	.145		
Percentage Correct	86.5%		

Dependent Variable: Voted in 2016 Election

Source: ANES 2016 Time Series

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

The results for the third age group (60+) are displayed in Table 3. The logistic model for this group can be written as:

$$\text{Logged odds (voting (agegroup 3))} = -.060 - .210(\text{vcont}) - .056(\text{socmed}) + .243(\text{int}) + 2.146(\text{preturn}) + .157(\text{educ}) + .422(\text{gen}) - .197(\text{race})$$

As was the case for the first two age groups, *votercontact*, *social media*, *gender*, and *race* did not pass the test of significance. *Previousturnout* again reported the highest odds ratio at 8.555. *Internet* reported an odds ratio of 1.275 and *educationlevel* reported an odds ratio of 1.170. Surprisingly, the internet variable and education level did not vary by much from the values in the first two age groups. However, previous turnout had an even higher odds ratio compared to 40-59-year-olds. This could be due to an even greater increase of habitual voters amongst voters 60 and older.

Ultimately, the main independent variables of voter contact and social media could not explain voting patterns in the Election of 2016 for all three age groups. However, my internet variable did have a positive and significant relationship with the dependent variable in all three age groups.

Table 3: Impact of Contact Methods on Individual Turnout of Elderly People

Regression Results (Ages 60+)			
Variables	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Voter Contact	-.210	.429	.811
Social Media	-.056	.229	.946
Internet	.243	.046*	1.275
Previous Turnout	2.146	.000***	8.555
Education Level	.157	.047*	1.170
Gender (M/F)	.422	.118	1.526
Race (White/Non-White)	-.197	.519	.821
Constant	-.060	.886	.942
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test	.634		
Chi Square	73.496		
Degrees of Freedom	7		
-2 Log Likelihood	440.436		
Nagelkerke R Square	.177		
Percentage Correct	92.6%		

Dependent Variable: Voted in 2016 Election

Source: ANES 2016 Time Series

* p < .05; *** p < .001

Discussion

Based on the results from the regression, my study offers some new insights for political consultants in the future. Internet research had an average odds ratio of 1.3 across all three age groups, demonstrating that it is heavily utilized for campaign research across generations. Furthermore, voting in the Election of 2012 increasingly determined voting in the Election of 2016 with as age increased. Thus, one of the important factors that campaigners and GOTV groups need to consider is that when obtaining a new voter, it is best to ensure that that voter returns to the polls in subsequent elections. This builds off the previous literature on youth voting patterns which has shown that one of the main reasons young people do not vote is because of a lack of information (Shea and Harris 2006; Bogard 2008; Ulbig and Waggener 2011). Campaigns can make it easier for young people to learn about candidates and issues along with the process of voting through websites that invite them to vote. If done properly each election cycle, emerging voters will become habitual voters over time and will not have to be convinced to vote in the future. Further studies must be conducted to test whether campaign sites are effective in producing habitual voters amongst the youngest generation.

Some of the questions left unanswered include the role of traditional campaign methods such as door-to-door canvassing, phone banking, and leafletting and their impact on voter mobilization. Phone banking and leafletting were not able to be measured in this study due to insufficient data from the ANES. Canvassing was measured through the *votercontact* variable but was not significant in determining voting patterns. This would contradict the previous literature on door-to-door canvassing which argues that it is one of the most effective and reliable forms of voter mobilization (Green and Gerber 2000; Green et al. 2003; Green and Gerber 2015). The reason for this insignificance could be because the regression allowed for previous turnout to be measured in conjunction with turnout in the Election of 2016. Hence, political scientists must consider previous turnout when studying canvassing effectiveness to ensure their results are not confounded.

Even with the limitations of my study, the results add to the body of literature on youth turnout and traditional campaigning by showing that younger generations are mobilized to vote through internet strategies. Additionally, older generations were impacted by the internet just as much as younger generations. Thus, campaigning for the future will require political consultants to develop an efficient and informative internet platform which helps engage emerging voters and encourages them to vote in subsequent elections.

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Appendix: Codebook

Variable Name: voteturnout16

Label: Did R Vote in the 2016 Presidential Election

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

Variable Name: votercontact

Label: Did anyone contact R about registering or GOTV?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

Variable Name: socialmedia

Label: How many days a week does R use social media to learn about 2016 Election?

- 0. None
- 1. One Day
- 2. Two Days
- 3. Three Days
- 4. Four Days
- 5. Five Days
- 6. Six Days
- 7. Seven Days

Variable Name: internet

Label: How many times did R receive information on 2016 Election on the internet?

- 0. None
- 1. Just one or two
- 2. Several
- 3. A good many

Variable Name: previousturnout

Label: Did R vote in the 2012 Presidential Election?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

Variable Name: educationlevel
Label: Highest Education Level of R

- 1. Less than high school
- 2. High School Diploma
- 3. Some College
- 4. Associate's Degree
- 5. Bachelor's Degree
- 6. Master's Degree
- 7. Professional School Degree
- 8. Doctorate Degree

Variable Name: gender
Label: Gender of R male or female?

- 0. Male
- 1. Female

Variable Name: race
Label: Race of R white or non-white?

- 0. White
- 1. Non-white

Variable Name: agegroups
Label: Age Group of R

- 1. 18-39
- 2. 40-59
- 3. 60+

