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The Message, Medium and Messenger: A Study of Political Persuasion Through a Case Study of Planned Parenthood

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The Message, Medium and Messenger:

A Study of Political Persuasion Through a Case Study of Planned Parenthood

An Honors Paper for the Department of Government and Legal Studies

By Jodi Kraushar

Bowdoin College, 2017

Contents

Some issues in U.S. politics seem ever more intractable and discordant. The schisms

between people on different sides of an issue—on everything from abortion to marriage

equality—appear impossible to assuage. Solutions, if even imaginable, are often posited as

complex and nuanced. Some may feel tempted to throw up their hands and declare that

certain social and political issues can never be solved. After all, some argue, people will

always stick to what they believe. But what if that were not the case? What if it was easier to

change someone's mind than social sciences had thought? What if, over the course of a 20-

minute conversation, one could alter someone's beliefs and once-seemingly fixed opinion on

an issue?

In December 2014, *Science* published an article that caused quite a stir not only in

academic communities but also among popular media outlets. The article by Michael LaCour

and Donald Green, "When Contact Changes Minds: An Experiment on Transmission of

Support For Gay Equality," suggests that a mere 20-minute conversation about a

controversial and personal issue can create a lasting attitude change. That conversation can

even spill over to other members of the household, thus creating a ripple effect of attitude

change through only one short face-to-face interaction. They utilize the notion of "the contact

hypothesis, which contends that outgroup hostility diminishes when people from different

groups interact with one another."[2] They argue that active contact, or "communication about

an issue that divides the two groups…has the potential to reduce hostility toward outgroups

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[1] Michael J. LaCour and Donald P. Green, "When Contact Changes Minds: An Experiment on Transmission of
Support for Gay Equality," *Science*, December 12, 2014, 1366–69.
[2] Ibid.

and to change attitudes on divisive issues."[3] LaCour and Green studied the door-to-door campaign of the Los Angeles LGBT Center, in which straight and gay canvassers had conversations with voters about support for same-sex equality. They found that "voters canvassed on marriage shifted by about 20 percent in favor of same-sex equality, as measured on a five-point scale of support."[4] The paper had implications for reducing prejudice and shifting opinions across political and societal spectrums. This new and novel finding thrilled social movement organizations, which were quickly ready to implement the conversation technique through door-to-door canvassing of their own.

That article, with results that seemed too good to be true, was indeed, too good to be true. Only five months later, three scholars discredited the work by LaCour and Green. The article, titled "Irregularities in LaCour (2014)," shattered the initial study and rocked the political science world. The authors, David Broockman, Joshua Kalla and Peter Aronow, originally set out to extend the work of the *Science* article; however, they found it impossible to achieve similar response rates.[5] Broockman and Kalla reached out to the survey firm supposedly used by LaCour and Green in order to help them with their extension of the study. The survey firm claimed that, "they had no familiarity with the project and that they had never had an employee with the name of the staffer [they] were asking for." The further they dug, the more irregularities they found. They discovered serious irregularities in the data, including a baseline outcome data that is "statistically indistinguishable from a national survey" and "over-time changes that are unusually small and indistinguishable from perfectly

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[3] Ibid., 1366.
[4] Benedict Carey, "Gay Advocates Can Shift Same-Sex Marriage Views," *The New York Times*, December 11, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/12/health/gay-marriage-canvassing-study-science.html.
[5] David Broockman, Joshua Kalla, and Peter Aronow, "Irregularities in LaCour (2014)," *Work. Pap., Stanford Univ. Http://Stanford. Edu/ Dbroock/Broockman_kalla_aronow_lg_irregularities. Pdf*, May 19, 2015, 1.

normally distributed noise."[6] Broockman, Kalla and Aronow argued that the original data might have been lifted from the 2012 Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project, based on similarities that seem unlikely to have occurred accidentally.[7] In total, the researchers found seven irregularities in the data set. Green seemed surprised by these irregularities, and in cooperation with the investigation by Broockman, Kalla and Aronow, he publicly ordered a retraction of his own article. Lacour admitted to falsely describing some of the details of the data collection, and, on May 19, 2015, the article was publicly retracted.[8]

The news of the fabricated data had implications that stretched into the greater world of political persuasion. Maria Konnikova questions in a *New Yorker* article, "How a Gay-Marriage Study Went Wrong:" "If, in the end, the data do turn out to be fraudulent, does that say anything about social science as a whole?"[9] Her answer is mostly no. Konnikova stresses that this case is a statistical fluke, since, "outright fraud is incredibly rare."[10] Still, she highlights the danger of confirmation bias, since Green is a strong supporter of gay marriage and he therefore might have been hoping for the study to be successful. She argues that confirmation bias, "may have made the study's shakiness easier to overlook."[11] Even if the LaCour and Green article was just one bad incident because of a single unreliable researcher, it still ended up having lasting repercussions for those who were invested in the study's results. Planned Parenthood of Maine, for example, had been basing their abortion canvass on the retracted article's findings, and had to reevaluate and rework their canvassing approach.

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[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 4.
[8] Ibid., 2.
[9] Maria Konnikova, "How a Gay-Marriage Study Went Wrong," *The New Yorker*, May 22, 2015, http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/how-a-gay-marriage-study-went-wrong.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

Yet, David Broockman and Joshua Kalla, two of the authors critiquing LaCour and Green, did not give up on the research idea. Instead, they recreated the study but this time around attitudes towards transgender people. A few other variables changed as well. Unlike the original retracted study which relied on gay or lesbian canvassers, the Broockman and Kalla canvass did not find a difference between transgender and cisgender canvassers. Also, the canvass was in Miami, not Los Angeles. In addition, they also create a new methodology to test the efficacy of the deep conversation canvassing, in which they implemented a pre-selection process. The process invited people to participate in a broad online survey, which signaled to the researchers that they were likely to open the door for a canvasser. This meant that they were able to increase their contact rate with people at the door and increase the efficiency of the canvass.[12] Their research, published with full transparency after the LaCour and Green scandal, found that "people who had experienced the L.A. LGBT Center's persuasion technique showed an average 10-point increase relative to the control group in their positive feelings about transgender people, on a scale of 100."[13] This result bolstered trust in this persuasion tool, and research regarding this type of canvassing was back on track.

While researchers regained conviction in the notion that deep canvassing could be effective, the underlying mechanisms remained ambiguous, thus making it challenging to understand if the technique could be effective for all issues. Broockman did a follow-up study on people's views on abortion, but found that the technique had completely failed. In

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[12] Christie Aschw, en, and Maggie Koerth-Baker, "How Two Grad Students Uncovered An Apparent Fraud — And A Way To Change Opinions On Transgender Rights," *FiveThirtyEight*, April 7, 2016, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-two-grad-students-uncovered-michael-lacour-fraud-and-a-way-to-change-opinions-on-transgender-rights/.
[13] Ibid.

the article for the blog *FiveThirtyEight*, he states, "it had something to do with perspective-taking," in which respondents, "make themselves vulnerable by sharing an experience of their own, and then leading them to imagine themselves in a trans person's shoes."[14] Although an interesting idea, it is unclear why someone would find it easier to imagine themselves as a trans person than as someone who has had an abortion. It seems that asking the respondents to be vulnerable should be possible regardless of the canvass issues. Broockman continues by saying that the abortion study failed, "because they just haven't had as much practice at getting people to that place on that issue. It's about the skill of the canvasser, not the identity of the person doing the canvassing."[15]

On the other hand, some argue that the issue of abortion is too contentious and deep-seated to have this type of canvassing be successful. Diana Mutz, director of the Institute for the Study of Citizens and Politics at the University of Pennsylvania, states, "the center's technique was unlikely to ever get big results on abortion because that issue was much more entrenched, much more divisive and much more of a bellwether for identity politics than trans rights are at this point."[16] While this argument holds some weight, it also seems possible that the experience that individuals have with abortions would allow them to engage in conversations at a deeper level. As of yet, no published study has shown deep canvassing as an effective strategy on the topic of abortion access. Perhaps "perspective-taking," canvasser skills or issue divisiveness makes it such that abortion is unable to garner the same results as the study on attitudes towards transgender people. This result, however, has not

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

been proven. And, if LaCour and Green's study has taught political science anything, it should be to double check its work.

An organization is working now to figure out if abortion is indeed immune to the benefits of this canvassing. Planned Parenthood of Maine Action Fund (PPMEAF, also referred to by its umbrella organization—Planned Parenthood of Northern New England or PPNNE), a "nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization formed as the advocacy and nonpartisan political arm of Planned Parenthood Federation of America,"[17] had been looking for a way to fight abortion stigma. Planned Parenthood is a reproductive health care provider, and the Action Fund is committed to "advocate for health care, promote effective education and prevention policies, protect a woman's right to access safe and legal abortion, and challenge government interference in the most personal decisions of women and their families."[18] They were ecstatic (and then, even more disappointed) by the news of the LaCour and Green study. They believed that the canvassing methods described in the LaCour and Green piece could be the key to combatting abortion stigma. In a letter to their supporters, they wrote: "today we have a new and effective model of social change to help voters understand abortion in a deeper and significant way, and make the connection between what they believe and how they vote. We have a tool to end the silence." Modeling their work directly off the now discredited study, PPMEAF attempted to spearhead this method of door-to-door canvassing in their own backyard.

Using research from the LaCour and Green study, and in collaboration with other organizations conducting similar canvassing across the country, Planned Parenthood Maine

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[17] "About Us," *Planned Parenthood Action Fund*, accessed January 29, 2017, https://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/about-us.
[18] Ibid.

piloted an extensive door-to-door abortion stigma reduction canvassing effort. In just one year, from August 29th 2015 through September 1st 2016, PPMEAF conducted 30 canvasses, during which time they knocked on 2,321 doors and had 618 voter conversations. The canvasses took place in over ten towns in mostly Southern and Mid-Coast Maine, including Waterboro, Wiscasset, Lewiston, Auburn, Topsham and Scarborough. For the fall of 2015 they canvassed mostly in Falmouth and Cumberland, two towns in which they had previous canvassing experience and they believed were more liberal. They expanded the following year to new sites, which were either contested political districts or places that they had connections to because of student volunteers—Bowdoin College students in Topsham and Bates students in Lewiston. They then followed those in-person conversations up with voter callbacks to assess the duration effects of the original campaign. The material is substantial in terms of number of canvasses and conversations, geographic diversity, and follow-up data.

This well of information has largely gone untapped. While it is being used for internal purposes, the data from PPMEAF has yet to be studied in a scholarly manner. Over the course of this paper, I attempt to understand the efforts of PPMEAF, and connect it to the greater literature around political persuasion and mobilization. *I will seek to answer: how do organizations influence people to believe or act in a certain way around political and social issues*? The paper is a review of the existing literature on canvassing and campaigning, as well as a case study of PPMEAF's canvassing efforts, through interviews, training documents, and an analysis of its data. Essentially, I work to understand what are the relevant components in persuasion (changing minds) and mobilization (getting one to act, or say, vote) of individuals? While persuasion is the main dependent variable, I will also be touching upon mobilization research, primarily in the analysis of "Get Out The Vote" canvassing. The

paper will center on persuasion largely because that is the driving force for Planned Parenthood's canvassing. According to a statement by their Vice-President Nicole Clegg, the organization is utilizing deep canvassing because "these meaningful and authentic conversations go straight to the heart of a voter – where lasting change occurs."[19] Additionally, political persuasion is a compelling field in an increasingly partisan world, where there exists the idea that no one changes his or her mind. Recently, more and more social movements have been looking at change and persuasion over direct mobilization, as are the cases for Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter. They are thereby echoing the concept of persuading individuals to shift their beliefs, rather than foremost convincing them to vote or act.

For the literature review, I grouped the causal influences on persuasion and mobilization into three major categories—the medium, the message and the messenger. For each of these independent variables, I examine the relevant literature and propose theories about the most effective strategies and how they connect specifically to certain social/political issues. First, I look at medium effects. Here, I rely heavily on the work of Donald Green and Alan Gerber in their book, *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*, as well as Lisa Bedolla and Melissa Michelson's work, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate Through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*. I compare and contrast the effectiveness, in terms of cost and persuasiveness, of online, mail, phone and in-person canvassing. In the case of Planned Parenthood, the medium is door-to-door, and so I focus heavily on the efficacy of this specific method. The research suggests that the more personal and direct the form of communication, the more effective it will be in mobilizing individuals.

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[19] Clegg, Nicole, "Changing the Conversation: Innovative Social Change Canvassing," *Planned Parenthood Maine Action Fund.*

For this section, I also incorporate recent studies of the role of Internet and social media as a source for transmitting messages. In today's day and age, is knocking on someone's door outdated, or ever more necessary? While the paper seeks to focus on persuasion over mobilization, much of the literature in this section concentrates on GOTV campaigns, since they dominate the literature on medium impacts.

Next, I switch to role of the messenger or canvasser. I look at the impact of individual characteristics on interviewer bias, stereotype threat and in-group/out-group connection in both surveys and canvassing. The section includes gender-of-interviewer and race-of-interviewer effects, as well as research on the persuasiveness and charisma of the canvasser. Then, I assess the role of the message itself. The first half of the message effects review focuses on campaign advertisements, while the second half highlights literature on framing. I analyze in what ways particular messages —whether negative or positive, fact-based or narrative, partisan or nonpartisan—may be more or less effective.

After the review of extant literature, I examine specific data from Planned Parenthood and place it within the context of those three areas. These two chapters are an in-depth case study situating this "innovative" deep canvass within the literature to better understand the rationale behind Planned Parenthood's choices and to evaluate their impact. The second chapter consists of an examination of PP's meeting notes, volunteer trainings, and interviews with various organizers. In this chapter, I utilize the data and interviews to paint a picture of the organization's decision-making process and reasoning. I also find patterns within the background material that could suggest which aspects of the canvassing are more persuasive and effective. Next, for the third chapter, I use statistical analysis to analyze whether PP has been effective in de-stigmatizing abortion and in what ways some of their goals have worked

or not worked. Using PPMEAF's own "feeling thermometer" scale from the canvassing, I conduct a analysis of attitude change. I examine the impact of individual-level demographic factors, such as age, gender, income, as well as the role of the canvasser themselves. Additionally, the follow-up phone calls will provide material that sheds light on the variation between mediums. Finally, I work to assess whether the tactic is more effective than other methods, by connecting it to the literature.

The data used in the analysis provide an important groundwork for an understanding and review of this canvassing method; however, it is not without its limitations. Planned Parenthood granted me access to all of their data, some of which had been edited by them for confidentiality purposes before I received it. I have received approval from the Institutional Review Board at Bowdoin College to interview individuals at Planned Parenthood and to use their quantitative data measuring canvassing impact, and I have made sure that all of the data that I analyze will not breach the confidentiality of the respondents or canvassers involved.[20] The data I received is very comprehensive. It includes debrief notes from trainings and canvasses, outlines for trainings, images of the various scripts utilized, reports to their volunteer base, quantitative spreadsheets of their data with feeling thermometer numbers along with demographic data, as well as feedback from canvassers about their experiences.

The data, however, was conducted without any consultation or advisement on my behalf. Therefore, the canvasses may not abide by the rigorous standards that a political scientist might hope for or expect. For example, each canvasser training was conducted slightly differently, and the data on canvasser feedback and follow-up phone calls are not comprehensive. The organization did consult with a political scientist, Adam Levine of

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[20] IRB approval date 02/21/2017; IRB #2017-08

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Cornell University, but he did not organize their data collection or lead their canvasser trainings. Rather, he assisted with creating new directions for trainings and brainstorming ideas for script development. In any canvass research, it is impossible to assure that the canvassers stick exactly to the script. In this work in particular, given that the canvassers were not trained by political researchers and the scripts require a large amount of improvisation, it is likely that each conversation varies widely in terms of the topics it covers and its duration. Additionally, there was no outside oversight of the data collected, which accounts for the fact that not all of the information is entered in a systematic and comprehensive fashion. Ultimately, though, they have 525 usable data entries that include feeling thermometer numbers and a variety of demographic data. That is a substantial enough source to conduct analysis that could be significant.

Social scientists are often beset by challenges of data collection, and this is true for both qualitative and quantitative analyses. One is often not able to draw causal or descriptive inferences that escape such challenges. But the work of social science strives to learn as much as possible from the available data at play. With cautious claims and careful attention to weaknesses in the data itself, I am confident that the analysis that follows in this thesis can discern a lot from the efforts of Planned Parenthood and can allow for explicit links back to the long and developing literature on political communication broadly construed and peer-to-peer mobilization and persuasion specifically.

Reading the Literature:

A Review of the Scholarship on Issue and Election Persuasion and Mobilization Efforts

The existing research on canvassing and campaigning is extensive. The following chapter is subdivided into three major sections—medium, messenger and message effects. However, this is not the only way to classify the existing research. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, political communications and canvassing is either working towards mobilization or persuasion. But mobilization or persuasion towards what? The research revolves mainly around two categories—elections and issues. Election literature covers everything campaign related, which ranges from Get Out The Vote efforts to canvasses for specific candidates to campaign advertisements. Issue literature covers everything in the realm of interest-group politics, looking at how specific organizations and non-profits mobilize or persuade around their particular subject. In the case of Planned Parenthood's Abortion Stigma Reduction Canvassing, the main goal is persuasion and the relevant research is on issues. The chart below depicts the intersections of these variables, and the "X" represents the focus of my review.

	Elections	Issues
Mobilization		
Persuasion		**X**

Subsequently, these four categories are still discussed underneath the message, messenger and medium subheadings. While I examine the persuasion and issue based literature, I often bring the role of election and mobilization work into focusas well. Additionally, as seen in the chart below, individual-level factors play an important role in the M/M/M effects and in mobilization and persuasion. The individual factors—often

demographic markers such as age, sex, income and political affiliation—influence how successful an organization or campaign is in mobilizing and/or persuading, as well as how strong the M/M/M effects are. For example, if the individual-level factor is sex, the effects of a message might play out differently for a woman than for a man, and women might be more or less likely to be mobilized or persuaded then men.

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Individual-level    │
                    │ factors (age, sex,  │
                    │ income, political   │
                    │ party, etc)         │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                       ↙              ↘
   ┌──────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────┐
   │ Medium/Message/  │   →    │  Mobilization/   │
   │ Messenger Effects│        │  Persuasion      │
   └──────────────────┘        └──────────────────┘
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Finally, a note about the literature reviewed. I attempt to focus mostly on research that uses field studies or conducts analysis of the efforts of real political and non-profit organizations that engage in this work. This research mimics the type of work I conduct in the following chapter, and therefore helps provide more directly relatable data. However, I also review the M/M/M effects in laboratory settings and in regards to surveys, as opposed to campaigns or issues. This literature holds useful information particularly in regards to interviewer bias and the wording of messages.

Medium Effects

A phone call. An advertisement on your television. A conversation on your doorstep. It seems as though there are an infinite number of ways in which you can be contacted by campaigns or organizations. And, with the rise of online communications, the possibilities are becoming even more endless. Yet, the question remains—which medium is most effective? Well, the answer is not so simple when you consider that effectiveness can be measured in a variety of ways. For example, mailers can help raise the name recognition of candidates, while door-to-door canvassing can influence a person's attitude about an issue. Also, cost-effectiveness is an important variable in the overall assessment of effectiveness, and each medium differs in its set-up and execution expenses. In the following section I draw heavily on Donald Green and Alan Gerber's seminal 2015 book on Get Out The Vote (GOTV) techniques, which is a collection and analysis of the literature on GOTV strategy in the last two decades. I separate the effects into five major categories, from the least to most intimate—online communications and texting, leaflets and signage, mailers, phone calls, door-to-door.

Online communications are a burgeoning field of political research, because it holds the possibilities of new and more effective ways of mobilizing and persuading individuals. The category includes e-mails, social media, and text messaging, although nowadays there are avenues on the Internet for communication through blogs and websites and other domains. Since the field is relatively new, and the technology is evolving faster than people are able to study it, the literature on the topic is sparser and more equivocal than on other forms of communication. Sara Vissers compares the research on online media to that off-line, and says: "we know far less…about the mobilizing impact of information and

communication technology (ICT)-based communication. Some studies document a clear and significant mobilization effect of Internet communication; others fail to detect any meaningful effects."[21]

The most obvious initial benefit of online communication is that it is cost-effective. According to Vissers, "[the] marginal cost of an additional contact with a potential participant is almost zero,"[22] meaning that political campaigns and organizations can easily and cheaply send messages to a much wider base. Elizabeth Bennion and David Nickerson describe how the Internet cuts costs:

> By connecting buyers and sellers without requiring physical presence, facilitating access to information and research, and eliminating the need for paper and transcription, thereby avoiding errors and delay, reducing communication time, and allowing for monitoring of transactions, delivery, and inventory.[23]

While it is evident that the Internet can make it cheaper and more seamless for organizers to connect with constituents, it is unclear how effective these forms of communication are.

Research into the effectiveness of e-mail, texting and social media communication is varied, with many studies showing that these quick messaging campaigns are not that successful in mobilizing people. In fact, a field study from Bennion and Nickerson from the 2006 federal midterm elections found that e-mails that direct individuals to online registration tools actually decrease the overall rates of voter registration. In their findings, only online registration drives that are then accompanied with some form of follow-up (texting or a phone call) will be effective. Vissers et. al find that online mobilization efforts are effective, but only in mobilizing to other online forums. They state that, "online

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[21] S. Vissers et al., "The Impact of Mobilization Media on Off-Line and Online Participation: Are Mobilization Effects Medium-Specific?," *Social Science Computer Review* 30, no. 2 (May 1, 2012): 153.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Elizabeth A. Bennion and David W. Nickerson, "The Cost of Convenience: An Experiment Showing E-Mail Outreach Decreases Voter Registration," *Political Research Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (December 2011): 859.

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mobilization efforts only had an impact on online forms of participation, without any significant spillover effects to off-line forms of participation." [24]

While most of the research has shown that impersonal tactics are less effective in mobilizing turnout, Allison Dale and Aaron Strauss's research on text messaging suggests just the opposite. They found in their field experiment in the 2006 election that text messaging can be effective at mobilizing voters, since "for some voters, a turnout strategy can be successful merely by increasing the likelihood that an individual pays attention to a reminder to vote. It is not essential that the message persuade citizens to vote through an appeal to social connectedness."[25] Dale and Strauss critique the theory of social connectedness developed by Green and Gerber, which, "describe[s] the extent to which a voter feels this sense of belonging at the polls."[26] They also add that text messaging is unique among impersonal forms of communication because it is noticeable, and so, "a regular mobile user will be unlikely to miss the text message as he or she uses the phone throughout the day."[27]

A study by Trevor Diehl, Brian Weeks and Homero Gil de Zúñiga also found that more modern forms of communication, particularly social media, could be effective in the political arena. Using the same concept of social connectedness that Dale and Strauss criticize, they highlight how social media can serve as a "potential space of interaction where citizens are simultaneously exposed to news, and the views of people in their social

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[24] Vissers et al., "The Impact of Mobilization Media on Off-Line and Online Participation," 153.
[25] Allison Dale and Aaron Strauss, "Don't Forget to Vote: Text Message Reminders as a Mobilization Tool," *American Journal of Political Science* 53, no. 4 (2009): 787.
[26] Ibid., 788.
[27] Ibid., 791.

network."[28] Diehl, Weeks and Zúñiga's work focuses on persuasion rather than GOTV

measures, therefore they analyze social networks and online communication from a different

angle. Their study looks at how apolitical social networks can lead to political persuasion,

and how social media use for news is positively associated with political persuasion through

the social media. They argue that "an ideal context for political persuasion to occur is

through conversation…[which] include[s] a shared text, a set of issues to discuss, the

opportunity to speak and debate, as well as exposure to diverse opinions."[29] Social media

provides all of these components, and could thus enable discourse and political engagement.

Though a compelling insight into the ways in which social media can open up dialogue and

interaction with political issues, the study ultimately does not focus on organizations or

campaigns that purposely use social media to direct the opinions of voters.

In addition to direct online messaging, there exist many forms of Internet advertising,

which influence voters' engagement and attitudes. In the 2012 presidential campaigns,

Obama and Romney both spent about 25% of their advertising dollars on Internet ads.[30]

Broockman and Green highlight how online advertisements can be utilized with great

frequency and are thus "ideal for persuasion under theories of attitude change that emphasize

the impact of repeated exposure to even subtle messages."[31] Still, they point out that online

advertisements are likely to leave "at most a fleeting impression on viewers," based on

analysis of similar televised messaging.[32] Also, in their analysis of two studies that use

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[28] Trevor Diehl, Brian E. Weeks, and Homero Gil de Zuniga, "Political Persuasion on Social Media: Tracing Direct and Indirect Effects of News Use and Social Interaction," *New Media & Society* 18, no. 9 (October 1, 2016): 1876.
[29] Ibid., 176.
[30] David E. Broockman and Donald P. Green, "Do Online Advertisements Increase Political Candidates' Name Recognition or Favorability? Evidence from Randomized Field Experiments," *Political Behavior* 36, no. 2 (June 2014): 263.
[31] Ibid., 264.
[32] Ibid.

Facebook ads to promote political candidates, they find that, "voters randomly assigned to view the political candidates' online ads were no more likely to recall the candidates' names, did not significantly update their opinions of the candidates, and sometimes did not recall viewing the ads at all."[33] While the results seem disappointing, Broockman and Green maintain that online advertisements can be a cost-effective method because the ads are inexpensive.

More traditional forms of indirect methods, as in leaflets and signage, have been shown to have similar insignificant effects as online indirect approaches. Leaflets include printed materials left on an individual's doorstep, or hung on their doorknob. Some suggest because these hangers require a physical visit to the home, voters might feel more engaged by or impressed by this form of communication.[34] However, Gerber and Green conducted a weighted average of eleven studies, and suggest that for every 189 voters whose doors receive hangers, only one additional vote is created.[35] A few studies have uncovered positive effects, perhaps because of informal in person conversations that occur between canvassers and voters, or due to the specific messaging and images on the leaflet, or the salience of the election.[36] Signage or campaign advertisements on front yards and on roads, seem to also have little effect on turnout.[37] Again, the cost of these methods often outweighs the slight benefit, with leaflets costing approximately $47 per persuaded vote (the cost of printing and the hourly cost of distribution).[38]

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[33] Ibid., 279.
[34] Lisa García Bedolla and Melissa R Michelson, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 36.
[35] Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber, *Get out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*, Third edition (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), 47.
[36] Bedolla and Michelson, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*, 44.
[37] Green and Gerber, *Get out the Vote*, 48.
[38] Ibid., 49.

Traditional mailers, the quick and easy form of communication before the Internet

took its place, has many of the same problems and benefits as online venues. David Doherty

and Scott Adler looked at state legislative races during the 2012 general election, and found

that partisan mailers can help increase the name recognition of a candidate, but does not do

much to increase turnout. Gerber and Green echo this sentiment: "direct mail that merely

reminds voters of an upcoming election and urges them to vote has no effect on voter

turnout. Five experiments that have tested reminders yield an overall estimate that is a shade

less than zero."[39] They continue by emphasizing that certain messages, particularly

unconventional ones, might impact the efficacy of the mailers. They also highlight that

advocacy mailing used to motivate their base about issues in the upcoming election have

disappointing results.[40] Additionally, they state that, "there is no evidence of synergy

between mail and other GOTV tactics."[41] Essentially, mailers do not assist in the

effectiveness of other campaign outreach methods. Edward Fieldhouse emphasizes, however,

that his data shows that while mail and telephone communication might not be interactive,

they are additive: "impersonal methods are effective and incremental, accumulating both

within and across elections as voters are exposed to multiple contacts."[42] Fieldhouse's

argument provides some hope for mailers, although likely only in the context of other forms

of communication.

Despite the effectiveness of some studies of indirect methods, the research points

overwhelming to the ineffectiveness of these methods of campaigning and reaching out to

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[39] Ibid., 58.
[40] Ibid., 59.
[41] Ibid., 61.
[42] Edward Fieldhouse et al., "Do Impersonal Mobilisation Methods Work? Evidence from a Nationwide Get-Out-the-Vote Experiment in England," *Electoral Studies* 32, no. 1 (March 2013): 122.

voters. Lisa Bedolla and Melissa Michelson, in their book *Mobilizing Inclusion* (2012), caution that, "experiments with text messaging, e-mail, and other indirect methods of reaching out to voters designed to be noticeable and salient continue to tend to find small or null results. Those that have found some effect on voters…are the exception rather than the rule."[43] They argue that while mailers and leaflets can help inform voters about the specific issues and candidates, ultimately, it does not connect the individuals with the political process. They posit that "an interactive component is what is necessary to elicit the cognitive shifts necessary to alter an individual's voting behavior."[44] Still, while these methods are not at all or only marginally effective in mobilization, it is unclear how good they are at persuasion. Much of the literature on indirect methods of communication focuses on GOTV, rather than on attitude change. Therefore, there is still a possibility that these informative and yet impersonal strategies can influence people's opinions.

Phone calls are a staple of many political campaigns and social movement organizations. While they remain popular, it is unclear how effective—particularly in terms of cost—they really are. There are a few methods of contacting voters over the phone, namely robo calls which are prerecorded, commercial phone banks run by telemarketing firms, and volunteer phone banks. According to Gerber and Green, "none of the experiments using robo calls have been able to distinguish their effects from zero."[45] Commercial phone banks, on the other hand, have modest effects, with: "a standard commercial phone script of approximately thirty seconds in length on average increas[ing] turnout by 0.8 percentage

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[43] Bedolla and Michelson, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the LEctorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*, 32.
[44] Ibid., 54.
[45] Green and Gerber, *Get out the Vote*, 82.

points among those contacted."[46] Best yet are volunteer phone banks, which can generate one vote for every thirty-five completed calls, but their results are much more widely-varied, and the numbers of voters reached is much lower.[47] Vincent Pons attributes this increase in personal phone conversations efficacy to the quality of communication, showing that informal conversations can help connect voters to the electoral process.[48]

All in all, door-to-door canvassing is still widely thought to be the most effective form of voter outreach—in terms of both mobilization and persuasion. Gerber and Green state that "when canvassers are able to reach voters, canvassing generates votes. In forty-four of fifty-one experiments, canvassing was found to increase turnout."[49] However, another study of voter turnout in France found that in-person canvassing did not affect voter turnout, although it did help increase François Hollande's vote share. Therefore, they argue that either the canvassing was persuasive but not mobilizing, or that it demobilized some constituents while mobilizing others. There are a number of theories as to why this type of canvassing is typically the most effective, and Gerber and Green posit that, "appeals delivered in person more intensely pressure individuals to comply with the social norm of voting than do anonymous impersonal appeals."[50]

While door-to-door canvassing is seen as generally effective, it is also costly in terms of organizational set-up and the amount of time canvassers must commit. Gerber and Green calculate that "it takes $31 worth of labor to produce on additional vote….contacting six households per hour produces one additional vote every 115 minutes," assuming that each

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[46] Ibid., 83.
[47] Ibid.
[48] R. Ramirez, "Giving Voice to Latino Voters: A Field Experiment on the Effectiveness of a National Nonpartisan Mobilization Effort," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 601, no. 1 (September 1, 2005): 80.
[49] Green and Gerber, *Get out the Vote*, 31.
[50] Ibid.

canvasser makes six direct contacts and three indirect contacts each hour, with an hourly wage of $15. [51] The type of canvassing that occurs at the door is also challenging to study, because there is a higher amount of discrepancy between each conversation than there is between every phone call and mailer. While all of the mediums interact with message and medium effects, door-to-door canvassing is particularly vulnerable to those two variables. For example, conversations at the door can vary widely based on everything from the personality of the canvasser to the length of the script. Michelson and Bedolla argue that the "sociocultural interactions in these conversations on the doorstep are richer in context and interaction than are those that occur on the phone."[52] Jared Barton, Marco Castillo and Ragan Petrie examine what happens when candidates themselves go door to door. They conduct a field experiment from a 2010 general election for local office, in which a candidate himself goes door-to-door, to examine whether the method or the message is the driving factor in persuading voters. The candidate varied his message between a pamphlet with a political message and a short how-to-vote guide, and his method between delivering the candidate personally and leaving it at the door. Barton, Castillo and Petrie's findings were mixed. They find that varying the type of message had almost no impact, stating that: "political persuasion is more than having a persuasive message."[53] On the medium side, they find that "personal contact with the candidate seems to be very important in the decision of which candidate a voter chooses."[54] They conclude that the candidate's campaign lowered voter turnout among the targeted voters, while also increasing the likelihood a voter supports the candidate by

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[51] Ibid., 36.
[52] Bedolla and Michelson, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the LEctorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*, 127.
[53] Jared Barton, Marco Castillo, and Ragan Petrie, "What Persuades Voters? A Field Experiment on Political Campaigning," *The Economic Journal* 124, no. 574 (February 2014): 296.
[54] Ibid.

about 20 percentage points.[55] Therefore, they argue that canvassing may not have a significant impact on voter turnout, but can play a large role in voter choice.

David Broockman and Joshua Kalla studied the door-to-door canvassing's impact on reducing transphobia. They find that: "the canvassing intervention's effects were both lasting and politically relevant," in terms of reducing prejudice towards transgender people.[56] The canvassing in their research is reliant on analogic perspective taking, an intervention that requires canvassers to work to encourage voters to see "how their own experience offered a window into transgender people's experiences, hoping to facilitate voters' ability to take transgender people's perspectives."[57] Their research thereby shows the impact of door-to-door canvassing in prejudice reduction, and connects closely with Planned Parenthood of Maine's abortion stigma reduction deep canvassing techniques. Their research is also novel because of their methodology for contacting voters. They sent out mailers inviting people to participate in an online survey, thus signaling to the researchers that they are more likely to open the door for a canvasser and increasing the response rate for the actual door-to-door canvassing process.[58]

Some researchers also contend that the impact of door-to-door canvassing reaches beyond its foremost purpose, whether that be voter turnout or attitude change. Michelson and Bedolla argue that this type of canvassing might help with organization building, and could assist in building a "reputation for the organizations and fomenting support for their issue-based work." This type of "personal invitation" into American politics could increase

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[55] Ibid., F314.
[56] David Broockman and Joshua Kalla, "Durably Reducing Transphobia: A Field Experiment on Door-to-Door Canvassing," *Science* 352, no. 6282 (April 8, 2016): 223.
[57] Ibid., 221.
[58] Aschw, en, and Koerth-Baker, "How Two Grad Students Uncovered An Apparent Fraud — And A Way To Change Opinions On Transgender Rights."

"community-level social capital," they argue.[59] David Nickerson studies the role of

interpersonal relationships on voting habits, and argues that door-to-door canvassing impacts

not just the voter who is having the conversation, but also the other individuals in the

household. He finds that an individual who is 25% likely to vote in the primary would

become 85% likely to vote as a direct result of a cohabitant deciding to vote, thus strongly

suggesting that "voting is a highly contagious behavior and an important determinant of

turnout."[60] Planned Parenthood of Maine also asserts that canvassing has a critical impact on

the canvassers themselves, by creating volunteers who are more engaged and knowledgeable.

In a newsletter, they write that the canvassers "are using their new skills outside of the

canvasses to create dialogue about abortion in other arenas of their life."[61] Therefore, even if

the canvassing cannot affect that many voters, it might create volunteers who are more

engaged and likely to discuss the issue outside of the actual campaign. However, the role of

canvassing on the canvassers themselves has yet to be studied, and so it is unclear how

effective it is.

Messenger Effects

One of the pivotal factors in political persuasion is the effect of the messenger.

Essentially, what influence does the identity and persuasiveness of the interviewer or

canvasser have on the outcome of persuasion or mobilization efforts? I will be looking at

these messenger effects primarily as they relate to door-to-door canvassing, but I will also

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[59] Bedolla and Michelson, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*, 127.
[60] David W. Nickerson, "Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments," *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 1 (2008): 54.
[61] Nicole Clegg, "PPNNE Abortion Canvassing Project," n.d.

examine broader interviewer effects on the phone and in non-field experiments. While there is a plethora of personal characteristics that could be analyzed, I focus mainly on gender, experience and charisma. I also highlight the overarching psychological tendencies behind interactions with a messenger, which can then be extrapolated to a host of other personality and identity traits.

It is important to distinguish first between surveys and canvassing. Much of the literature around messenger effects relate to the interviewer variance in surveys, or the "variability in survey estimates expected to arise when survey estimates vary depending on which interviewers conduct the data collection." In these cases, the literature investigates how the interviewer could get in the way when asking a question or soliciting information. However, for canvassing, the volunteer who goes door-to-door plays an active role in convincing or swaying the receiver; therefore, the various identity or personality traits of the messenger might be valuable in changing the opinion of the person on the other side. The following section will focus both on the role of the interviewer in surveys and the volunteer in canvassing literature.

Since all people are infinitely different in their characteristics, mannerisms, and speech, it is inevitable that each messenger influences the survey or canvass responses in his or her own way. As Bedolla and Michelson state, "In just one-minute of face-to-face contact, humans interpret a wide range of information, much of it outside the verbal communication taking place; they respond to appearance, facial expressions, posture, et cetera."[62] While, it is obvious that all people are different and thus will interact with the receiver differently, I work to analyze the elements that are most relevant to my subsequent research on Planned

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[62] Bedolla and Michelson, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the LEctorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*, 127.

Parenthood's method. Therefore, in relation to survey interviewer effects, I will be focusing

mainly on gender and experience, although I will touch upon race. For canvassing effects, I

will discuss the role of social networks, charisma, and training. Finally, I will examine the

ways in which these effects manifest themselves differently over the phone and in-person.

The characteristics of the interviewer are crucial in determining survey measurement

error and nonresponse. Durrant et. al understands the interview effects as falling under two

categories—fixed effects, or systematic influences that can be controlled, and interviewer

variance, or the unpredictable variability in survey estimates depending on which interview

conducts the data.[63] The fixed effects often occur when the interviewer characteristics link

thematically to the data, as in the way that the interviewer's gender may play a role if the

survey is about something gender related, or the prospect that the interviewer's age may play

a role if the survey relates to age. Many studies have examined gender-of-interviewer (GOI)

effects, looking at how the gender of the interviewer changes both the response rate and the

answers themselves. In terms of the base response, Durrant et. al find that "female

householders are more likely to respond than men if the interviewer is also female, whereas

interviewer gender has no effect among male sample units."[64] They argue that women might

be fearful of a strange man at the door, and also that according to the theory of liking, people

are "favorably inclined toward those whom they like or have something in common with."[65]

This notion that people are more likely to respond—or respond more positively—to those

with whom they share identity characteristics comes up throughout the study of interviewer

effects.

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[63] G. B. Durrant et al., "Effects of Interviewer Attitudes and Behaviors on Refusal in Household Surveys," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (2010): 2.
[64] Ibid., 21.
[65] Ibid., 22.

Adding on to the question of the role of GOI effects on response rates, researchers

probe the relationship between the response and the type of question. Emily Kane and Laura

Macaulay study the GOI effects on men and women as they relate to home-related gender

attitudes, work-related gender attitudes, action orientations and perceptions of men's and

women's group interests. They state that there is a "tendency for both male and female

respondents to offer more egalitarian or critical responses to female interviewers than to male

interviewers."[66] They then analyze the breakdown of female verses male responses, to

conclude that "female respondents are significantly more likely to advocate collective action

by women when interviewed by women than when interviewed by a man and to advocate

government efforts related to occupational equality and day care."[67] Additionally, they find

that:

> Male respondents offer significantly different responses to male and female
> interviewers on more commonly debated issues like attitudes toward work-related
> gender inequality. This suggests that some men may be trying to maintain 'polite
> conversation' with female interviewers, especially on prominent topics.[68]

Huddy et. al. (1997) expands on this dichotomy between male and female respondents to test

for the effects over a wide range of gender-related questions, arguing that Kane and

Macaulay do not determine "whether effects exist across all items or are restricted to a

particular subset."[69] According to Huddy et. al: "Respondents were more likely to give a

feminist response to a female interviewer on 11 of the 13 gender-related concepts."[70]

Importantly, Huddy et. al. examines the characteristics of the respondents most vulnerable to

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[66] Emily W. Kane and Laura J. Macaulay, "Interviewer Gender and Gender Attitudes," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (1993): 11.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 22.
[69] Leonie Huddy et al., "The Effect of Interviewer Gender on The Survey Response," *Political Behavior* 19, no. 3 (1997): 198.
[70] Huddy et al., "The Effect of Interviewer Gender on The Survey Response."

the GOI effects. They determine that "less well-educated respondents were more influenced than well-educated respondents by their interviewer's gender when answering questions on gender-related issues."[71] Flores-Macias and Lawson (2008) hone in on the "existence of bias attributable to the gender of the interviewer on political questions."[72] Their results occasionally contradict themselves, since they conduct polls in both Mexico City and the countryside, and the canvassing region proves to be a challenging confounding effect. Still, in their multivariate analysis in which they take into account the factors of age, educational level, frequency of church attendance, socioeconomic status and ideological self-placement, Flores-Macias and Lawson found that "the effect of interviewer gender for male respondents living in Mexico City is highly significant for both questions."[73] The questions referred to are: "whether or not abortion should be legal in cases of rape" and to "rate the urgency of different policy priorities for the next president," with "Women's rights" included among a number of other options.[74] Although the research is varied, most of the literature supports the notion that respondents are more likely to give a "feminist" or more "egalitarian" response to women than they are to men.

The effects of interviewer characteristics extend beyond gender. Davis and Silver (2003) explore the role of race of interviewer effects and how they can be explained by stereotype threat rather than social desirability bias. They describe social desirability bias as the idea that, "individuals overtly 'perform' or 'front' during an interview in ways that differ from their true feelings. Respondents try to look better in the eyes of the interviewer by

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[71] Ibid., 208.
[72] Francisco Flores-Macias and Chappell Lawson, "Effects of Interviewer Gender on Survey Responses: Findings From a Household Survey in Mexico," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 20, no. 1 (2008): 100–110.
[73] Ibid., 105.
[74] Ibid., 102.

expressing opinions that conform with perceived interviewer expectations or wider societal norms."[75] They argue, however, that respondents give different answers to white and black interviewers, thereby highlighting that the effect cannot just be a case of political correctness or giving the socially acceptable answer. Instead, they point to stereotype threat, which is the notion that, "[a] person's anxiousness to disconfirm a negative stereotype and a potentially degrading label may interfere with performance of the task."[76] They state that a survey is similar to a test in that it can heighten a respondent's sensitivity to race, and therefore similar test-based stereotype threats effects can occur. The notion of stereotype threat can be applied to all visible characteristics, including gender, perceived sexual orientation, age and perceived socio-economic class.

Much of the literature around gender of interviewer effects connects both to the idea of appealing to the opposite group through politeness and to one's own group through shared characteristics. In a survey of Latino get out the vote (GOTV) measures, Michelson (2003) found: "that shared ethnicity matter confirms theories long held by de la Garza and others that Latino activists can effectively mobilize the Latino vote. That shared political partisanship (or at least perceived partisanship) is important is more complicated."[77] Although shared interviewer characteristics can often introduce bias in survey collection, they are able to positively impact canvassing mobilization efforts. Michelson's results expand on the previous dialogue on the positive impact of same group interviewing and surveying. However, it also touches upon the problems inherent in determining

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[75] Darren W. Davis and Brian D. Silver, "Stereotype Threat and Race of Interviewer Effects in a Survey on Political Knowledge," *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 1 (January 2003): 33.
[76] Ibid., 35.
[77] Bedolla and Michelson, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the LEctorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*, 258.

characteristics, in that not all traits are visible, or equally "visible" to all respondents, which

could skew data and make it challenging to find groups that can help connect to the right

receivers. Still, research seems to point to the idea that respondents are more open to

individuals who are like them or with whom they share similar characteristics. As Donald

Green and Alan Gerber argue in their iconic *Get Out the Vote* book, that: "there seems to be

some evidence that local canvassers are more effective than canvassers from outside the turf

they are canvassing."[78] Michelson further emphasizes this notion in her study on Latino

GOTV efforts: "The experiment provides solid evidence that face-to-face canvassing can

have a statistically significant and substantively large effect on voter turnout when the

canvasser and the targeted voter share ethnicity and political partisanship."[79] While different

studies point to contrasting and at times conflicting messenger effects, it seems that there are

overall two major impacts of varying messenger characteristics. In regards to efforts that

relate to a certain demographic (as in the gender and race questions discussed earlier, or the

research on Latino voting mobilization) a messenger can work to either influence a member

of the opposite demographic or appeal to a member of one's shared trait group.

In addition to examining the specific characteristics of the interviewer, many

researchers have also studied the impact of interviewer behavior on likelihood and quality of

response. These variances can be divided into the following categories—experience,

confidence and tailoring. In terms of experience—or how long an interviewer has been

conducting interviews—there seems to be conflicting data as to its relevance. Groves and

Couper (1998) analyze US decennial census match data and using logistic regression models

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[78] Green and Gerber, *Get out the Vote*, 33.
[79] Melissa R. Michelson, "Getting out the Latino Vote: How Door-to-Door Canvassing Influences Voter Turnout in Rural Central California," *Political Behavior* 25, no. 3 (2003): 258.

find that "those with greater interviewing experience tend to achieve higher rates of cooperation than those with less experience."[80] Similarly, according to Morton-Williams, "Durbin and Stuard (1951) found that overall nonresponse was 14 per cent higher for inexperienced (and largely untrained) interviewers than it was for fully trained and experienced Government Social Survey interviewers."[81] Durrant et. al. determine that there are more complex underlying factors than just number of years of experience. They find that

> When experience is the only interviewer-level variable in our model, we also found it to predict lower refusal rates for more experienced interviewers. However, after controlling for the effect of pay grade…interviewers who have been in the job for nine years or more seem to perform significantly less well than those with less experience…Skill level, reflected in pay grade, appears to be the underlying mechanism driving cooperation rates, not the simple length of time employed.[82]

They argue that the pay level is more influential in survey response than experience. Michael Butterworth (2006), however, finds that interviewer experience does not always lead to consistent and higher responses. Looking at exit polls from the 1996 US presidential election, Butterworth finds that, "interviewers with face to face experience, some of whom also had telephone experience, had high non-sampling variance."[83] Non-sampling variance refers to errors in data collection that skews the results. Butterworths findings show that interviewers with more experience are not necessarily better at controlling for this variation in data collection, and are in fact more likely to create errors while interacting with respondents.

In addition to experience, the behavioral effects of the interviewer can depend on an interviewer's own sense of confidence in his/her abilities. Durrant et. al. highlights that

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[80] Robert M. Groves and Mick Couper, *Nonresponse in Household Interview Surveys*, Wiley Series in Probability and Statistics (New York: Wiley, 1998), 215.

[81] Jean Morton-Williams, *Interviewer Approaches* (Aldershot, England: Dartmouth Publishing Company Limited, 1993), 27.

[82] Durrant et al., "Effects of Interviewer Attitudes and Behaviors on Refusal in Household Surveys," 19.

[83] Michael Butterworth, *Inside the within Precinct Error* (American Association for Public Opinion Research, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 2006), 2, http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/proceedings/y2006/Files/JSM2006-000152.pdf.

> Interviewers who report more confidence in their ability to persuade reluctant respondents, who believe they can persuade when others cannot, and who disagree with the statement 'no matter what I do, some respondents will never agree to participate' show a lower probability of refusal. [84]

The interviewers who self-identify as more confident and persuasive are less likely to encounter refusal. Durrant et. al emphasizes that interviewers who believe that they are more persuasive are more likely to persuade individuals, regardless of other training sets. Unfortunately, few scholars touch upon the ways in which persuasion could be taught and measured beyond self-identification.

While it is not evident how to explicitly teach persuasion, there does exist research on training methods for interviewers and canvassers. The integral aspects of cultivating a successful messenger involve recruitment, training and feedback, and supervision. Bedolla and Michelson emphasize that training must be "interactive, especially programs that included opportunities for realistic role-playing before sending canvassers out into the field." [85] Additionally, they point to the importance of feedback for ensuring that the canvassers feel heard and feel that their experiences matter, thereby helping "maintain[ing] their commitment to the mobilization effort and to the organization itself…[and] as a result, they tended to be more effective at mobilizing voters."[86] Finally, they say that, "frequent contact between the interviewers in the field and a field management representative, usually in the form of a local area organizer, supervisor or field assistant, is an important element in maintain morale." [87]

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[84] Durrant et al., "Effects of Interviewer Attitudes and Behaviors on Refusal in Household Surveys," 19.
[85] Bedolla and Michelson, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the LEctorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*, 139.
[86] Ibid., 138.
[87] Morton-Williams, *Interviewer Approaches*, 65.

It is important to emphasize the role that credibility plays in messenger effect. A messenger must be deemed credible or trustworthy in the eyes of the respondent in order for the message to be communicated effectively. Karen Callaghan and Frauke Schnell (2009) define credibility of a source as, "reflect[ing] both the source's expertise on the topic and the trustworthiness of the communicator."[88] They emphasize the importance of a source's credibility, especially if he or she is seen as an expert, since, "expertise cues the recipient to pay greater attention to the issue frame, guides the reader to conceptualize the issue in that context, and enhances the weight a person attaches to a frame in the decision-making process."[89] In their study on the impact of differing sources on gun control beliefs, Callaghan and Schnell find that high credibility sources like journalists and professors not only increase interest in an issue but also can positively shift attitudes around the issue. An earlier study by Carl Hovland and Walter Weiss conducted in 1951 also looked the role of source trustworthiness. They evaluated the impact of source credibility on communication effectiveness by asking individuals to rate the trustworthiness of sources, then having those sources transmit information, and then evaluating the individuals' answers to questionnaires about the previously given material. They found that while subjects do not retain more information with more credible sources, they "changed their opinion in the direction advocated by the communicator in a significantly greater number of cases when the material was attributed to a 'high credibility source' than when attributed to a 'low credibility source."[90] However, they also found that this effect was temporary, and that: "there was a

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[88] Karen Callaghan and Frauke Schnell, "Who Says What to Whom: Why Messengers and Citizen Beliefs Matter in Social Policy Framing," *The Social Science Journal* 46, no. 1 (March 2009): 14.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Carl I. Hovland and Walter Weiss, "The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (1952 1951): 642.

decrease after a time interval in the extent to which subjects agreed with the position advocated by the communication."[91] While Hovland and Weiss report on the positive impact of credible sources, Mark Joslyn and Donald Haider-Markel conducted a more contemporary study on the role of messengers in framing physician-assisted suicide in which they found contradictory results. They report that using public figures, like politicians, government officials or scientific 'experts,', who may be deemed more credible because of their reputations and notoriety, may actually have an adverse effect on the message:

> Advocacy coalitions may have more success when they simply sell their message devoid of a messenger or perhaps have it delivered by a less well-known or less controversial political messenger…Messengers who are public figures can of course be persuasive…but it seems less likely that messengers who are also political figures can effectively convey a message without alienating some even while they maintain or gain the support of others.[92]

While Joslyn and Haider-Markel speak to the problematic effects of credible public figures, Michelson analyzes the more individualized impact of credibility. In her study on Latino GOTV efforts, she had each canvasser introduce themselves as Fresno State students, because it was, "expected to increase the willingness of individuals to agree to speak with the canvassers, as Fresno State enjoys a very positive reputation in the communities surrounding the campus."[93] Michelson's notion here seems intuitive, in that people believe those who are more reputable. However, by linking reputation to a certain education degree, she constructs a particular definition of credibility and highlights the problem of creating more credible interviewers and canvassers. Callaghan and Schnell write that, "sources do matter and not all sources are created equal."[94] While ultimately credibility seems a goal to strive for, each

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[91] Ibid., 650.

[92] Mark R. Joslyn and Donald P. Haider-Markel, "Should We Really 'Kill' the Messenger? Framing Physician-Assisted Suicide and the Role of Messengers," *Political Communication* 23, no. 1 (January 2006): 98.

[93] Michelson, "Getting out the Latino Vote," 251.

[94] Callaghan and Schnell, "Who Says What to Whom," 24.

respondent defines it differently and thus it is an impossible challenge to find universally

credible individuals.

<u>Message Effects</u>

This next section will focus on "the message," or how a movement chooses to frame

and communicate its issue(s) and goal(s). When it comes to political persuasion, the message

can come in the form of the scripts that volunteers and canvassers must follow, or the words

on a pamphlet supporting a certain candidate. It is no easy task to decide what should be said

to convince an individual to change their mind, or to mobilize. What should be written on a

mailed flyer? How can a voter be convinced over the phone? Are facts or stories more

effective in swaying a respondent? This section will explore those questions and delve into

effective communication strategies and campaigns advertisement literature, as well as social

movement and political framing.

One of the important subset of the messaging literature relates to campaigns, since

they are centered on finding the most effective way to convince people to vote for their

respective candidate or support their issue. Often this literature debates whether messages in

advertisements or canvasses should use or not use a certain tone or strategy. I will examine

the following dichotomies in messaging effects—narrative verse numerical, negative verse

positive and partisan verse nonpartisan.

<u>Campaigns and Advertising</u>

There is a vast literature debating whether facts and figures or stories are more

persuasive. Generally, research highlights the notion that a personal story or narrative can

shift a person's beliefs and mobilize individuals more effectively and maintain the persuasion

for longer. However, the discussion is more complex than simply numbers versus stories. There are subheadings under the category of numerical evidence. For example, researchers examine the differences between statistics and percentages. As Yanna Krupnivok and Adam Levine discuss in their paper, "Political Issues, Evidence, and Citizen Engagement: The Case of Unequal Access to Affordable Health Care:" "not all forms of statistical evidence are alike."[95] Similarly, the concept of stories or narratives encapsulates a wide variety of messages, and with each there are different theories on why and how they are most effective.

What exactly is numerical evidence, which types are most effective, and in what contexts is it often utilized? Magdalena Wojcieszak and Kim Nuri describe numerical evidence as: "arguments that utilize numbers to advance a point of view, or 'empirically quantified descriptions of events, persons, places, or other phenomena.'"[96] Krupnikov and Levine specifically distinguish between raw numbers and percentages, noting that the former leads people to "conceptualize the problem in terms of a large group of nameless, faceless people," while the later creates a conceptualization that, "is in terms of a single person or a very small group of (identifiable) individuals."[97] For instance, one could describe the population of women in the U.S. as either 308 million (a raw number), or 50.8% of the total population (a percentage). They further highlight the importance of this distinction, by arguing that people are more likely to mobilize around an issue when they can understand it in terms of a struggling individual or small group, and they can view it in "concrete and affect-driven ways."[98] Therefore, they argue that raw numerical evidence will not heighten

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[95] Yanna Krupnikov and Adam Seth Levine, "Political Issues, Evidence, and Citizen Engagement: The Case of Unequal Access to Affordable Health Care," 2016, 20.
[96] Magdalena Wojcieszak and Nuri Kim, "How to Improve Attitudes Toward Disliked Groups The Effects of Narrative Versus Numerical Evidence on Political Persuasion," *Communication Research*, 2015, 787.
[97] Krupnikov and Levine, "Political Issues, Evidence, and Citizen Engagement: The Case of Unequal Access to Affordable Health Care," 4.
[98] Ibid.

issue engagement, whereas percentage evidence will. They delve even further and explain that percentages only increase issue engagement when they are larger; otherwise, individuals will not become more engaged. Krupnikov and Levine found that high percentages are not the only productive form of getting a message across. They also identified case stories, or personal narratives, as being effective.

Messages that use personal stories to exert persuasive influence are often categorized as "narrative persuasion." Hinyard and Kreuter define narrative as "any cohesive and coherent story with an identifiable beginning, middle, and end that provides information about scene, characters, and conflict; raises unanswered questions or unresolved conflict; and provides resolution."[99] Generally, research argues that this form of persuasion can engross a reader or listener and transport them into a different world. Krupnikov and Levine assert that case study evidence, or stories of a "particular, identified person or family facing a problem," enables people to think of a problem from a more micro perspective. These forms of evidence, which encourage individual-level conceptualizations of a problem, "can increase citizens' attitudinal and behavioral engagement." [100]

Interestingly, the literature on advertisements handles the fact and story divide slightly differently. Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar write about the "Craft of Political Advertising," and highlight the contrast between issue and image spots, or in product advertising terms—the hard sell and the soft sell. The hard sell "sticks with the facts," whereas the soft sell "plays on passions."[101] Though the issue-image divide is not

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[99] Anne Hamby, David Brinberg, and James Jaccard, "A Conceptual Framework of Narrative Persuasion," *Journal of Media Psychology*, August 26, 2016, 1.

[100] Krupnikov and Levine, "Political Issues, Evidence, and Citizen Engagement: The Case of Unequal Access to Affordable Health Care," 18.

[101] Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar, "The Craft of Political Advertising: A Progress Report," in *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*, ed. Diana C. Mutz, Paul M. Sniderman, and Richard A. Brody (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 109.

identical to the fact-story divide, it plays on a similar question of—is it better to appeal to a

person's rational or emotion? Ansolabehere and Iyengar find that while there is "no

consensus on the effectiveness of symbolic and substantive appeals," the premise itself is

flawed. They argue that, "the knowledge that voters have…conditions how they evaluate the

claims made in political advertisements and whether the advertisement is ultimately

persuasive."[102] Therefore, individuals are more likely to judge an advertisement by candidate

credibility (a concept discussed further in the messenger section).

Beyond the type of evidence, researchers of political advertisements often focus on

the tone of the message. Political advertisements, especially over the last few decades, have

become increasingly negative in nature, and the literature has accordingly focused on this

negative-positive divide. Krupnikov writes in a 2014 article titled, "How Negativity Can

Increase and Decrease Voter Turnout: The Effect of Timing," that, "over the last decade,

negative ads have not only grown to be one of the most frequently employed campaign

techniques, but media coverage of elections have increasingly fixated on negative

campaigning."[103] There are a number of theories as to why negativity in advertisements and

campaigning might prove more persuasive. Michael Cobb and James Kuklinski stipulate that,

"con arguments, those offered in opposition to a policy initiative, will hold more weight. All

else equal, in other words, public opinion will be biased toward the status quo." Their

argument hinges on the idea that people are averse to loss, and that negative information

stands out because it is less common than positive.[104] In their research, they identify the

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[102] Ibid., 110.

[103] Yanna Krupnikov, "How Negativity Can Increase and Decrease Voter Turnout: The Effect of Timing," *Political Communication* 31, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 446.

[104] Michael D. Cobb and James H. Kuklinski, "Changing Minds: Political Arguments and Political Persuasion," *American Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 1 (January 1997): 91.

interaction effects of hard and easy arguments on message tone. Hard arguments "tend to be long and complex, and focus primarily on the antecedents of a proposal," and are "largely factual and argumentative in content," easy arguments are: "short, simple, and symbolic, they conjure up readily accessible images. They also elicit more effect than hard arguments."[105] Cobb and Kuklinski find that "con arguments have more impact when they are combined with hard arguments, especially among politically aware subjects.[106]

An additional common dichotomy in political advertising is the partisan-nonpartisan divide. Costas Panagopoulos states that partisan messaging, as in—a politician asking constituents to vote for them—consists of "appeals attempting to persuade people to vote a particular way."[107] Nonpartisan messages, on the other hand, means that which appeals to people "to vote on the basis of civic duty."[108] Panagopoulos articulates that partisan messages might be more effective for three reasons: "First, partisan messages may provide a boost to turnout by giving citizens something for which to vote…Second, party labels may grant a campaign and canvassers added legitimacy and persuasiveness…Third, partisan campaigns may cause some voters to feel that they belong to a larger movement."[109] However, he ultimately finds that partisan ads have no impact on turnout.

An important factor in messaging relates to the timing of the messages. Although this is possibly also relevant to the medium section, the message's effects are inextricably tied to when they are transmitted to the constituent or voter. Additionally, much research has been

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[105] Ibid., 93.
[106] Ibid., 103.
[107] Costas Panagopoulos, "Partisan and Nonpartisan Message Content and Voter Mobilization: Field Experimental Evidence," *Political Research Quarterly*, 2008, 71, http://prq.sagepub.com/content/early/2008/07/08/1065912908316805.short.
[108] Ibid.
[109] D. W. Nickerson, "Partisan Mobilization Using Volunteer Phone Banks and Door Hangers," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 601, no. 1 (September 1, 2005): 11.

done to study how long a message's effects will last. Seth Hill et. all study the duration of persuasion effects conducting surveys using media market-level advertising data from the 2000 presidential election. They find that "most persuasion effects decay quickly, but that small effects survive six weeks and perhaps longer. The half-life of persuasion effects in the 2000 election is about four days."[110] However, this finding differs for lower level races, in which they conclude that, "advertising causes preference shifts that have half-lives of only one to two days and no discernible long-term survival."[111]

<u>Framing</u>

Aside from campaign advertisements, an alternate lens through which to understand message effects is framing. Framing is a concept in political science that, "help[s] to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function[s] to organize and guide action."[112] In other words, framing is the idea that a message is purposefully constructed by an actor in order to make it seem more important or convincing. That actor could be social movement organizations, the media, or politicians. They deliberately build a narrative and lens through which to explain a movement or issue. Frames are often discussed in terms of "frame in communication" (also known as media frame) or "frame in thought." The former refers to "the words, images, phrases and presentation styles that a speaker…uses when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience," while the later indicates "an individual's cognitive understanding of a given situation."[113] Essentially, "frames in thought" means how an individual thinks about a situation, whereas "frames in communication" refers to how

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[110] Seth J. Hill et al., "How Quickly We Forget: The Duration of Persuasion Effects From Mass Communication," *Political Communication* 30, no. 4 (October 1, 2013): 3.
[111] Ibid., 4.
[112] Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 614.
[113] Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, "A Theory of Framing and Opinion Formation in Competitive Elite Environments," *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 100–101.

some third party relays the issue to the individual. Essentially, the former is what a person thinks and the latter is what a speaker says.

Therefore, frames are dependent both on how the media, politicians or a social movement present an issue, as well as on how an individual interprets the given issue. Robert Benford and David Snow emphasize that framing is both "active," as in "something is being done," as well as "processual," meaning it is a "dynamic, evolving process—"[114] or, in other words, purposely constructed. Framing can be effective in individuals by creating new beliefs, making certain beliefs accessible, or "making beliefs applicable or 'strong' in people's evaluations," according to Chong and Druckman.[115] The literature around framing often questions how various organizations make beliefs "strong," or "applicable." An earlier work by Benford and Snow on framing highlights four different strategies employed by social movement organizations. These techniques include, in order from most reformist to most radical: bridging, amplification, extension and transformation.[116] Reformist implies that the technique connects to an already existing frame, while radical connotes a departure from an existing narrative. For example, Christian Right groups use bridging mailers to their constituents in which they connect their followers to other religious conservative groups.[117] On the other hand, groups like Hare Krishna rely on transformative frames in which they encourage followers to depart completely from their pasts.[118] These two examples illustrate three of the major questions concerning how frames operate: How constructed, or

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[114] Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements," 614.
[115] Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, "Framing Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 111.
[116] David A. Snow et al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 4 (August 1986): 467.
[117] Ibid., 468.
[118] Ibid., 476.

manipulated, are they (spontaneous or purposeful)? How ambitious are they (radical or reform)? What tools are they using (mailers, charismatic leaders)?

There are two major framing categories—equivalency and emphasis. My focus will be primarily on emphasis framing, which is where the more developed political science literature focuses. In the following section I will define both types of frames, analyze how frames interact with moderating effects and different types of issues, and examine when and how frames become stronger and more relevant. The literature on framing effects converges with social psychology and psychological theories on priming, behavior and influences. I will attempt to cover the most salient theories, but overall—despite the relationship between framing and psychology—my review avoids delving into the more complex psychological concepts.

Issue or emphasis frames, also referred to as value frames, work to shape an individual's understanding of a topic by shifting the weight given to some of its elements over others. Porismita Borah describes it as: "accentuating certain considerations in a message [that] can influence individuals to focus on those considerations."[119] Yu-Kang Lee and Chun-Tuan Chang expand on that definition: "issue framing is generally manipulated through stressing specific values, facts or considerations to endow people with apparent relevance to the issue." [120] For example, in the issue of abortion, there are a number of emphasis frames. The pro-choice movement might choose to focus on women's equality, choice, or public health, while the pro-life movement might frame the issue in terms of family values, religion, and morality.

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[119] Porismita Borah, "Conceptual Issues in Framing Theory: A Systematic Examination of a Decade's Literature," *Journal of Communication* 61, no. 2 (April 2011): 248.
[120] Yu-Kang Lee and Chun-Tuan Chang, "Framing Public Policy: The Impacts of Political Sophistication and Nature of Public Policy," *The Social Science Journal* 47, no. 1 (January 2010): 71.

Equivalency or valence frames, on the other hand, focus on the specific wording of a message. In equivalency frames, "an effect occurs when different, but logically equivalent, phrases cause individuals to alter their preferences. This typically involves casting the same information in either a positive or a negative light,"[121] according to Druckman (2004). Equivalency frames often relate to whether an issue is categorized by a positive story and facts or the converse. Equivalency frames prove important because, as Lee and Chang argue, "two logically equivalent (but not transparently equivalent) statements of a problem lead decision makers to choose different options."[122] Chong and Druckman give the example of stating "90% employment" versus "10% unemployment."[123]

Frames do not work in isolation; rather, frames interact with moderating variables that may augment or diminish the impact of the frame. As Borah puts it: "Framing effects are not universal; individual characteristics can shape the influence of frames."[124] These variables can include a person's values, knowledge, political sophistication and confidence. The literature on the effects of these variables is varied and at times contradictory. In general, researchers find that individuals with more firmly held convictions (as relating to any of the characteristics above), are less susceptible to framing effects. In a study on reaction to gay rights, Chong and Druckman find that "individuals who have strong values are less amenable to frames that contradict those values."[125] Similarly, they find that, "knowledgeable individuals tend to possess entrenched priors that, as mentioned, reduce susceptibility to framing. "[126] Lee and Chang study the moderating effect of political sophistication, which

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[121] James N. Druckman, "Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir) Relevance of Framing Effects," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (2004): 671.
[122] Lee and Chang, "Framing Public Policy," 71.
[123] Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory," 114.
[124] Borah, "Conceptual Issues in Framing Theory," 252.
[125] Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory," 111.
[126] Ibid., 112.

they describe as "an individual's prior familiarity with the political issues and his/her ability to think carefully and abstractly about politics."[127] As with the other variables, Lee and Chang propose that, "Less knowledgeable people possess fewer strongly held prior opinions (and frames) and thus exhibit increased susceptibility to new frames. Compared with audiences who are less sophisticated, those of high political sophistication are less likely to be persuaded by framed messages since they are already acutely aware of the facts and arguments."[128] Druckman (2004) also highlights the role of confidence in impacting a framing effect. He states: "increased confidence causes individuals to take actions based on their preferences, to deepen their commitment to their preferences, to ignore and not pursue additional information, and to resist persuasion."[129] The literature on the moderating variables is tautological—essentially, those who already have strong beliefs are less likely to have their beliefs changed or influenced by a particular message.

In addition to moderating variables, research on framing analyzes the impact of competing frames on the strength or effectiveness of a particular message. People are rarely exposed to just one frame; instead, they must distinguish between a number of frames and choose the one that is more applicable or consistent with their values or principles.[130] As Chong (1996) highlights in his argument for creating common frames of reference on political issues, "politics is typically competitive, fought between parties or ideological factions, and issues that are debated are framed in opposing terms. Individuals receive multiple frames with varying frequencies."[131] The frequency refers to how often the frame is

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[127] Ibid.
[128] Lee and Chang, "Framing Public Policy," 72.
[129] Druckman, "Political Preference Formation," 680.
[130] Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory," 113.
[131] Dennis Chong, "Creating Common Frames of Reference on Political Issues," in *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*, ed. Diana C. Mutz, Paul M. Sniderman, and Richard A. Brody (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 102.

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reiterated or restated. In the political arena, this could mean that if there are two candidates

running for office, individuals might hear one more frame with a higher frequency (through

more in-person contact, mailers, advertisements, etc.) than the other. The frequency at which

a frame is delivered might have an impact on how likely the individual is to follow it.

Some researches argue that a frame's strength relates to its appeal to a certain

individual. Essentially, a frame is strong if someone thinks it is. Frames can rarely be

universally stronger or superior than another. Chong and Druckman emphasize that, "Strong

frames often rest on symbols, endorsements, and links to partisanship and ideology, and may

be effective in shaping opinions through heuristics rather than direct information about the

substance of a policy."[132] Many players in society—from the media to politicians to social

movements—work to frame issues, but in competing against each other to create the most

appealing frame, they are not always concentrating on being factually correct. Lene Aarøe

(2011) argues, however, that frame strength is reliant on whether or not it is episodic or

thematic. Episodic frames portray specific events and concrete cases that elucidate an issue,

whereas thematic frames place political issues and events in a broader context and present

abstract and general evidence.[133] Aarøe finds that episodic frames can increase an

individual's "compassion, pity, anger, and disgust," therefore emphasizing the extant

literature that episodic frames are stronger in that they increase emotional arousal.[134] She

goes even further to argue that: "the use of thematic frames could possibly lower people's

emotional involvement compared to a situation where no frame is provided."[135] Frames often

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[132] Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory," 111.
[133] Lene Aarøe, "Investigating Frame Strength: The Case of Episodic and Thematic Frames," *Political Communication* 28, no. 2 (April 28, 2011): 209.
[134] Ibid., 216.
[135] Ibid.

strive to connect an individual to an issue, so it seems obvious that the frames that are more successful in reaching a person's emotions can be deemed "stronger."

When it comes to campaign messaging and framing, there is a lot of inconsistent literature. There are many ways to categorize a message—by tone, evidence and emotional appeal. Researchers also study the intervening role of variables such as time, individual characteristics, and opposing messages in the effectiveness of advertisements and framing. For all of the literature, some question how much the specific message really matters. Melissa Michelson (2003) argues that in regards to Latino get out the vote efforts, "altering the content of the delivered message does not significantly effect the power of the mobilization effort…it is not so much a matter of convincing Latinos that it is important for them to participate but that they need only to be asked."[136] Similarly, Donald Green and Alan Gerber stress that, "The message does not seem to matter much…although we cannot rule out the possibility that these variations in message and presentation make some difference, the effects seem to be so small that none of the studies were able to detect them reliably."[137] Importantly, both of these scholars are referencing efforts to mobilize individuals to vote. They highlight that while certain frames or message characteristics might hold more sway than others, just being contacted can increase a person's likelihood to act. Still, the specific differences in a message might hold more influence in a person's likelihood to change their mind or beliefs. Additionally, the message effects can only be understood in conjunction with messenger and medium effects. A message might be a relevant factor in determining whether an individual believes in something or mobilizes around an issue, however, it is likely that the variations in the messenger or medium hold more sway.

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[136] Michelson, "Getting out the Latino Vote," 258.
[137] Green and Gerber, *Get out the Vote*, 34.

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The literature on framing is also lacking in relation to Planned Parenthood's canvassing efforts in a few important ways. The existing literature is focused mainly on specific issues, as in recycling campaigns or civil rights activism. Although Planned Parenthood's canvass is ostensibly about abortion, it also attempts to deal with deeper cognitive questions. In speaking with individuals, the canvassers are working to not only destigmatize abortion, but to also create a broader dialogue about attitude change. The current literature in political science on framing, even if it is about persuasion, often includes a mobilization aspect. After all, persuasion is challenging to measure without the action component. A vote or a donation is a more measurable sign of an individual's beliefs. However, Planned Parenthood's canvass evades the ultimate mobilization goal, and thus opens a new question within the literature on framing: what happens when the end goal is amorphous?

<u>Conclusion</u>

The literature on political persuasion and mobilization is far-reaching and extensive, but it is also often contradictory. Ultimately, there are many factors at play, and studies show conflicting results because the circumstances are slightly different every time. As shown in the chart at the beginning, mobilization and persuasion are influenced by the medium, messenger and message effects, as well as by individual-level factors. For example, in-person canvassing might have a different impact in GOTV efforts in a rural population than an urban one. Or, frames might hold more sway if the individual is less educated. None of the three M effects exist in a vacuum. Rather, they are both interactive and additive. They influence one

another, and they build on each other to increase or decrease the likelihood of persuasion or mobilization.

While the results may seem amorphous and inconsistent, there are some important takeaways. In-person contact seems to be the most effective medium, whether the goal be mobilization or persuasion. While there are negatives to this form of communication, mostly related to cost, the benefits seem higher when compared to the other forms of outreach. In terms of messenger, it seems evident that the visible characteristics of the messenger play an important role. That role can be counter-productive in the form of interviewer bias. Or, it could be helpful. For example, when canvassers from a certain demographic are reaching out to individuals from that same demographic. Finally, the message seems to have the least impact on individuals; although, there are certain frames and wordings that seem more successful than others. Narrative persuasion and personal stories seems to be more effective than purely numerical evidence. This concept is emphasized in campaign advertisement literature through the idea of the "soft sell." Additionally, timing plays an important role in mobilization, especially in relation to GOTV efforts.

The research provides invaluable insight into the world of political persuasion and mobilization. Some of it, however, has already been done by Planned Parenthood itself. The literature in some ways echoes the trial-and-error work of many social and political organizations and campaigns. Planned Parenthood of Maine Action Fund tried phone calls, only to realize that door-to-door canvasses allowed for higher response rates and more comfortable conversations. They used to rely more on facts and figures, only to discover that personal stories seemed to have a bigger impact on respondents. As much as they can, they try to get canvassers who have had abortions to be open and share those personal

experiences. Not only are they using the literature that exists, but they are also expanding on it. Their canvassing effort breaks into relatively new territory in the realm of political persuasion. It holds important relevance in the field of persuasion as it relates specifically to the more amorphous goals of de-stigmatization and attitude change. In the next section, I will further expand on those goals and identify the ways in which the canvass breaks from the research and the ways in which it supports it.

Training Ground:
An Assessment of PPMEAF's Abortion Stigma Reduction Canvass

The chart from the previous chapter has another layer. The variations in medium, message and messenger are neither created in a vacuum nor random. Rather, they are purposely constructed by organizations in order to establish the most effective effort. Just as I discussed the ways in which actors specifically frame messages to induce the strongest impact, so too do organizations strategically plan the medium and messenger components of a canvass. There are a number of considerations that an organization considers in determining the type of M/M/M. Resources are important. A canvass is often costlier than a phone-bank, a phone-bank costlier than social media. Therefore, an organization must consider financial resources as well as volunteer capacity. Additionally, organizations often want to engage in efforts that mimic their mission and goals. Therefore, an organization like Planned Parenthood, for example, that has a national reputation and engages in political and civic discourse from a non-radical perspective, is more likely to engage in a canvass effort

that is not highly contentious. The personalities of the specific branch of the organization are important as well. One individual might spearhead the canvass, which might be more possible in a place like Maine that is more independent because of its smaller size. For Planned Parenthood of Maine Public Affairs (PPMEAF), Aimee Martin—Data Manager—and Nicole Clegg—Vice-President—took the helm. Therefore, an organization's efforts must be evaluated within the context of its organizational makeup. In the following section I work to evaluate the canvass as it relates to the peculiarities of PPMEAF.

Voters in Maine are used to canvasses—on everything from marriage equality to local elections. Yet, on August 29th of 2015 PPMEAF, embarked on a canvass that they claimed to be revolutionary, in both its distinctive nature and its ability to bring about change. This project was called Abortion Stigma Reduction Canvassing (ABSR), also referred to as deep canvassing. In their own words in a newsletter written by Nicole Clegg, Vice President of Public Policy: "We are breaking new ground, and we have a chance to change hearts and minds through meaningful one-on-one conversations." Over the course of one year, PPMEAF engaged in 30 canvasses, which resulted in 2,321 doors knocked and 618 conversations.

Throughout those canvasses they kept extensive notes of their efforts and conversations. At the beginning and end of every in-person conversation, they asked for a response to the question, "on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in the middle are some regulations, where would you put yourself?" The difference between the number given at the end and the one given at the beginning is the change rate. It is a measurement of success in both my own and PPMEAF's eyes. According to internal data

analysis by PPMEAF, they state that this change rate was 55% by the end of their canvassing in August of 2016. This means that 55% of those canvassed changed their number from the beginning to the end of the canvass, although this excludes individuals who started at a 10. Though this scale will be further dissected in the next chapter, the claim is impressive. How did a small branch of Planned Parenthood in Maine, in only a year, establish a massive canvass with suggestive data of its ability to effectively destigmatize abortion? The answer: with a lot of help, a little imitation, and a good amount of trial-and-error.

From 2009 to 2013, the Leadership LAB conducted over 12,000 conversations with voters who voted for Proposition 8 in California. The Leadership LAB is an organization in Los Angeles that organizes against anti-LGBT prejudice. Proposition 8 was a ballot initiative in 2008 to add a constitutional amendment to California's constitution stating that, "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California."[138] The Leadership LAB was hoping through the canvassing conversations to convince voters for Prop 8 to change their mind about the amendment, and to be more in favor of gay rights and marriage equality. Over the course of those conversations they experimented with various canvassing techniques and created over 150 iterations of their script until they landed on one that they believed worked. In collaboration with political scientists, they attempted to analyze the effectiveness of this canvass. This research by Michael LaCour and Donald Green argued that these 20-minute conversations from LGBT volunteers lastingly changed voters' minds on same-sex marriage and reduced their anti-gay prejudice. This study was soon thereafter discredited for using false data, as described in the introductory chapter, but a new canvass was already underway. This time, it was about abortion. In collaboration with Planned

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[138] "What Is Prop 8?," accessed April 23, 2017, https://mic.com/articles/31061/what-is-prop-8.

Parenthood, the Leadership LAB attempted to apply the same canvassing technique from the Prop 8 efforts to increasing support for abortion. In their own words, "we wanted to create a canvassing model in which a variety of motivated people can have conversations with all types of voters, even self-identified 'pro-life,' Republican and conservative voters, and with people who start out telling us they 'don't believe in abortion.'" (pg 7) They tried to achieve this by asking the canvassers to share true stories from their lives about abortion, birth control, sexuality and relationships, and then asking the voters to do the same. While the methodological findings from this study were inconclusive, and the retraction of the LaCour and Green piece halted much of the efforts of the LAB, the groundwork was already put in place for other groups to pick it up. That is where Planned Parenthood of Maine comes in.

Aimee Martin, Data Manager, and Nicole Clegg, all of Planned Parenthood Maine Action Fund, were at a conference in D.C. in December of 2014. They were looking for new ideas after the recent reelection of Republican Governor Paul LePage, a supporter of anti-abortion legislation. They attended a presentation by the Leadership LAB on marriage equality deep canvassing, in which they were discussing the findings from the then recent LaCour and Green piece. Martin says:

> Nicole and I looked at each other and we said we have to do this. For multiple reasons...one, Maine is a state where canvassing is a thing that people do on everything. People are used to opening their doors and talking to people. Two...we knew Mainers would have twenty minute conversations about really personal things, like marriage and abortion. And, three, I had already worked with them on the project in Los Angeles so I knew the people that had done the study and I knew the process and everything.[139]

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[139] This quote comes from an interview I conducted with Aimee Martin in February 2016. Throughout the following chapter I incorporate quotes from that interview. I also interviewed Christopher (Chris) Richards, a canvasser for Planned Parenthood. That interview is quoted throughout as well.

They returned to Maine ready to replicate the work of the Leadership LAB. Just as they begin to sketch out their ideas for an abortion canvass run by Planned Parenthood of Maine Action Fund (PPMEAF), however, the original study is discredited. They put a pause on their project to reevaluate, but Martin emphasizes that they still had faith in the project. After reflection, they decided to go ahead with their efforts anyway, and PPMEAF launched its first Abortion Stigma Reduction Canvass (ABSR) on August 29th 2015.

The Model - The Leadership Lab

The ABSR was thus originally conceived as a replication of the Leadership LAB's marriage equality and abortion canvassing. In a letter to its community members, PPMEAF describe its canvass as following:

> The Abortion Stigma Reduction Canvass Campaign helps volunteers be empowered to talk about reproductive health and abortion with their community members. This unique project is currently the only of its kind in the country on the subject of abortion care access and is designed to use empathy building through personal storytelling as a means to reduce the stigma of abortion. Canvasses are led each Saturday, in different areas of the state, with teams of highly trained volunteers who are collecting quantitative as well as qualitative data on voter viewpoints.

The language closely mirrors that of the Leadership LAB's 2014 year-end report. The LAB's report states: "each of our canvassers shared true stories from their lives about abortion, birth control, sexuality, and relationships, and we asked voters to tell us stories from their lives about the same topics" (29). Starting from the LAB's framework of sharing stories to reduce abortion stigma, PPMEAF began to work on the logistics of the canvass. The organization set initial field goals at total of 16,8000 doors knocked, 3,360 conversations and 845 volunteer shifts over the course of 12 canvasses across Southern and Mid-coast Maine. The actual numbers came nowhere near that many.

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After a few months of canvassing, Planned Parenthood hit another roadblock. In January of 2016, scientific data from Los Angeles reanalyzing the impact of the abortion canvassing of the Leadership LAB came back with a null result. At this juncture, Planned Parenthood decided to take a moment to reorganize. Yet, they still believed in their work and the whole setup was operational, so instead of scraping the project PPMEAF went on to update and adapt their script and canvassing methods. As Martin puts it, they began to "think outside of the box to have these kinds of conversations and what to say." That is when they began to shift to educating not only the voters[140], but the volunteers themselves.

Canvassers

Who exactly were these volunteers? Unlike in many of the studies of GOTV canvassing conducted by political scientists Alan Gerber and Donald Green, PPMEAF used unpaid volunteers. PPMEAF had its volunteers participate in an informal feedback form, but only 19 of them participated. The low response rate is likely due to the lack of insistence by the organization and lack of incentive to participate. However, the answers available provide insight into the canvassers' experiences canvassing and their reasoning for engaging in the work in the first place. The canvassers are asked why they decided to canvass, if they would do it again, and what their conversations with voters were like. One question stated: "What made you interested in signing up for the canvass project?" Answers ranged from urgency around abortion advocacy to interest in the opportunity and project. One canvasser who participated in 5 canvasses, stated that they participated because: "changing worldview/making a long-lasting impact – different than any type of canvassing I have ever

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[140] I use the word "voter" when discussing the individuals being canvassed, even though they are not explicitly voting for anything. The word mimics the language from the Leadership LAB, in which they were specifically targeting voters for Prop 8. PPMEAF uses the word voter to describe these individuals as well. Some of the literature refers to those being canvassed as respondents, which is analogous to my use of the word "voters."

done." Another who had only done one canvass wrote: "Lindsay [a PP employee] invited me but also I thought the idea of talking to people about abortion especially for such a good reason actually sounded like something I would enjoy." That same canvasser, when asked on a scale of 0-10, 0 representing would never canvass again and 10 being would love to participate again, she gave a 10. Her reason was that: "the experience I had the one time I was able to canvass was so positive." In their summary report, PPMEAF highlights the passion of the canvassers: "The volunteers who have canvassed with us have LOVED it." By placing an emphasis on the desire of the canvassers to engage with this work, PPMEAF is able to sidestep the literal cost of canvassing, which Gerber and Green calculate as an average $15 hourly wage. The organization stresses that many of the canvassers find the canvass to be enjoyable and meaningful.

Using volunteers as opposed to paid canvassers has another long-term effect. Martin points to the role of canvassers in helping build a sustainable volunteer base. She says that "why we started the [ABSR] program was because we wanted to build volunteer capacity for the 2016 election. So, we wanted to build volunteer teams. We wanted to build a movement of folks doing this and paid canvassers aren't a movement." Although it is possible that paid canvassers could be just as successful in an individual canvass as unpaid volunteers, PPMEAF was thinking long-term. The canvass might have a stronger impact on volunteers than on paid canvassers, because they could become more emotionally connected to the work. The canvassers might better spread the effects of the de-stigmitization beyond the conversations at the door. Also, Martin highlights an important aspect of volunteers over paid canvassers which is oft ignored in the literature. An organizational event, like a canvass, might have the capacity to build a volunteer base that goes beyond that specific event.

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Volunteers that are engaged through canvassing might be more likely to participate in future events and donate to the organization.

Additionally, if an organization can build up its credibility through multiple canvasses, each canvasser can capitalize on the credibility effect discussed by Carl Hovland and Walter Weiss, as well as Mark Joslyn and Donald Haider-Markel. The political scientists argue that a messenger must be deemed credible or trustworthy by the respondent so that the message can be communicated effectively. Often, sources that are considered to be experts—like journalists and professors—are more likely to be seen as credible. Melissa Michelson also highlights the variability of credibility effect, to show that each community has its own understanding of a credible source. In her research, the canvassers introduced themselves as Fresno State students because it was expected to increase the likelihood of individuals to speak with the students because of the good reputation of the school in the community.[141] In the case of PPMEAF, there is the possibility that more canvasses could increase the credibility of the organization through a more visible community presence. Conversely, it could frustrate individuals and decrease the credibility of the organization and its canvassers, thus decreasing the effectiveness of the message.

An important aspect of the LaCour and Green study is the contact between voters and gay canvassers. The research revolves around the contact hypothesis—that interaction between two groups can diminish hostility and prejudice. For PPMEAF to carry over the effects of this study would mean to use canvassers with specific experiences with the organization and abortion. The canvassers were not preselected or recruited, and so the organization was forced to work within the confines of the experiences of the volunteers.

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[141] Michelson, "Getting out the Latino Vote," 251.

Instead of requiring volunteers who have had abortions, PPMEAF broadened the spectrum of personal stories. Martin claims that there were about 7 canvassers who had had abortions and shared those stories, but that the canvassers could also share the personal stories of friends and families. In the training outlines, a major portion of the session is dedicated to identifying and developing personal stories. In an "Intro to ABSR Training Outline," under the heading of "Personal Stories", the prompts include "Who here learned about sex from their parents?" and "who here has ever bought condoms before- for yourself or a friend?" with follow-ups asking how that felt. The outline continues with the sub-heading "Commonality", which states:

> Most of us raised our hands for one of those questions and I bet if we kept talking about experiences with sex and sexuality, we would find even more experiences, both shared and personal, on these issues. But many of us don't talk about these experiences because of embarrassment, shame, or stigma.

PPMEAF utilizes an expanded version of contact theory, which allows for canvassers of all backgrounds to function successfully in the canvass. They are still exposing the voter to contact with an out-group; in this case, that group being individuals who have had abortions or been reliant on Planned Parenthood. However, the stories were not necessarily their own. The canvassers were not fabricating stories, but they were encouraged to listen to other people's experiences in the trainings and communicate them with the voters. As far as is observable through interviews and watching recorded footage from several canvass conversations, they did not claim that those stories were their own. Beyond sharing narratives about their experiences with Planned Parenthood or reproductive health care, the canvassers were also taught to share personal stories about changing their mind in general. Again, based on interviews and recorded footage, each canvasser seems to maintain a similar script between each canvass. Although the conversations differ between canvassers because the

stories they share are different, each canvasser him/herself has a relatively similar script each time.

<u>Trainings</u>

PPMEAF began to place an emphasis on reducing entrenched stigmas even within individuals who seem supportive of abortion access—starting with the canvassers themselves. In conjunction with a political scientist, Adam Levine, whom they brought on board a few months into their canvassing efforts, they understood the need for "biographing our own stigmas." In that sense, they had canvassers share with voters that they too had stigmas and were able to change their minds, thus, according to Martin, "creating dialogue with voters so they can see…this person isn't perfect either so let's change our minds together." In a newsletter by Nicole Clegg on the canvass, entitled, "Changing the Conversation: Innovative Social Change Canvassing," she writes: "we realized that our volunteers didn't know enough about abortion to counter the myths voters were citing. So, we started teaching abortion facts to our volunteers." Before the canvasses themselves even began, PP focused first on trainings with the volunteers.

The volunteer trainings focus on developing personal stories and assuaging nerves. Firstly, Planned Parenthood expresses acknowledgment of the role of nerves in a volunteer's performance when canvassing. The Leadership LAB similarly stresses the relevancy of canvasser nerves, since in their updated 2016 report they state: "we improved elements of the canvass training and added new ones, including normalizing canvasser nervousness, which before then went unacknowledged."[142] They continue later in the report to identify three essential layers of persuasion: "1) the canvasser has to build a great rapport; 2) share their

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[142] Laura Gardiner and Dave Fleischer, "We're Still Talking...Progress to Date Applying Deep Persuasion Canvassing to Increase Support for Safe and Legal Abortion" (The Leadership LAB, June 10, 2016), 8.

own personal stories; and 3) elicit a personal story from the voter that carries emotional weight for that voter."[143] The first two rely on training canvassers to be comfortable, charismatic, and have personal stories of significance. The PPMEAF trainings differ, and they had separate documents ranging from handouts to PowerPoint slides to easel presentations for each canvass event. This is a methodological drawback to its canvassing efforts, although the variation seems minimal. Typically, however, the trainings have multiple parts that include informative and interactive components. They start with introductions, which include community norms and go arounds. They then discuss urgency, and go into a brief discussion about the current landscape for reproductive rights. Often, they then go into a discussion about ABSR and why its unique. In some trainings they show a video of a sample canvass and then critique the conversation, and sometimes they go straight into fleshing out their own personal stories. Most of the trainings also include practice between volunteers, where they role-play situations and give feedback.

Additionally, the trainings also involve a discussion of stigmas—addressing common abortion stigmas and how to combat them. In the introduction, I discussed the role of abortion specifically as an issue that can or cannot be changed in the minds of voters through this technique. Some scholars argue that because abortion is more entrenched, it might not be susceptible to these conversations in the way that transgender rights are. Martin dismisses the notion that abortion nullifies the effectiveness of this type of canvassing, but she does state that it requires an added layer of complexity and education. She says, "I think [ABSR] does require a little more nuance than the typical [canvass] because there is so much more misinformation." She highlights that, "not only are voters misinformed about what the

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[143] Ibid., 16.

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realities are on abortion, but so were our volunteers." One of the volunteers, Christopher

Richards, who participated in at least 6 canvasses, created a write-up of the three most

common stigmas he encountered in conversation. These included: "abortion as birth control,"

"minors should need parent permission," and "abortion is murder." Although the deep

canvassing is meant to be a two-sided conversation with open-ended questions, the PPMEAF

team believed that it was necessary to arm its canvassers with tools to combat these

entrenched stigmas—not only with the voters but within the canvassers themselves. An entire

document from the January 9th, 2016 canvass included different graphics explaining the

stigmas, such as: "women shouldn't have sex without dealing with the consequences" and

"women can't be trusted to make own decisions (sex, abortion, life, everyday)." Therefore, as

PP discussed in their final report, they had to teach the abortion facts to the volunteers,

because "our volunteers didn't know enough about abortion to counter the myths voters were

citing." To "counter the myths," the organization used a mix of facts and storytelling. They

worked in trainings to understand and disprove what they believed to be common stigmas,

while also getting the canvassers to search for stories within their own lives which could

contradict concepts that they argued were commonly held misconceptions. According to

PPMEAF, the trainings not only helped the volunteers to find their own personal "voice," but

also to learn facts and stories that aligned with the organization and assist in a more

productive de-stigmatization of abortion.

The Script

What exactly do those conversations look like, and how they did they evolve over

time? While the blueprint for each canvass remained the same, the scripts evolved slightly

over time. All versions of the script are in the Appendix under Figure 2. There are a few

major changes in terms of topics discussed, and minor specific wording varied with each canvass. All of the canvasses relied on conversations that consisted of essentially three different components—1) a feeling thermometer at the beginning and end of the conversation in which the voter ranked themselves from 0 to 10 in terms of access to legal abortion, 2) Personal stories from the voters, in which the canvasser is trying to understand why the voter feels the way he/she does, and 3) the canvassers share their own stories with reproductive health care, stigmas, and changing their minds in order to create a connection and allow for inter-group understanding and perspective taking. Underneath the heading of personal stories, the scripts break it down into the following categories, with the title "EXPLORE:" "Experiences with sex and relationships," "Experiences with abortion & unplanned pregnancy," and "experiences with judgment vs. support." For the most part, the canvassers have two or three stories that they rely on and utilize in each conversation.

Those headings came in different orders in different canvasses, and the questions within each section were constantly being tweaked. For example, for the canvass on April 9th 2016 in Bath, Maine, they decided to add "who helped you get it?" after the question, "when you first needed birth control, what options were available to you?" Additionally, for their April 16th canvass, a week later, they add the question "who's the person you love most in the world." They then replace this in the next canvass with "are you married? Do you have kids or grandkids?" PPMEAF continued to design the ideal formula for asking questions to yield open and considerate conversation. However, the keenness on finding the perfect wording seems antithetical to the very nature of the canvassing strategy—which is a go-with-the-flow type of back-and-forth. Also, as Gerber and Green discuss in the literature around effective messaging strategies, the specificity of language often has a much more minimal

impact than the act of the canvass itself. Simply put, all of the script fine-tuning might not matter that much, because the medium holds weight over the message. The Leadership LAB in their 2016 report described persuasion as keys, whereby "each of these new parts of the script represented a key that we hoped might have the potential to 'unlock the voter'…when we tried several of them, we increased the odds that one key would finally help the voter open up." Indeed, PPMEAF seems to have been employing a similar strategy of testing out different questions and wordings—a search for the right "key" to the voter's heart.

Also, the way in which the canvassers introduced themselves evolved over time. For the first canvass, they identified themselves as Planned Parenthood Maine Action Fund, but found that the mention of the organization's name cut the conversations short. Therefore, they began to state, "I'm ____, with Maine Action Fund," instead. Although this could raise ethical concerns about their lack of transparency with voters, they stressed that they were not being disingenuous. Martin stated that canvassers were encouraged to be open with voters if they asked who they were with, but not to offer the information if it was not requested.

Essentially, the scripts are a framework that allow for two-way conversations about reproductive health and stigmas. Canvasser Richards states: "the best part of the conversation was keeping them conversations…the only way they [listen] is if you can lead them to it, with the right amount of psychology and compassion." According to Martin, the conversations are an attempt to force the voters to defend why they think the way they do, in the hopes that they will realize that what they are saying is "hypocritical."

Door-to-Door & Follow-up Phone Calls

A staple of the deep canvassing conversations is the face-to-face interaction component, although there are drawbacks to in-person canvassing. Even in this case, Planned Parenthood first tried out phone calls. Unfortunately, as Martin states, "we got hung up most often when we would say, 'hey how do you feel about abortion 0-10?" As she points out, individuals are often much nicer in person, and around an issue as controversial as abortion, the organizers needed to assuage the hostility. The preeminence of door-to-door canvassing underscores the academic literature, which overwhelmingly points to this type of canvassing as being the most effective. Most of the research attributes the higher success rate of in-person canvassing to the nature of the depth of conversation possible at the door. Lisa Bedolla and Melissa Michelson also identify an interactive component as being necessary to "elicit the cognitive shifts" required to change an individual's voting behavior.[144] Even though in the case of PP the target is not voting behavior but rather stigma reduction, there is no reason to believe that same theory would not apply.

Therefore, door-to-door canvassing's effectiveness can be viewed as two-fold. First, it has a higher rate of response, as in the likelihood that people will engage in a conversation, over phone calls or online communication. Individuals are much less likely to slam a door in someone's face than they are to hang up a phone after they heard the words "abortion" or "Planned Parenthood". Along with this idea comes the concept of respect—when a canvasser is showing up on a person's doorstep they are forced to respect the space of the voter. This could create a sense of understanding that one could not get on the phone, and could also endow the voter with a sense of agency (I'm choosing to participate in this conversation, as

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[144] Bedolla and Michelson, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*, 54.

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opposed to being forced) and comfort that allows for a more successful two-way conversation. The canvasser Christopher Richards, emphasizes that the interactions are based in "mutual respect," and requires, "recognizing that you're in someone else's space." After all, he points out, "They have every right to ask you to leave, for whatever reason."

Secondly, as the scholarly work suggests, the conversations themselves are more likely to sway voters to change their minds. Conversations with a real person face-to-face are more likely to induce "cognitive shifts" and help the voter to empathize with the canvasser and their stories. Martin also emphasizes that deep canvassing is built on two-way conversations that include open-ended conversations and sharing personal stories. She believes that this type of outreach has a stronger durability effect. In comparison to a leaflet, Martin highlights that, "long-term change would not be effected by that leaflet because it did not dig into [the voters'] personal lives." Unfortunately, their data around the permanence of their efforts is limited, thereby making it challenging to assess the validity of this claim. However, based on cognitive shift research, there seems to be a good probability that her statement could ring true. While PPMEAF believes in the benefits that come with this type of canvassing, there are weaknesses as well.

According to political scientists Donald Gerber and Alan Green, two of the biggest shortcomings of in-person canvassing are cost and time. They analyze the cost-effectiveness of GOTV campaigns and find that each canvasser can make around six direct contacts and three indirect contacts each hour.[145] The actual rate of Planned Parenthood's canvass seems much lower than that, and has turned out to be much lower than even their own estimates (Appendix Figure 1). They produced a field goal assessment at the beginning of 2016 after

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[145] Green and Gerber, *Get out the Vote*, 36.

having completed a few preliminary canvasses in the fall. They estimated that they could

knock on 214 doors in their first April canvass with 60 conversations and 15 volunteer shifts,

and then two canvassers later they would add on 5 volunteers for a total of 100 conversations

and 357 doors. They predicted an almost exponential increase both in the number of

volunteers, as well as doors knocked and conversations had. Their final estimate came to a

total of 11,000 doors, 3080 conversations, 770 volunteer shifts. In actuality, for the fall and

summer of 2016, they reached 1,547 doors, had 407 conversations and 138 volunteer shifts—

significantly smaller numbers than their initial goals.

They had assumed that through the canvasses they could build a volunteer base that

would be more effective at recruiting new volunteers and persuading canvassers. This

canvassing tidal wave never came into effect, however, illustrating the challenges associated

with recruiting volunteers and coordinating a large-scale canvassing effort. Martin points out

that they had to reevaluate that initial number multiple times, because it was too hard to get

that many volunteers and the conversations were longer than previously predicted. She also

states that there was a particular struggle for volunteers for this canvass because it was an

election year, and so potential volunteers were pulled between different canvasses by

different organizations. To illustrate, in the canvass on April 2nd of 2016 in Lewiston, eight

canvassers turned out for a total of 149 doors knocked and 27 conversations. In their final

canvass four months later on August 11th, 2016, they only had four canvassers for a total of

25 doors knocked and 6 conversations. However, Planned Parenthood uses unpaid

volunteers, rather than hired canvassers, which helps reduce the literal cost of the canvassing.

Although not as massive (in terms of canvassers and conversation rates) as they had

previously hoped, a very low budget still makes the canvass seem productive in terms of cost-benefit analysis.

A discussion of door-to-door canvassing would be incomplete without an analysis of the relevance of location. The literature discusses this component mostly as it relates to the impact of other factors. Francisco Flores-Macias and Chappell Lawson discuss how the role of interviewer gender on survey responses changes between Mexico City and the countryside. Melissa Michelson also utilizes location in her analysis of GOTV efforts of Latino populations, arguing that message effects can be augmented when coming from a canvasser from the same neighborhood as the voter.

The role of place is even more important in PPMEAF's understanding of their canvassing. Martin highlights that the distinctiveness of Maine allows for canvassing that is less hostile and therefore more effective. She states that, "Maine is a state where canvassing is a thing that people do on everything." However, she also emphasizes that there are a number of older male Republican voters, who often pose a greater challenge for the young female canvassers (who represent the majority of the volunteer positions). Additionally, the more rural nature of parts of Maine (especially in comparison to Los Angeles, where the Leadership LAB conducted their initial marriage equality study. That study served as the basis for PPMEAF's canvass), could account for the low numbers of doors knocked and conversations.

Although the focus was mainly on these in-person canvasses, PPMEAF also followed-up with the individuals who they interviewed through phone calls. Those conversations occurred around 6 weeks later. They attempted to contact voters multiple times in order to get higher response rates. The data on this aspect is much more limited, with only

a total of 49 phone conversations. Statistics done by an intern for the organization calculated that 26 changed their "number," as in their feeling thermometer number on access to abortion that they gave at the end of their canvassed conversation. However, of those 26, only 11 actually increased their support for abortion access. This means that more people decreased their number after the conversation than increased their number. In PPMEAF's own memo, they stated a 28.6% higher rating in voters during the call back as compared to their first rating at the start of the canvass, yet they caution that this is "based on limited data." These phone conversations are an important way to test the lasting effect of the persuasion canvassing; however, the current material is too incomplete to allow for a thorough analysis.

Success?

At first, PPMEAF thought that 11,000 doors knocked was their goal. As they began to reevaluate that specific number, PPMEAF also worked to reevaluate their understanding of what constituted success in general. They began to look at the canvass less as an effort to build a massive movement, but rather to take victory in each individual perspective change. As Martin puts it, "success changed to being that we would have a 25% move rate from where our voter started at the beginning of the conversation to where our voter started at the end of the conversation." Importantly, in their progress report statistics, their first emphasized takeaway is "change of opinion rate." Mobilization efforts, such as voting habits or bringing in new volunteers, are not emphasized.

Still, when success is to be viewed as the change rate, it is unclear how well they are doing. According to data conducted in-house by one of their summer interns, out of 143 conversations in the fall of 2015, only 19 people changed their end number in a positive

direction. In the spring, 50 out of 359 changed their number from lower to higher. In total, that means they achieved a 13.7% positive move rate. Although not trivial, without verifiable data of follow-up phone calls or some form of mobilization (voting patterns or volunteer involvement), it is hard to determine whether those number changes are concrete and enduring. It is entirely possible that someone who gave a "4" at the beginning of a conversation decides to give a "5" at the end, out of respect or obligation for the canvasser. And they also emphasize that abortion has many moving targets of opposition. To "destigmatize" the issue, according to PPMEAF, requires more than just breaking down one misconception, but rather disrupting a host of common stigmas, which is likely challenging over the course of one 10-15 minute conversation. Importantly, this highlights the ways in which different issues are susceptible to different persuasion efforts. While PPMEAF believes in the effectiveness of the in-person campaign, perhaps it is more challenging to de-stigmatize an issue in this way because of its supposed multi-faceted stigmas.

For the most part, PPMEAF and its volunteers suggest that the conversations, regardless of whether the voter change their mind, has some sort of impact by bringing the topic of abortion into public discourse. One canvasser, April, in a reflection about her canvass on June 16th, 2016, stated that she was talking with a woman who was a "7" and considered herself pro-choice but was concerned about testing that's done on fetal tissue. Throughout the conversation, they discussed TV commercials about fetuses, how the voter brought her own daughter into a health center to get birth control, and harassment at clinics, and April states that, "she did not change her number, but I felt like that was really impacting towards the end." A similar sentiment comes up in a recorded debrief conversation, in which Martin asks the volunteers: "Did anyone have someone who stayed at the same number but

you know you made an impact on them today?" In that same tone, another canvasser's

story—this time highlighted by PPMEAF themselves in their progress report—states that:

"although [the voter] did not change her '3' rating that day, I felt that she had opened her

mind on the issue.'" This time, however, "When we spoke to [the voter] again during the

call-back, she had reflected more on the conversation and changed her rating to a "10.""

Importantly, PPMEAF evaluates its own success beyond the specific number change. While

this could be a valuable aspect of the canvassing, it poses quite a challenge for political

science, in that there is little to study from invisible impact.

PPMEAF's evaluation of its own success places a critique on existing literature,

because there is limited scholarship on organizations that engage in amorphous big-level

change. Understandably, political scientists must measure something. However, it seems that

even when researchers are studying persuasion, they are doing so with some sort of

mobilization benchmark. For example, the Donald Green and Michael LaCour piece was

trying to change voters' minds about marriage equality in relation to Proposition 8—a

tangible piece of legislation.

Another important aspect of the canvassing, one that is more an indirect than explicit

result, is the way in which it helps the volunteers themselves become more comfortable with

talking about abortion and understanding the related stigmas. In a sense, the canvassers are

more than volunteers for PPMEAF, but rather missionaries for the abortion rights. As

PPMEAF writes in their progress report, "Deep canvassing empowers volunteers to engage

confidently and effectively in persuasion work, and share their stories more widely –

influencing their personal lives and their future advocacy efforts." When asked in a survey

follow-up to canvassers, "did your conversations with voters have an impact on how you

speak with or listen to people now?" many of the volunteers stated yes. Although only 19 canvassers participated in this follow-up, which also likely skew the data towards canvassers who are more involved with the project and found it to be more influential, some of the answers are still telling. One canvasser writes, "Yes. It definitely makes me less combative and more understanding of why and how their thoughts on abortion came to be." The canvasses seem to have an impact on those who participate, although data analysis on this measure would be beneficial.

PPMEAF is starting up the canvass again in the summer of 2017. However, other branches have yet to get on board. One must question why not, seeing as the Maine branch of Planned Parenthood seems to think it is so effective. Here comes again the role of organizational culture, types and resources. The specifics of the Maine branch, in terms of the entrepreneurial spirit of some of the leaders, as well as funding sources, allows for it to engage in this canvass whereas other branches cannot. It would be interesting for further research to see the success of this canvass beyond Maine.

Appendix

Figure 1. Field Goals Spreadsheet created by PPMEAF in the beginning of 2016

"Doors" indicates the number of doors knocked, "conversations" refer to discussions with voters that last beyond the opening statement but might not include an end number, "volunteer shifts" is the number of volunteers that show up to canvass for that event, "sign up goals" is the number of volunteers they are hoping to get for future canvasses, and "sign up" is the number they actually get.

| Timeline | Weekly Canvassing Goals | | | | Weekly Canvassing Actuals | | | |
	Doors	Conversations	Volunteer Shifts	Sign up Goals	Doors	Conversations	Volunteer Shifts	Sign up
4/2/16	214	60	15	45	95	28	10	10
4/9/16	214	60	15	45	203	61	12	15
4/16/16	286	80	20	61	58	16	5	6
4/23/16	357	100	25	76	141	39	7	20
4/30/16	214	60	15	45				
4/30/16	357	100	25	76	161	31	13	33
5/7/16	357	100	25	76	110	22	7	12
5/14/16	643	180	45	136	0	0	0	0
5/20/16	429	120	30	91	0	0	0	0
5/28/16	0	0	0	0	30	9	4	9
6/4/16	643	180	45	136	66	16	8	19
6/11/16	643	180	45	136	26	4	3	15
6/18/16	429	120	30	91	38	16	7	14
6/25/16	643	180	45	136	110	31	12	17
7/2/16	0	0	0	0	45	10	3	2
7/9/16	643	180	45	136	82	19	10	11
7/16/16	643	180	45	136	209	58	19	60
7/23/16	714	200	50	152	0	0	0	0
7/30/16	571	160	40	121	65	18	8	10
8/6/16	571	160	40	121	0	0	0	0
8/13/16	643	180	45	136	25	6	3	4
8/20/16	786	220	55	167	83	23	7	17
8/28/16	1000	280	70	212	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	11000	3080	770	2333	1547	407	138	274

Figure 2. Scripts from all of the Canvasses

1. Script from the 10.17.15 canvass

Stigma Reduction Script 10.17.15

Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____, and today I am volunteering with the Maine Action Fund talking with registered voters in your neighborhood today about abortion because it's an important issue coming up in the news and in legislation here in Maine.

On a scale of **0 to 10**, where 0 means you think women should have no access to safe and legal abortion, 10 means women should have full access to safe and legal abortion, and in the middle are some restrictions, **where would you put yourself?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO Access				← ← Middle → →						FULL Access

[Get clarification of what's on either side]
Why is that the right number for you? What's on both sides of the issue for you? What restrictions are coming to mind that you would support?

Have you always felt this way? *[If NO] why not?*

Persuasion: Real, lived experiences
Abortion is a personal issue and it's not something we talk about every day…

Turn over: Uncover real life stories: get the <u>details</u> and the <u>emotions</u>

→Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why
Now that we've been talking about this, what's most on your mind?

To wrap-up let's go back to that 0 to 10 scale, where 0 means you think women should have no access to abortion, 10 means women should have full access to abortion, and in the middle are some restrictions, **where would you put yourself?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO Access				← ← Middle → →						FULL Access

[If moved] Why is that the right number? What makes you rate yourself differently?

[If 10] Awesome! Can we also count on you to Stand with Planned Parenthood?
[if yes] Great! **What is your best email address?**

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at?
Canvasser Name: _____ **Voter Name:** _____ **VAN ID:** _____

PPMEAF &Leadership LAB Abortion Canvassing Script © 2015 PPMEAF   10/03/15   1

TOPIC: Experiences with Abortion & Unplanned Pregnancy
Find out what the voter's life experiences really teach them about abortion.

Have you ever had a conversation with anyone about your thoughts on abortion?
  When did you first learn about abortion?
    Do you know anyone who's had an abortion?
    [If no] an unplanned pregnancy?

Tell me more…
What happened?
Can you say more about that?
How did you feel about that?
Why?

SHARE *YOUR* STORY*

TOPIC: Experiences Learning and/or Teaching about Sex
Seek experiences that show: "Sex is a part of life; not talking about it can have consequences."

Sex is also something we don't talk about often. How / when did you first learn about sex?
  Are you a parent? What did you teach your kids about sex? Why was that important to you?

Tell me more…
What happened?
Can you say more about that?
How did you feel about that?
Why?

SHARE *YOUR* STORY*

TOPIC: Experiences Learning to navigate Sex & Relationships
Seek experiences that show: "We all have made decisions that others might judge us for; Women should not be held to different standards"

When it comes to sex and relationships, none of us are perfect and we learn as we go.
SHARE *YOUR* STORY*

Have you ever gone through anything like that?
  Have you ever made a choice about a relationship or sex that others saw as irresponsible?
    Have you ever felt judged by someone who didn't know your whole situation?

Tell me more…
What happened?
Can you say more about that?
How did you feel about that?
Why?

CONCLUSION: Revisit Voter's Concerns & MAKE YOUR CASE!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier, what's on your mind now?
  Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier…
Every woman should have access to safe and legal abortion, without judgment.
  I'm a 10 on that scale; I support full access to abortion because…

Turn over and get final rating

PPMEAF &Leadership LAB Abortion Canvassing Script © 2015 PPMEAF   10/03/15   2

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2. Script from the 11.21.15 canvass

Abortion Stigma Reduction Canvass Script

Introduction

Hi, _____? I'm _____ with the Maine Action Fund. We're talking with registered voters in your neighborhood today about abortion, because it's an important issue in legislation here in Maine.

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you think women should have no access to abortion, 10 means women should have full access to abortion, and in the middle are some restrictions, where would you put yourself?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO Access				← ← Middle → →						FULL Access

Why is that the right number for you?

In what kind of situations would you support abortion? In what kind of situations would you *not* support abortion?

Come Out: So I'm a 10 on that scale, but I know this isn't something we talk about often, so I'm interested in hearing how you honestly feel.

EXPLORE FIRST: Experiences with Abortion & Unplanned Pregnancy
When did you first learn about abortion?
  Do you know anyone who's had an abortion?
  [If no] an unplanned pregnancy?

What happened?
Were they supported or judged?
How did you feel about that?

SHARE *YOUR* STORY*

EXPLORE: Experiences with SEX and RELATIONSHIPS
Seek experiences that show: "Sex is a normal and positive part of life, but women often get judged for having it"

Sex is also something we don't talk about often. Who did you first talk to about sex / birth control?

What were you taught? How has that impacted your approach to sex? How has life matched up with what you were taught?

Have you ever seen a woman be judged for having sex?

Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why, or why not?
Has sex been a positive thing in your life? Why or why not?
How did you feel about that?

SHARE *YOUR* STORY*

MaineActionFund and Leadership LAB Abortion Canvassing Script © 2015 LA LGBT Center   11/21/15   1

EXPLORE: Experiences with JUDGMENT vs. SUPPORT
Seek experiences that show: "We need the opportunity to make mistakes and learn as we go. We need support and trust, not judgment. Women often just get judgment."

When it comes to love and relationships, none of us are perfect and we learn as we go.
SHARE *YOUR* STORY*

Did your parents trust your decision-making? How did they demonstrate that?
How did that impact you? What was helpful? What was not helpful?

Have you ever had an experience (with a relationship or sex) that didn't work out perfectly?
Did you ever feel judged (by yourself or others)? Did anyone support you? How did that feel?
Have you ever seen a woman that you cared about judged unfairly?

MAKE THE MISOGYNY CASE: Women Should be Trusted and Not Judged

(I believe it is critical for women to be trusted to make their own decisions because…)
We can support or judge women in difficult situations—one or the other, you can't do both. I want to support and trust women who've had unintended pregnancies, and for them to control their own destiny.
What do you think about that?

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier, what's on your mind now?

Wrap-up: Final Rating

To wrap-up let's go back to that 0 to 10 scale, where 0 means you think women should have no access to abortion, 10 means women should have full access to abortion, and in the middle are some restrictions, where would you put yourself?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO Access				← ← Middle → →						FULL Access

[If moved] Why is that the right number? What makes you rate yourself differently?

VOTER INFO: How long have you lived at this address?

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at? *[Write on walk list]*

EMAIL: Can we count on you to stand with Planned Parenthood?
  [if yes] Great! What is your best email address?

MaineActionFund and Leadership LAB Abortion Canvassing Script © 2015 LA LGBT Center   11/21/15   2

3. Script from the 4.02.16 Canvass

Abortion Stigma Reduction Script 04.02.16

Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____ with the PP Maine Action Fund. We're talking with voters in your neighborhood today about abortion. Abortion is legal; however, today there are laws that impact access to safe abortion.

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in middle are some restrictions, **where would you put yourself?**

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
FULL Access				← ← Middle → →						NO Access

[Get clarification of what's on either side]
Why is that the right number for you? What's on both sides of the issue for you?

What restrictions are coming to mind that you would support?

Have you always felt this way? *[If NO] why not?*

Persuasion: Real, lived experiences with sex and abortion
Abortion is a personal issue and it's not something we talk about every day…

TOPIC: Experiences with Abortion & Unplanned Pregnancy
Find out what the voter's life experiences really teach them about abortion.

Have you ever had a conversation with anyone about your thoughts on abortion?

How did you come to your views about abortion?

Do you know anyone who's had an abortion?
[If no] an unplanned pregnancy?

SHARE YOUR STORY*

Tell me more…
What happened?
Can you say more about that?
How did you feel about that?
Why?

EXPLORE: Experiences with SEX and RELATIONSHIPS
Seek experiences that show: "Sex is a normal and positive part of life, but we are taught to hide it."

Sex is also something we don't talk about often. Who did you first talk to about sex / birth control?

What were you taught? How has that impacted your approach to sex? How has life matched up with what you were taught?

When you first needed birth control, what options were available to you? Who helped you get it?

Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why, or why not?
Has sex been a positive thing in your life? Why or why not?
How did you feel about that?
How were you able to pay for it?
How was that experience for you?

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EXPLORE: Experiences with JUDGMENT vs. SUPPORT
Seek experiences that show: "We need the opportunity to make mistakes and learn as we go. We need support and trust, not judgment. Women often just get judgment."

When it comes to love and relationships, none of us are perfect and we learn as we go.
SHARE YOUR STORY*

Was there an time when you hid something about yourself or a relationship from someone close to you because you thought you'd be judged? Why did you fear they'd judge you?

Tell me more…
What happened?
Can you say more about that?
How did you feel about that?
Why?

When have you seen a woman that you cared about judged unfairly? [If applicable] How might that have gone if it were a man?

CONCLUSION: Revisit Voter's Concerns & MAKE YOUR CASE!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier, what's on your mind now?
Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier…

Every woman should have access to safe and legal abortion, without judgment.
I'm a 10 on that scale; I support full access to abortion because…

→Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why
Now that we've been talking about this, let's go back to the scale from before, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in middle are some restrictions, **where would you put yourself?**

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
FULL Access				← ← Middle → →						NO Access

[If moved] Why is that the right number? What makes you rate yourself differently?

[If 10] Awesome! Can we count on you to stand with Planned Parenthood?
[if yes] Great! What is your best email address?

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at?

Canvasser Name: _____   **Voter Name:** _____   **VAN ID:**

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   04/02/16   2

4. Script from the 4.23.16 Canvass

Abortion Stigma Reduction Script 04.23.16

Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____ with the Maine Action Team. We're talking with voters in your neighborhood today about abortion. Abortion is legal; however, today there are laws that impact access to safe abortion.

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in middle are some restrictions, **where would you put yourself?**

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
FULL Access				← ← Middle → →						NO Access

[Get clarification of what's on either side]
Why is that the right number for you? What's on both sides of the issue for you?

What restrictions on access to abortion are coming to mind that you would support?

Have you always felt this way? *[If NO] why not?*

Persuasion: Real, lived experiences with sex and abortion
Abortion is a personal issue and it's not something we talk about every day…

TOPIC: Experiences with Abortion & Unplanned Pregnancy
Find out what the voter's life experiences really teach them about abortion.

Have you ever had a conversation about abortion with someone close to you?

Do you know anyone who's had an abortion?
[If no] an unplanned pregnancy?

Are you married? Do you have kids or grandkids?

SHARE YOUR STORY*

Tell me more…
What happened?
Can you say more about that?
How did you feel about that?
Why?

EXPLORE: Experiences with SEX and RELATIONSHIPS
Seek experiences that show: "Sex is a normal and positive part of life, but we are taught to hide it."

Sex is also something we don't talk about often. Who did you first talk to about sex / birth control?

What did your parents teach you or you teach your children about sex / birth control?

Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why, or why not?
How did you feel about that?
How were you able to pay for it?
How was that experience like for you?

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   04/23/16   1

When you first needed birth control, what options were available to you? Who helped you get it?

EXPLORE: Experiences with JUDGMENT vs. SUPPORT
Seek experiences that show: "We need the opportunity to make mistakes and learn as we go. We need support and trust, not judgment. Women often just get judgment."

When it comes to love and relationships, none of us are perfect and we learn as we go.
SHARE YOUR STORY*

Was there an time when you hid something about yourself or a relationship from someone close to you because you thought you'd be judged? Why did you fear they'd judge you?

Tell me more…
What happened?
Can you say more about that?
How did you feel about that?
Why?

When have you seen a woman that you cared about judged unfairly? [If applicable] How might that have gone if it were a man?

CONCLUSION: Revisit Voter's Concerns & DIG DEEPER!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier, what's on your mind now?
Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier…

Every woman should have access to safe and legal abortion, without judgment.
I'm a 10 on that scale; I support full access to abortion because…

→Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why
Now that we've been talking about this, let's go back to the scale from before, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in middle are some restrictions, **where would you put yourself?**

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
FULL Access				← ← Middle → →						NO Access

[If moved] Why is that the right number? What makes you rate yourself differently?

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at?

[If 10] Awesome! Can we count on you to stand with Planned Parenthood?
[if yes] Great! What is your best email address?

What does that mean to you?
For the people I know who've had an abortion that has not been the case. Do you know someone who experienced that?
Who should decide that a reason is valid to have an abortion?
Do you think that every woman who…

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5. Script from the 04.30.16 Canvass

Script 04.30.16

Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____ with the Maine Action Team. We're talking with voters in your neighborhood today about abortion. Abortion is legal; however, today there are laws that impact access to safe abortion.

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in middle are some restrictions, **where would you put yourself?**

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
FULL Access				← ← **Middle** → →						**NO Access**

[Get clarification of what's on either side]
Why is that the right number for you? What's on both sides of the issue for you?

What restrictions on access to abortion are coming to mind that you would support?

Have you always felt this way? *[If NO] why not?*

Real, lived experiences with sex and abortion
Abortion is a personal issue and it's not something we talk about every day...

TOPIC: Experiences with Abortion & Unplanned Pregnancy
Find out what the voter's life experiences really teach them about abortion.

Have you ever had a conversation about abortion with someone close to you?

Do you know anyone who's had an abortion?
[If no] an unplanned pregnancy?

Are you married? Do you have kids or grandkids?

SHARE YOUR STORY*

Tell me more...
What happened?
Can you say more about that?
How did you feel about that?
Why?

EXPLORE: Experiences with SEX and RELATIONSHIPS
Seek experiences that show: "Sex is a normal and positive part of life, but we are taught to hide it."

Sex is also something we don't talk about often. Who did you first talk to about sex / birth control?

What did your parents teach you or you teach your children about sex / birth control?

Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why, or why not?
How did you feel about that?
How were you able to pay for it?
How was that experience like for you?

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   04/30/16   1

When you first needed birth control, what options were available to you? Who helped you get it?

EXPLORE: Experiences with JUDGMENT vs. SUPPORT
Seek experiences that show: "We need the opportunity to make mistakes and learn as we go. We need support and trust, not judgment. Women often just get judgment."

When it comes to love and relationships, none of us are perfect and we learn as we go.
SHARE YOUR STORY*

Was there an time when you hid something about yourself or a relationship from someone close to you because you thought you'd be judged? Why did you fear they'd judge you?

Tell me more...
What happened?
Can you say more about that?
How did you feel about that?
Why?

When have you seen a woman that you cared about judged unfairly? [If applicable] How might that have gone if it were a man?

CONCLUSION: Revisit Voter's Concerns & DIG DEEPER!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier, what's on your mind now?
Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier...

Every woman should have access to safe and legal abortion, without judgment.
I'm a 10 on that scale; I support full access to abortion because...

→Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why

Now that we've been talking about this, let's go back to the scale from before, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in middle are some restrictions, **where would you put yourself?**

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
FULL Access				← ← **Middle** → →						**NO Access**

[If moved] Why does that feel right for you now? Do you feel differently about abortion in anyway?

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at?

[If 10] Awesome! Can we count on you to stand with Planned Parenthood?
[if yes] Great! What is your best email address?

What does that mean to you?

For the people I know who've had an abortion that has not been the case. Do you know someone who experienced that?

Who should decide that a reason is valid to have an abortion?

Do you think that every woman who

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6. Script from the 05.07.16 Canvass

Script 05.07.16

Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____ with the Maine Action Team. We're talking with voters in your neighborhood today about abortion. Abortion is legal; however, today there are laws that impact access to safe abortion.

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in middle are some regulations **where would you put yourself?**

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
FULL Access				← ← **Middle** → →						**NO Access**

[Get clarification of what's on either side]
Why is that the right number for you? What's on both sides of the issue for you?

What regulations are coming to mind that you would support?

What helped shape your beliefs about abortion?

Real, lived experiences with sex and abortion
Abortion and sex are personal issues and we don't talk about them every day...

TOPIC: Experiences with Abortion and Sex
Find out what the voter's life experiences really teach them about abortion.
Seek experiences that show: "Sex is a normal and positive part of life, but we are taught to hide it."

Have you ever had a conversation about abortion with someone close to you?

Do you know anyone who's considered having an abortion?
Do you know anyone who's had an unplanned pregnancy?

What did you hear growing up about sex / birth control?
Would you have been comfortable talking to your parents about sex and birth control?

Can you tell me more about that?

What happened?
How did you feel about that?
Why?

Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why or why not?
What was that experience like for you?

When you first needed birth control, what options were you aware of? Who helped you get it?

Revisit Voter's Concerns & DIG DEEPER!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier_____, what's on your mind now?
Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier...

When I think about a woman having an abortion, I think about how the issue has evolved in my mind overtime..... *[share an abortion story or fact that made you think and expand your mind]*

Have you ever had an experience where you learned more about something and you changed your mind about it?

Tell me more about that... What happened? What did you learn? How did you feel?

Dig Questions
What does that mean to you?
How do you think that could be regulated?
What do you think should be taught in schools about sex?
What is a decision you have made that impacted your future?

What do you think the experience should be like for a woman who decided to have an abortion?

Do you think people should talk about abortion more?

Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why

Now that we've been talking about this, on that same scale from before, where 0 means you think women should have no access to abortion, 10 means women should have full access to abortion, and in middle are some restrictions, **where would you put yourself?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO				← ← **Middle** → →						**YES**

Why does that feel right for you? Do you feel differently about abortion in any way?

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at? _____

[If 7- 10] Thank you! The Maine Action Team is part of Planned Parenthood here in Maine. So we are asking folks like yourself if we can count on you to stand with Planned Parenthood? ☐ Yes ☐ No

[if yes] Great! What is your best email address? _____

MaineCare Question
Right now, the state prohibits MaineCare from covering abortion for low-income women. Do you think abortion should be a covered service for women eligible for MaineCare? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   07/25/16   2

7. Script from the 06.11.16 Canvass

Script 06.11.16

Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____ with the Maine Action Team. We're talking with voters in your neighborhood today about abortion. Abortion is an issue that can bring out strong feelings for people. Some think it is okay for a woman to have an abortion and others think it is not okay for a woman to have an abortion and even others find themselves somewhere in the middle.

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means a woman can have an abortion and 0 means a woman cannot have an abortion, and in middle are some limits for a woman having an abortion **where would you put yourself?**

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
FULL Access				← ← Middle → →						**NO Access**

Why is that the right number for you? What's on both sides of the issue for you?

What limits are coming to mind that you would support?

What helped shape your beliefs about abortion?

Real, lived experiences with sex and abortion

Abortion and sex are personal issues and we don't talk about them every day…

TOPIC: Experiences with Abortion and Sex
Find out what the voter's life experiences really teach them about abortion.
Seek experiences that show: "Sex is a normal and positive part of life, but we are taught to hide it."

Have you ever had a conversation about abortion with someone close to you? *Tell me more about that…Who was it with? What happened? What was that experience like for you?*

Do you know anyone who's had an abortion? or considered having an abortion?
Do you know anyone who's had an unplanned pregnancy?
Can you tell me more about that? Who was it? How old were they? Where did they live? What impact did it have on their life? How did you feel about that?

What did you hear growing up about sex / birth control?
Were you comfortable talking to your parents about sex and birth control?
Why? Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why or why not?

Do you remember the first time you had to get birth control? Was it easy? Embarrassing? Did you know what to do or how to get it?

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   06/11/16   **1**

If you could go back to yourself then, what advice would you give?

EXPLORE: Experiences with Being Judged
Share and Seek experiences that show: "We need support for decisions we make, not judgment."

Have you ever been judged for a decision you have made that you knew was the right one for you?

Tell me more about that… What happened? Who was involved? How did you feel?
How did they judge you? How did it make you feel?

Have you ever felt that you judged someone else unfairly? What happened?

Do you think women who have abortions are judged for their decision? How do you think that makes a woman feel?
Share an abortion story

CONCLUSION: Revisit Voter's Concerns & DIG DEEPER!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier, what's on your mind now?
Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier…

What do you think the experience should be like for a woman who decided to have an abortion/end a pregnancy?

I'm a 10 on that scale; I support full access to abortion because…

→Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why

Now that we've been talking about this, on that same scale from before, where 10 means women can have an abortion and 0 means they cannot have abortions, and in middle are some limits, **where would you put yourself?**

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
FULL Access				← ← Middle → →						**NO Access**

Why does that feel right for you? *Do you feel differently about abortion in any way?*

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at?

What does that mean to you?
How do you think that could be regulated?

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What do you think should be taught in schools about sex?   **2**

8. Script from the 06.28.16 Canvass

Script 06.28.16

Part 1: Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____ a volunteer with the Maine Action Team. We're talking with voters in your neighborhood today about abortion. Some think it is okay for a woman to have an abortion and others think it is not okay and even others find themselves somewhere in the middle.

So, today we are asking folks, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means a woman cannot have an abortion and 10 means a woman can have an abortion, and in middle are some limits for a woman having an abortion **where would you put yourself?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO				← ← Middle → →						**YES**

Why is that the right number for you? What's on both sides of the issue for you?

What limits are coming to mind that you would support?

What helped shape your beliefs about abortion?

Do you know anyone who has had an abortion?
considered having an abortion?
had an unplanned pregnancy?

Tell me more about that…

What was that experience like for her?
Do you think she thought through her decision?

Do you think she made the right decision for her life?

Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why or why not?

Did she tell you why she decided to have an abortion?

Why do you think a woman has an abortion?

Dig questions:
Can you tell me more about that?
Who was it?
What happened?

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   06/28/16   **1**

When I think about a woman having an abortion, I think about how the issue has evolved in my mind as I met folks who have had abortions. [share an abortion story that made you think and expand your mind]

Tell me more about that… What happened? Who was involved? How did they judge you? How did you feel?

Share an example of when someone spoke to you and it made you think about something differently

Revisit Voter's Concerns & DIG DEEPER!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier, what's on your mind now?
Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier…

What do you think the experience should be like for a woman who decided to have an abortion/end a pregnancy?

Part 4: Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why

Now that we've been talking about this, on that same scale from before, where 0 means women cannot have abortions and 10 means they can have an abortion, and, and in middle are some limits, **where would you put yourself?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO				← ← Middle → →						**YES**

Why does that feel right for you? *Do you feel differently about abortion in any way?*

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at? _____

[If 7- 10] Thank you! The Maine Action Team is part of Planned Parenthood here in Maine. So we are asking folks like yourself if we can count on you to stand with Planned Parenthood? ☐ Yes ☐ No

[if yes] Great! What is your best email address? _____

What does that mean to you?
How do you think that could be regulated?
How have you come to a decision that impacted your future?

Part 5: MaineCare Question

Right now, the state prohibits MaineCare from covering abortion for low-income women. Do you think abortion should be a covered service for women eligible for MaineCare? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   05/30/16   **2**

9. Script from the 07.07.16 Canvass

Script 07.07.16

Part 1: Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____ a volunteer with the Maine Action Team. We're talking with voters in your neighborhood today about abortion. Some think it is okay for a woman to have an abortion and others think it is not okay and even others find themselves somewhere in the middle.

So, today we are asking folks, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means a woman cannot have an abortion and 10 means a woman can have an abortion, and in middle are some limits for a woman having an abortion **where would you put yourself?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO					← Middle → →					YES

Why is that the right number for you? What's on both sides of the issue for you?

What limits are coming to mind that you would support?

What helped shape your beliefs about abortion?

Do you know anyone who has had an abortion?
considered having an abortion?
had an unplanned pregnancy?

Tell me more about that…

What was that experience like for her?
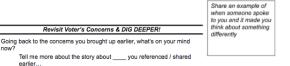*Do you think she thought through her decision?*

Do you think she made the right decision for her life?

Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why or why not?

Did she tell you why she decided to have an abortion?

Why do you think a woman has an abortion?

What did you hear about sex growing up?
What did you teach your kids?

Dig questions:
Who was it?
What happened?
How old were they?
Where did they live?

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   07/07/16   1

When I think about a woman having an abortion, I think about how the issue has evolved in my mind as I met folks who have had abortions. [share an abortion story that made you think and expand your mind]

Tell me more about that… What happened? Who was involved? How did they judge you? How did you feel?

> Share an example of when someone spoke to you and it made you think about something differently

Revisit Voter's Concerns & DIG DEEPER!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier, what's on your mind now?

Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier…

What do you think the experience should be like for a woman who decided to have an abortion/end a pregnancy?

Part 4: Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why

Now that we've been talking about this, on that same scale from before, where 0 means women cannot have abortions and 10 means they can have an abortion and, and in middle are some limits, **where would you put yourself?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO					← ← Middle → →					YES

Why does that feel right for you? Do you feel differently about abortion in any way?

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at? _____

[If 7- 10] Thank you! The Maine Action Team is part of Planned Parenthood here in Maine. So we are asking folks like yourself if we can count on you to stand with Planned Parenthood? □ Yes □ No

[if yes] Great! What is your best email address? _____

What does that mean to you?
How do you think that could be regulated?
How have you come to a decision that impacted your future?

Part 5: MaineCare Question

Right now, the state prohibits MaineCare from covering abortion for low-income women. Do you think abortion should be a covered service for women eligible for MaineCare? □ Yes □ No □ Undecided

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10. Script from the 07.09.16 Canvass – Video indicates that they are planning on recording this canvass for internal training purposes

Script 07.09.16 -Video

Part 1: Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____ a volunteer with the Maine Action Team. We're talking with voters in your neighborhood today about abortion. [And this is my friend _____ who is filming my conversations today, if that is ok.] *[5 second pause]* Some think it is okay for a woman to have an abortion and others think it is not okay and even others find themselves somewhere in the middle.

So, today we are asking folks, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you think women should have no access to abortion, 10 means women should have full access to abortion, and in middle are some limits for a woman having an abortion, **where would you put yourself?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO					← Middle → →					YES

Why is that the right number for you? What's on both sides of the issue for you?

What limits are coming to mind that you would support?

What helped shape your beliefs about abortion?

Real, lived experiences with sex and abortion

Do you know anyone who has had an abortion?
considered having an abortion?
had an unplanned pregnancy?

Tell me more about that…

Do you think she thought about her decision?

Do you think she made the right decision for her life?

Did she tell you why she decided to have an abortion?

What was that experience like for her?

Why do you think a woman has an abortion?

What did you hear growing up about sex / birth control?
Were you comfortable talking to your parents/kids about sex and birth control?

Why? Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why or why not?

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Dig questions:

Revisit Voter's Concerns & DIG DEEPER!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier, what's on your mind now?
Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier…

When I think about a woman having an abortion, I think about how the issue has evolved in my mind as I have been volunteering on this campaign. [share an abortion story or fact that made you think and expand your mind]

Have you ever had a similar experience?

Tell me more about that… What happened? Who was involved? How did you feel?

What does that mean to you?
How do you think that could be regulated?
How have you come to a decision that impacted your future?

What do you think the experience should be like for a woman who decided to have an abortion/end a pregnancy?

Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why

Now that we've been talking about this, on that same scale from before, where 0 means you think women should have no access to abortion, 10 means women should have full access to abortion, and in middle are some limits for a woman having an abortion, **where would you put yourself?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO					← ← Middle → →					YES

Why does that feel right for you? Do you feel differently about abortion in any way?

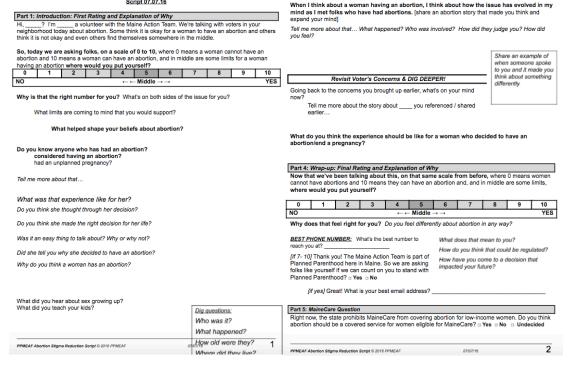**BEST PHONE NUMBER:** What's the best number to reach you at? _____

[If 7- 10] Thank you! The Maine Action Team is part of Planned Parenthood here in Maine. So we are asking folks like yourself if we can count on you to stand with Planned Parenthood? □ Yes □ No

[if yes] Great! What is your best email address? _____

MaineCare Question

Right now, the state prohibits MaineCare from covering abortion for low-income women. Do you think abortion should be a covered service for women eligible for MaineCare? □ Yes □ No □ Undecided

Canvasser: _____ _____ **Voter Full Name:** _____ **VANID/Street:** _____

Video release language: This has been great — I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with me.

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   07/09/16   2

11. Script from 07.16.16 Video

Script 07.16.16 -Video

Part 1: Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____ a volunteer with the Maine Action Team. We're talking with voters in your neighborhood today about abortion. And I am having some of my conversations filmed today, if fine with you [*pause*]. Great! Abortion is an issue that can bring out strong feelings for people and is not something that we talk about every day.

So, today we are asking folks, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you think women should have no access to abortion, 10 means women should have full access to abortion, and in middle are some restrictions, where would you put yourself?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO					← ← Middle → →					YES

Why is that the right number for you? What issues come to mind when you think about abortion?

What restrictions on access to abortion would you support?

What helped shape your beliefs about abortion?

Do you think we should talk about abortion more?

Real, lived experiences with sex and abortion

Do you know anyone who has had an abortion?
considered having an abortion?
had an unplanned pregnancy?

Tell me more about that…

What was that experience like for her?

Did she tell you why she decided to have an abortion?

How do you think she came to that decision?

Why do you think a woman has an abortion?

What did you hear growing up about sex / birth control?
Were you comfortable talking to your parents/kids about sex and birth control?

Why? Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why or why not?

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   07/16/16   1

Revisit Voter's Concerns & DIG DEEPER!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier_____, what's on your mind now?
Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier…

When I think about a woman having an abortion, I think about how the issue has evolved in my mind overtime….. [*share an abortion story or fact that made you think and expand your mind*]

Have you ever had an experience where you learned more about something and you changed your mind about it?

Tell me more about that… What happened? What did you learn? How did you feel?

> **Dig Questions**
>
> What does that mean to you?
>
> How do you think that could be regulated?
>
> What do you think should be taught in schools about sex?
>
> What is a decision you have made that impacted your future?

What do you think the experience should be like for a woman who decided to have an abortion/end a pregnancy?

Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why

Now that we've been talking about this, on that same scale from before, where 0 means you think women should have no access to abortion, 10 means women should have full access to abortion, and in middle are some restrictions, **where would you put yourself?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO					← ← Middle → →					YES

Why does that feel right for you? Do you feel differently about abortion in any way?

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at? _____

[*If 7- 10*] Thank you! The Maine Action Team is part of Planned Parenthood here in Maine. So we are asking folks like yourself if we can count on you to stand with Planned Parenthood? □ Yes □ No

[*if yes*] Great! What is your best email address? _____

MaineCare Question

Right now, the state prohibits MaineCare from covering abortion for low-income women. Do you think abortion should be a covered service for women eligible for MaineCare? □ Yes □ No   □ Undecided

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   07/16/15   2

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12. Script from 07.25.16 Canvass

Script 07.25.16 -Video

Part 1: Introduction: First Rating and Explanation of Why

Hi, _____? I'm _____ a volunteer with the Maine Action Team. We're talking with voters in your neighborhood today about abortion. [And I am having some of my conversations filmed today, if fine with you [*pause*].] Great! Abortion is an issue that can bring out strong feelings for people and is not something that we talk about every day.

So, today we are asking folks, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you think women should have no access to abortion, 10 means women should have full access to abortion, and in middle are some restrictions, where would you put yourself?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO					← ← Middle → →					YES

Why is that the right number for you? What issues come to mind when you think about abortion?

What restrictions on access to abortion would you support?

What helped shape your beliefs about abortion?

Real, lived experiences with sex and abortion

Do you know anyone who has had an abortion?
considered having an abortion?
had an unplanned pregnancy?

Tell me more about that…

What was that experience like for her?

Did she tell you why she decided to have an abortion?

How do you think she came to that decision?

Why do you think a woman has an abortion?

What did you hear growing up about sex / birth control?
Were you comfortable talking to your parents/kids about sex and birth control?

Why? Was it an easy thing to talk about? Why or why not?

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   07/25/16   1

EXPLORE: Experiences with Being Judged
Share and Seek experiences that show: "We need support for decisions we make, not judgment."

Have you ever been judged for a decision you have made that you knew was the right one for you?

Tell me more about that…

Why did they judge you?

> What happened?
> Who was involved?
> How did you feel?
> Why?

SHARE YOUR STORY*

CONCLUSION: Revisit Voter's Concerns & DIG DEEPER!

Going back to the concerns you brought up earlier, what's on your mind now?
Tell me more about the story about _____ you referenced / shared earlier…

What do you think the experience should be like for a woman who decided to have an abortion/end a pregnancy?

Every woman should have access to safe and legal abortion, without judgment.
I'm a 10 on that scale; I support full access to abortion because…

→Wrap-up: Final Rating and Explanation of Why

Now that we've been talking about this, let's go back to the scale from before, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in middle are some regulations, **where would you put yourself?**

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
FULL Access					← ← Middle → →					NO Access

[*If moved*] Why does that feel right for you now? Do you feel differently about abortion in any way?

BEST PHONE NUMBER: What's the best number to reach you at?

[*If 10*] Awesome! Can we count on you to stand with

> What does that mean to you?
> Do you know someone who experienced that?
> How do you think that could be regulated?
> What do you think should be taught in schools about sex?

PPMEAF Abortion Stigma Reduction Script © 2016 PPMEAF   05/07/16   2

Checking the Temperature:

An Analysis of Success Through Feeling Thermometer Change Rates

Planned Parenthood of Maine Action Fund conducted 30 canvasses between August 29th 2015 and September 1st 2016. Over the course of that year, canvassers knocked on 2,321 doors and had a total of 618 conversations. In the previous chapter, I conducted a qualitative analysis of their work. My primary aim was to understand the motivation behind their canvassing decisions and to elucidate their training and canvassing processes. Additionally, I studied how they attempted to define success. To that end, I found that PPMEAF thought of success in two ways. Firstly, they were working towards a 25% move rate for the voters from the beginning of the conversation to the end of the conversation—also called the "change rate." Then, they were also aiming for a more amorphous goal of de-stigmatization, which mainly translated to addressing stigmas and targeting myths around abortion in not only the voters but also the canvassers themselves. Since the second goal is relatively impossible to quantify, the following section will focus mainly on the change rate of the voters.

PPMEAF did primary analysis of some of their data based on the feeling thermometer numbers given by the voters at the beginning and the end of the conversation. The voter was asked at the beginning and end of the conversation to place themselves on a scale of 0 to 10 in terms of access to abortion. This scale is often referred to as a "feeling thermometer" in political science. The specifics of the question varied in each canvass, but was generally along the lines of: "on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in middle are some regulations where would you but yourself?" Sometimes the "0" explanation was given first, occasionally the phrase "in any circumstance" was left out, and in some cases the phrase "safe and legal" was added before "abortion" is mentioned. PPMEAF has over 70

online documents, which record their efforts in the canvass. These documents range from uploaded images of individual scripts from many of the canvasses to notes from the various canvass debriefs to training meeting transcriptions and outlines. Though the documents provide an important insight into the ABSR efforts of PPMEAF, there exist some major discrepancies between some of their documents. In the following section I identify the gaps in their work, assess the existing in-house quantitative research, and conduct data analysis based primarily on the feeling thermometer numbers in an attempt to decode message and messenger effects.

PPMEAF's Data—Shortcomings and Strengths

Although PPMEAF claims to have had 618 conversations, there exists no single record of all of those interactions. Instead, the data is segmented and partial—therefore making data analysis inevitably incomplete. PPMEAF has a few major documents of the quantitative results from their canvasses. In one, there exists data on each voter's race, town, income, sex, party affiliation based on their ID number in Planned Parenthood's national database. Planned Parenthood uses an external source called NGP VAN, which is a technology platform that helps social and political organizations manage voter files and build phone-banks and in-person canvasses.[146] Therefore, these answers do not contain what the voter said him/herself, but rather information gleaned from the organization's registry I will refer to this document as the *Voter Characteristics Table.* Their data are from Fall 2015 through Summer 2016 and contains 525 entries. Also, PPMEAF screens the potential voters to eliminate individuals whom they think will already be a 0 on the scale, based on analytics

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[146] "NGP VAN | The Leading Technology Provider to Democratic and Progressive Campaigns," accessed May 4, 2017, https://www.ngpvan.com/content/voter-contact-and-volunteer-management.

from their national voter registry files. This disproportionally weighs the data in favor of abortion access.

This data is supplemented by two more of PPMEAF's documents. In an analysis report titled "Data Results Fall 2015 and Spring 2016," they distinguish between 143 results from the fall and 359 results from the fall and the spring. They also have a separate document from the Summer 2016. Therefore, I will be able to contrast the cumulative data with the fall, spring, and summer data, and analyze the differences in the effectiveness of the canvassing over time. Additionally, they have a document that I will refer to as the *Master Report*, which contains much of the overarching data. It has a list of all of the canvass dates, who the PPMEAF leader of that canvass was, how many volunteers signed up, and how many conversations they had for each canvass. This document also contains information on the response rates for phone banking and in-person canvasses, which I use later to analyze medium effects. While PPMEAF already conducted a primary study of this data, breaking it down into political party, gender, age, income and city, I will expand upon their work by further explaining their findings and conducting data analysis.

Although this data is quite comprehensive, there are serious limitations as well. An entire document, "Canvass Discrepancies," addresses some of these concerns. Due to differences between the tallies in the paper tally sheet, the electronic tally sheet, the VAN (Planned Parenthood's online canvassing database) and the master document, the final numbers cannot be unequivocally verified. For example, the *Voter Characteristics Table* only contains 525 entries, while PPMEAF claims that the total number is 618. This is likely because the voters whom they canvass that are not in the VAN and so they are not uploaded into the registry. Perhaps they were not the intended respondent; in a few rare cases, the

canvassers have conversations with individuals who are not the ones that they originally plan to canvass because they happened to have answered the door. Also, the *Voter Characteristics Table* only contains entries with start and end feeling thermometer answers. Some of the 618 conversations did not proceed all the way to the end. In general, because the training and material collection was done entirely by Planned Parenthood without supervision by a political scientist, it is impossible to be certain which information was excluded or how exact the canvassers were in their input. Additionally, I will be relying on the VAN classifications regarding political party, race, income, age, income, although these might not always be accurate. Also, because the trainings and canvasses were not conducted with a scientific study in mind, there are discrepancies in the ways canvassers learned and conveyed the scripts. Although the deviation between trainings was minimal, the lack of standardization will likely lead to a higher margin of error in the analysis. Further, the canvassers stuck closely to the script, but differences between the personal stories and a lack of outsight oversight suggests that there is a likelihood of conversation variance.

Despite the drawbacks to the data, there are many merits to it as well. A sample size of 525 is substantial and provides a strong basis for simple analytical claims. Also, as I will discuss in more depth later, the demographic distribution is relatively even. For example, there are 288 women and 236 men, as well as 228 Democrats and 139 Republicans. Additionally, the voter files allow for data analysis on a wide variety of individual-level factors—including age, gender, income, and political party. PPMEAF also has records of response rates and phone banking, which allows for a study of medium differences. While the data is neither perfect nor ideally methodological collected, it is a robust jumping-off point for analysis of deep canvassing efforts.

Figure 1 below is the most comprehensive spreadsheet of all of the canvasses, their dates, and the number of attempted and completed conversations.

Figure 1. Full list of Canvasses and Conversations

Event Date	Location	Canvassers	Conversation Attempts	Conversations
8/29/15	Falmouth	4	35	10
9/12/15	Falmouth	4	52	12
10/3/15	Falmouth	8	52	23
10/17/15	Cumberland	10	119	43
11/7/15	Falmouth	12	226	50
11/21/15	Gorham	10	172	46
1/9/16	Scarborough	8	55	7
4/2/16	Lewiston	10	95	28
4/9/16	Auburn	12	203	61
4/16/16	Lewiston	5	58	16
4/23/16	Bath	7	141	39
4/30/16	Waterboro	3	26	8
4/30/16	Lewiston	10	135	23
5/7/16	Topsham	4	51	15
5/7/16	Auburn	3	59	7
5/21/16	Sanford	4	30	9
6/4/16	Auburn	4	15	6
6/4/16	Buxton	4	51	10
6/11/16	Midcoast	3	26	4
6/16/16	Scarborough	7	38	16
6/25/16	Auburn	12	110	31
6/30/16	Lewiston	3	45	10
7/7/16	Scarborough	4	37	9
7/9/16	Wiscasset	6	45	10
7/16/16	------	19	209	58
7/25/16	------	8	65	18
8/11/16	Wiscasset	3	25	6
8/20/16	Waterboro	7	83	23
8/30/16	------	2	32	8
9/1/16	Waterboro	5	31	12
Grand Total:			**2321**	**618**

The discrepancy in number of conversation attempts (doors knocked) can be mostly attributed to the number of canvassers. That is not always the case, however, as sometimes the same number of canvassers in the same location can end up with different conversation success rates. Of the first two canvasses in Falmouth, one resulted in 35 conversation attempts and the other in 52, even though both had 4 canvassers. Perhaps the canvassers paired up in one of the canvasses and were thus able to cover less ground, or maybe there were poor conditions that made the terrain less travelable. The variation is interesting because it speaks to the challenges and instability of door-to-door canvassing. The number of actual conversations was mostly proportional to the number of conversation attempts, although not always. Some of the canvasses had a higher numbers of conversations in relation to the attempts, which could be attributed to successful canvasser strategies (perhaps they were more persistent or patient at a specific house) as well as the differences between towns.

These data are also particularly interesting in contrast to other mediums. Figure 2 illustrates the different attempt and conversations rates between canvassing and phone banks for the 2015 and 2016. PPMEAF indicated that they chose to do in person canvassing partly because they were having trouble getting people to answer the phone. Indeed, the data below indicates that the success rate (the number of conversations in relation to attempts) was 13% higher for canvassing than it was for phone banking. Still, the data indicates how phone banking is able to reach a higher volume of people, meaning that the lower success rate does not translate to fewer conversations. In fact, there were 7,760 more conversations through the phone banks than through canvassing. The data speak, then, to the effectiveness of the dual approach. If the organization is capable of holding both phone and in-person canvasses, as

PPMEAF has clearly shown they are able to do, it will likely enable the highest response rate possible.

Figure 2. Response Rate for Canvassing and Phone Banking

	Sum of Attempts	Sum of Conversations	Average of Success Rate
Canvassing	**N = 2,321**	**618**	**27%**
2015	656	184	28%
2016	1,665	434	26%
Phone Bank	**N= 10,081**	**1,447**	**14%**
2015	4,782	746	16%
2016	5,299	701	13%
Grand Total	**12,402**	**2,065**	**17%**

Individual-Level Factors

Figure 3. Start Ratings by Individual-Level Characteristics

	Individual-Level Characteristics	Mean FT Start Rating*	Number of Cases (N=)
Gender:	Female	7.19	288
	Male	6.35	236
Political Party	Democrat	7.69	228
	Republican	5.20	139
Age Range	18-29	6.44	9
	30-44	7.55	80
	45-64	6.85	252
	65+	6.38	184
Household Income:	$0-19,000	4.50	2
	$20-39,000	5.67	27
	$40-59,000	6.59	197
	$60-79,000	7.00	212
	$80,000+	7.23	87
TOTAL:		6.81	525

* "Mean FT Start Rating" indicates the average of the initial Feeling Thermometer responses for the given demographic. "FT Rating" is the numerical answer given by the respondent in reply to the question: "on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means women should have access to abortion and 0 means they should not have access to abortions in any circumstance, and in the middle are some regulations, where would you but yourself?" FT means Feeling Thermometer, and is a commonly used political science term for this type of attitude scale.

The data in Figure 3 bolster the claim elucidated in Chapter 1 that individual-level factors are a strong determinant of a person's support for an issue. The average start rating is quite high at 6.81. Although there are no standards against which to measure this data point, it suggests that the people canvassed are already relatively supportive of abortion access. A 6.81 on the feeling thermometer scale indicates that they are more in favor of full access to abortion than against it. This is not that surprising, though, since the people canvassed did not include people who they thought would completely oppose abortion access.

The discrepancies between the demographic groups are not huge, but they do indicate that individual-level factors play a role in how an individual sees an issue. Before the conversations even began, there existed a discrepancy in support of abortion on the basis of gender, political party, age and household income. Women are more supportive then men by 0.84 points, and Democrats are more supportive than Republicans by 2.49 points. Younger voters are more supportive than older voters, however the sample size is smaller for the two younger age groups, thus creating the possibility that there is a wider margin of error. Support for abortion increases with income; richer voters are more likely to support abortion. The demographic most likely to be in support of full abortion access is high-income young Democratic women. This data also shows the relatively even distribution of voters by demographic. Aside from low-income and young voters, most of the demographic measures are fairly evenly divided and contain a substantial sample size.

Feeling Thermometer Change Rates

Figure 4. Start and End Ratings

FT Rating¶	Start Rating	End Rating
0	64	49
1	20	23
2	9	12
3	14	10
4	8	10
5	69	62
6	17	18
7	35	33
8	47	45
9	27	33
10	215	230
Grand Total	**N = 525**	**525**

¶ The FT scale question is asked twice during the canvass, once at the beginning and once at the end. The start rating refers to the first question, and the end rating to the second. The FT rating is also called the

The main measurement of success for PPMEAF was the change rate. They hoped for a 25% move rate and they claimed in their report that they rate was, "steadily increasing from 16% during fall 2015 pilot to 20% in April 2016, then 26% in early summer, to 41% in July, and now 55% in August." The numbers they calculated excluded conversations where the voter started at a 10. I assess the change rate for the *Voter Characteristics Table* in fall 2015 and spring 2016, summer 2016 and cumulatively. I created two charts for each category, one using all entries, and one excluding all entries that had an original thermometer number of 10, unless there was a negative change rate. As in, if the entry started at 10 and ended with 10 it was excluded, but if it started at 10 and ended with anything lower, I included it. For each chart, I also calculated the mean difference, or mean change. Figure 4 is a raw unanalyzed version of the data, which indicates how many individuals start and end at each FT number. Without statistical analysis, it is still evident that there are fewer "0"s and more "10"s by the end than at the beginning.

Figure 5. Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 Canvasses

1. All Responses			2. Excluding Entries with a Starting # of 10		
Feeling Thermometer Change #	Count of Change	Change as % of Total	Feeling Thermometer Change #	Count of Change	Change as % of Total
-3	3	0.84%	-3	3	1.35%
-1	2	0.56%	-1	2	0.90%
0	304	84.68%	0	168	75.34%
1	21	5.85%	1	21	9.42%
2	16	4.46%	2	16	7.17%
3	3	0.84%	3	3	1.35%
4	5	1.39%	4	5	2.24%
5	4	1.11%	5	4	1.79%
7	1	0.28%	7	1	0.45%
Grand Total	N =359	100.00%	Grand Total	N = 223	100.00%
Positive Change:	13.9%		Positive Change:	22.42%	

Figure 6. Summer Canvasses 2016 Canvasses

1. All Responses			2. Excluding Entries with a Starting # of 10		
Feeling Thermometer Change #	Count of Change	Change as % of Total	Feeling Thermometer Change #	Count of Change	Change as % of Total
-8	1	0.63%	-8	1	1.11%
-3	3	1.90%	-3	3	3.33%
-2	1	0.63%	-2	1	1.11%
-1	1	0.63%	-1	1	1.11%
0	123	77.85%	0	55	61.11%
1	15	9.49%	1	15	16.67%
2	7	4.43%	2	7	7.78%
3	1	0.63%	3	1	1.11%
4	2	1.27%	4	2	2.22%
5	3	1.90%	5	3	3.33%
6	1	0.63%	6	1	1.11%
Grand Total	N=158	100.00%	Grand Total	N=90	100.00%
Positive Change:	18.35%		Positive Change:	32.22%	

Figure 7. All Existing Canvass Data

1. All Entries			2. Excluding Entries with a Starting # of 10		
Feeling Thermometer Change	Count of Changed	Changed as % of Total	Feeling Thermometer Change	Count of Changed	Changed as % of Total
-8	1	0.19%	-8	1	0.32%
-3	4	0.76%	-3	4	1.28%
-2	2	0.38%	-2	2	0.64%
-1	3	0.57%	-1	3	0.96%
0	435	82.86%	0	223	71.25%
1	33	6.29%	1	33	10.54%
2	25	4.76%	2	25	7.99%
3	6	1.14%	3	6	1.92%
4	7	1.33%	4	7	2.24%
5	7	1.33%	5	7	2.24%
6	1	0.19%	6	1	0.32%
7	1	0.19%	7	1	0.32%
Grand Total	N=525	100.00%	Grand Total	N=313	100.00%
Positive Change:	15.23%		Positive Change:	25.7%	

Overall, the numbers are quite impressive. For all of the charts, the positive change

rate is over 13%, and for the entries excluding those starting at 10, it is at least 25%. The

positive change indicates the percentage of total entries that moved on the feeling

thermometer in a positive direction. For example, in Figure 7 for all entries, 80 out of 525

entries (15.23%) had a change rate higher than 0. This means that for the most part PPMEAF

was successful in reaching their goal of a 25% move rate. When you exclude entries with a

starting number of 10, the move rate is almost twice as much as the one for all entries. For

the total canvassing data for the *Voter Characteristics Table*, the mean change was 15.23%

for all entries and 25.7% excluding the 10 starts. None of the changes are too drastic,

however. In Figure 7, only 7.04% of voters moved more than two points. 10.54% of voters

moved one point, and 7.99% of voters moved 2 points. The vast majority, 71.25% or 223 out

of 313 voters, did not move at all. Throughout all of the charts, the highest percentage of voters could be categorized as having no change. Yet, the move rate did increase from the fall and spring canvasses to the summer, indicating a positive trajectory in the effectiveness of the canvassing. In Figure 5, the fall and spring canvass data from the *Voter Characteristics Table* excluding entries with a starting number of 10, the no change rate was 75.34%. In the summer, however, that number decreased to 61.11%. That 14% reduction indicates that over the course of the canvassing PP likely improved their trainings, scripts and/or voter targeting in a way that moved more voters. However, PPMEAF indicate that it was up to 55% in August, which seems higher than the data indicates. This discrepancy could be because of data error, or because they include the negative change rates as well, which is allows them to claim higher numbers even though the actual implications of those numbers are negative.

Importantly, however, not all of the move rates indicate a positive change. Some of the voters end the conversation with a lower number than they begin. This could be attributed to a few factors. Firstly, the voters could simply not remember the number they give after the course of the long conversation. Therefore, it is possible that they are only incidentally giving a lower number at the end. Yet, this seems unlikely, since a 10 rating requires a strong conviction. Perhaps the assumption would be more applicable to someone who starts out with a 6 and ends with a 5, for example. Another possibility is that the conversation has an adverse effect on some voters. Some voters might believe that they are pro-choice, but in talking about the nuances of abortion policy realize that they are more uncomfortable with their belief than they had previously thought. This adverse consequence holds troubling significance for this type of canvassing. On the whole, however, the numbers are largely positive. This increase in change rate is quite substantial, not necessarily in terms of how

much people change their minds but rather in how many people change their minds a little bit. Instead of entirely altering an individual's worldview, the data indicates that the ABSR canvassing causes people to shift their thinking a little bit. However, without data about the longevity of the effects, it is impossible to know how durable the change is. It is possible that voters give a higher number at the end of the conversation out of politeness, but do not actually change their minds. Follow-up data is necessary to assess the lifespan of this canvass and whether or not it is effective.

Also, supposing the validity of spillover effect research, the effort could reach more people than just those canvassed. According to the spillover effect hypothesis, canvassing influences not only the primary contact/voter but also the other members of the household. Through conversations after the canvass has finished, the voter inadvertently spreads the impact of the canvass.

Canvasser Effects

In addition to understanding the move rate and the "success" of PP's work, I am also working to isolate additional variables that came up in my literature review and qualitative analysis. One of those is the role of the individual canvassers. In order to analyze the messenger effects, I analyzed the move rate by canvasser. Unfortunately, the comprehensive *Voter Characteristics Table* does not include the canvasser name. Therefore, I had to use a less comprehensive data table, which I refer to as the *Qualitative Responses Table,* which has only 247 usable results. The limited responses are because this chart is not automatically updated from the NGP VAN canvassing software, but is composed of manually entered data. This table includes details from the specific conversations, including the phrasing used by the voters themselves, as well as a breakdown by canvasser. Below is a list of all of the

canvassers and the respective change rates from their conversations. Again, this is not a wholly accurate list because it does not represent all of the canvasses. Yet, it still sheds some light onto canvasser disparity.

Figure 8. Change Rate by Canvasser

Canvasser	-5	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
1					3	1					4
2					2						2
3					9	2	2			1	14
4	1				1						2
5					2						2
6				1	8	2				1	12
7					4					1	5
8						1					1
9					2						2
10					13	5	1		1		20
11					2						2
12					3						3
13					2				1		3
14			1		1	2				1	5
15					7						7
16			1		6	1					8
17					3						3
18					3						3
19					9		1	1			11
20					3						3
21		1			2						3
22					3						3
23					1					1	2
24					10	1					11
25					1						1
26					4	2					6
27					4						4
28					3						3
29					13	1					14
30					2						2
31					3	1					4
32		1			1						2
33					4						4
34					3						3
35					5						5

36					6	1	1				8
37					4						4
38					3		1				4
39					1						1
40					5						5
41					3						3
42					6	2	5	1	1		15
43					2						2
44					1				1	1	3
45					1						1
46					2						2
47					1						1
48										1	1
49					12	2					14
50					1						1
51					3						3
Grand Total	1	2	2	1	193	24	11	2	4	7	247

This data is challenging to analyze because there is little data about these specific canvassers. It would be interesting to know their gender, age, or race in order to factor in those mediating effects. As I discussed in the first chapter, the individual-level characteristics of the canvassers themselves likely play an important role in the effectiveness of their message delivery. Political scientists Emily Kane and Laura Macaulay, for example, found that, there is a "tendency for both male and female respondents to offer more egalitarian or critical responses to female interviewers than to male interviewers."[147] Therefore, it could be possible that discrepancy between canvasser effectiveness is because of the gender of the messenger.

Despite the lack of demographic information, the document still shows that some canvassers do better than others. No canvasser had more than 1 negative change rate, suggesting that there might not be any completely ineffective or even negatively impactful canvassers. This could be attributed to successful trainings or frequent check-ins, which mitigate the negative

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[147] Kane and Macaulay, "Interviewer Gender and Gender Attitudes," 11.

impact of poor canvassers. Also, a bad canvasser might just not make it through the whole conversation, meaning that the data would not even count. There are definitely some more experienced canvassers, and a lot of the literature highlights the importance of experience in effective canvassing. Still, it is hard to tell whether these canvassers got better over time, or just have more move rates because they canvassed more. Yet, in comparing canvassers who had the same number of conversations, it becomes evident that some canvassers have more success than others. For example, between three canvassers who all had 14 conversations— one had only one positive change, one had two, while the third had five. As discussed in the first chapter, some canvassers are more confident and charismatic than others. Demographic factors as well as learned behaviors, such as comfort-level, experience and charisma, can all play a role in the variance between canvasser success.

Relevant Voter Characteristic Variables

Figure 5. Mean Feeling Thermometer Change

	Individual-Level Characteristics	Mean FT Change ^	# of Cases (N=)
Gender:	Female	0.24	288
	Male	0.35	236
Political Party	Democrat	0.21	228
	Republican	0.39	139
Age Range	18-29	-0.22	9
	30-44	0.26	80
	45-64	0.26	252
	65+	0.35	184
House-hold Income:	$0-19,000	0	2
	$20-39,000	0.44	27
	$40-59,000	0.33	197
	$60-79,000	0.3	212
	$80,000+	0.1	87
TOTAL:		**0.27**	**525**

Figure 6. Mean Feeling Thermometer Change Excluding Cases with Start Rating of 10

	Individual-Level Characteristics	Mean FT Change	# of Cases (N=)
Gender:	Female	0.43	155
	Male	0.56	158
Political Party	Democrat	0.46	102
	Republican	0.5	110
Age Range	18-29	-0.29	7
	30-44	0.45	47
	45-64	0.45	146
	65+	0.57	113
House-hold Income:	$0-19,000	0	2
	$20-39,000	0.63	19
	$40-59,000	0.55	118
	$60-79,000	0.5	127
	$80,000+	0.19	47
TOTAL:		**0.46**	**313**

^ "Mean FT Change" indicates the average change for each individual-level group on the feeling thermometer scale. 0 indicates no access to abortion and 10 indicates full access, so larger numbers indicate a higher positive change rate and smaller or negative numbers indicate a lower or negative change rate

Beyond just the change rate, I analyzed the specific characteristics of the voters in order to understand who was more posed to change their mind and whether it related to certain identity markers. Figure 5 and 6 are based on the *Voter Characteristics Table* for all existing data and all data except for entries starting at 10. For each of the individual-level factors, I also conducted an expanded an analysis with percentages, as seen in the Appendix. The mean change indicates on average, how many points on the feeling thermometer scale the voters are moved. In total, the canvass moved people an average of 0.27, or 0.46 excluding entries that start at 10. Regression models would be needed to prove the statistical significance of these numbers, however they seem to suggest that the canvass is effective in creative positive change. While the numbers are all lower than one, a half-point change seems to be a strong indicator that the canvass creates change. However, as I have stressed before, without durability tests the longevity of this change is impossible to determine.

There exists a small amount of discrepancy between voters, which again highlights the role of individual-level characteristics in persuasion. For all entries, male voters are more likely to change their number than female voters by 0.11 points, Republicans are more likely to change than Democrats by 0.18 points, older people are more likely to change than younger people, and people with lower household income are more likely to change than people with higher income. This statistics are the inverse of the initial start ratings from earlier. Indeed, this makes sense. For the categories where more people start at a 10, they are less likely to go anywhere.

However, what is particularly interesting, is that those change rate differences hold true across all demographics even when excluding entries that start at 10. The data suggest that men, Republicans, older voters, and people with lower household incomes are more

likely to change their mind and be persuaded to support abortion access than other demographics. In terms of gender, some scholars argue that gendered topics make the out-group (ie: men answering questions about female equality) more sensitive and therefore more likely to answer in the way that they think is desired by the interviewer. This could explain why men would be more likely to answer more favorably.

Figures 5 and 6 also illustrate the division of ratings based on different income brackets. Research differs about the susceptibility to persuasion of voters based on income level. Some scholars argue that lower-income and less educated voters might be more likely to change their minds because their ideas are less entrenched. Others contend that higher-educated and more wealthy voters are more likely to change their minds because they are more open to facts.[148] The data here are not totally clear, because there are far more upper-income voters than lower-income, which makes the data slightly challenging to compare. The change rate seems to be the highest among those with an income of $20,000-39,000. Yet, the sample size of 19 makes statistical significance unlikely. There is minimal change difference between those with an income $40,00-59,000 and those earning $60,000-79,000. Of those cases, there was about a 0.5 mean change. Once again, this change rate is not just positive, however. In terms of age range, the data set is also limited for the younger categories, making data analysis challenging. Yet, it does seem that older voters are more likely to change their mind about abortion.

Lastly, I broke down the data based on political party. This categorization seems relevant given the highly politicized and partisan nature of abortion. There are 228 entries for Democrats in the first table, and only 102 in the second. It is not surprising that more

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[148] Huddy et al., "The Effect of Interviewer Gender on The Survey Response," 208.

Democrats rate themselves as a 10 at the beginning of the conversation. What is perhaps more interesting is examining the change rates of the individuals who are not at a 10 at the beginning. While the Democrat voters had a relatively low change rate in the initial graph, only around 0.21, when you exclude the entries that have an initial 10 rating, the change rate increases to around 0.46. There is not much disparity between the party affiliation. Republican voters have a 0.5 change rate in the second table, which is only 0.04 points different than Democrats. This minor difference might indicate that partisan identity is not the biggest factor in determining the effectiveness of a canvassing effort. Perhaps that might not be true for other issues, and it would be interesting to identify in what cases political affiliation holds more weight. It seems that, for PPMEAF's case, it is not the strongest marker of susceptibility to change.

Conclusion

Individual-level characteristics matter on many levels. They determine what people think about an issue and how likely they are to change their mind about that issue. As shown through the data, there are variations in the initial start rate opinion of abortion based on gender, political party, age range, and household income. Those same demographic measures also have an impact on how likely a person is to change their number on the abortion feeling thermometer scale. Additionally, they also play a role in the messenger's effect, in terms of how persuasive the specific canvasser might be depending on their identity. The literature on interviewer bias and gender-of-interviewer effect is mixed in terms of how demographic factors influence individuals. Further research would be necessary to determine in what ways those effects come into play in this study.

However, not all of the individual level factors are the same. For example, political party holds less sway in change rates than gender and age. People of different ages seem more likely to think differently about abortion according to the initial rates than people with different household incomes. Likely, certain canvasser characteristics would be more impactful than others.

Overall, despite the variances between individual-level factors, PPMEAF's canvass seems to have a net positive change rate. In that respect, they were successful. Importantly, the numbers are not huge. For the most part, change happens within the one to two point scale. This indicates that even if voters are "changing their minds," it is happening on a marginal level. Out of the 525 entries, only 22 moved 3 or more points in a positive direction. That is only 4.19%.

What, then, could Planned Parenthood do better to achieve higher rates of success? Without proper data collection, it is hard to determine. As I indicated in the previous chapter, they have been constantly working on their scripts and wording. Although the message might not always be the most important factor, as I discussed in the first chapter, those differences in script could be a way to increase their change rates. Additionally, they could attempt to utilize theories about interviewer effect and vary which canvassers they use. Finally, as I will discuss in the following chapter, they could try to use other mediums, like mailers or phone-calls, to screen for people who are more likely to answer the door and thereby create more efficient canvasses. In the following chapter, I lay the groundwork for a more ideal study that could expand on this analysis.

Appendix

Figure 1. Gender Feeling Thermometer Change Expanded with Percentages

	Gender					
FT Change	**Female**		**Male**		**Grand Total**	
-8	1	0.35%	0	0.00%	1	0.19%
-3	2	0.69%	2	0.85%	4	0.76%
-2	0	0.00%	2	0.85%	2	0.38%
-1	2	0.69%	1	0.42%	3	0.57%
0	243	84.38%	191	80.93%	434	82.82%
1	19	6.60%	14	5.93%	33	6.30%
2	12	4.17%	13	5.51%	25	4.77%
3	1	0.35%	5	2.12%	6	1.15%
4	3	1.04%	4	1.69%	7	1.34%
5	4	1.39%	3	1.27%	7	1.34%
6	1	0.35%	0	0.00%	1	0.19%
7	0	0.00%	1	0.42%	1	0.19%
Grand Total	**288**	**100.00%**	**236**	**100.00%**	**524**	**100.00%**

Figure 2. Age Feeling Thermometer Change Expanded with Percentages

	Age									
FT Change	**18-29**		**30-44**		**45-64**		**65+**		**Grand Total**	
-8	1	11.1%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.22%
-3	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3	1.19%	1	0.54%	3	0.65%
-2	0	0.00%	1	1.25%	0	0.00%	1	0.54%	1	0.22%
-1	0	0.00%	2	2.50%	1	0.40%	0	0.00%	3	1.15%
0	5	55.6%	62	77.5%	212	84.1%	156	84.8%	388	90.8%
1	0	0.00%	10	12.5%	19	7.54%	4	2.17%	26	4.60%
2	3	33.3%	4	5.00%	6	2.38%	12	6.52%	20	3.45%
3	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3	1.19%	3	1.63%	4	0.87%
4	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	1.59%	3	1.63%	7	1.52%
5	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	1.59%	3	1.63%	6	1.30%
6	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.54%	1	0.22%
7	0	0.00%	1	1.25%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.22%
Grand Total	**9**	**100%**	**80**	**100%**	**252**	**100%**	**184**	**100%**	**525**	**100%**

Figure 3. Political Party Feeling Thermometer Change Expanded with Percentages

FT Change	Democrat		Republican		Green		Non-Affiliated/ Neutral		Grand Total	
							Political Party Affiliation			
-8	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.71%	1	0.19%
-3	2	0.88%	0	0.00%	1	6.67%	1	0.71%	4	0.76%
-2	1	0.44%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.71%	2	0.38%
-1	2	0.88%	0	0.00%	1	6.67%	0	0.00%	3	0.57%
0	196	85.96%	114	79.00%	11	73.33%	112	79.43%	434	82.82%
1	10	4.39%	10	8.20%	0	0.00%	13	9.22%	33	6.30%
2	10	4.39%	8	7.19%	2	13.33%	5	3.55%	25	4.77%
3	4	1.75%	1	5.76%	0	0.00%	1	0.71%	6	1.15%
4	1	0.44%	4	0.72%	0	0.00%	2	1.42%	7	1.34%
5	1	0.44%	2	2.88%	0	0.00%	4	2.84%	7	1.34%
6	1	0.44%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.71%	1	0.19%
7	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.71%	1	0.19%
Grand Total	228	100.00%	139	100.00%	15	100.00%	141	100.00%	524	100.00%

Figure 4. Household Income Feeling Thermometer Change Expanded with Percentages

FT Change	0-19,000		20000-39000		40000-59000		60000-79000		80000+		Grand Total	
							Household Income Brackets					
-8	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.54%	0	0.47%	1	0.22%
-3	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.53%	3	0.51%	0	1.42%	3	0.65%
-2	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.00%	1	0.51%	0	0.47%	1	0.22%
-1	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.53%	1	0.51%	1	0.47%	3	1.15%
0	2	100%	22	81.5%	166	85.1%	166	84.3%	79	78.3%	388	90.8%
1	0	0.00%	2	7.41%	6	2.66%	21	3.05%	4	9.91%	26	4.60%
2	0	0.00%	1	3.70%	11	5.85%	10	5.58%	3	4.72%	20	3.45%
3	0	0.00%	1	3.70%	4	1.60%	1	2.03%	0	0.47%	4	0.87%
4	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	2.13%	3	2.03%	0	1.42%	7	1.52%
5	0	0.00%	1	3.70%	3	1.60%	3	1.52%	0	1.42%	6	1.30%
6	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.54%	0	0.47%	1	0.22%
7	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.54%	0	0.47%	1	0.22%
Grand Total	2	100%	27	100%	197	100%	212	100%	87	100%	525	100%

<u>Conclusion</u>

Was Planned Parenthood successful in persuading individuals to think differently about abortion? In a few important regards, the evidence suggests that the answer is yes. The data indicate that the conversations shifted a relatively high number of people to become more open to abortion access. Excluding individuals whose starting rate was already 10, the mean opinion change was 0.48 points. In other words, on average, individuals were moved about a half a point towards more open abortion access, on a ten-point scale. Moreover, that does not seem limited to those who might seem more disposed to supporting Planned Parenthood. In fact, the mean opinion change for Republican voters was 0.39 points, while for Democrats it was 0.21 points. This is likely because more Democrats start at a 10 (i.e., already highly supportive of abortion access), but it still suggests that individual-level characteristics do not preclude entire groups from being immovable. Therefore, on just the measure of feeling thermometer change, there seems to be a strong likelihood that persuasion is possible.

Another measure of success involves how Planned Parenthood sees itself. The organization, in both personal interviews and communication with its constituent base, speaks of the impressive achievements and importance of the canvass. Indeed, it is not surprising that the organization would want to praise their efforts, even hyperbolically. However, it does offer insight into organizational framing. As in, it highlights how an organization might proclaim the success of one effort in order to garner volunteer support for future efforts. The specific framing of the PPMEAF canvass was something not just necessary (in their eyes), but as fun. By claiming that the canvassers actively enjoy the canvass, PPMEAF might be able to better build its volunteer base and redefine abortion not

as a controversial and difficult issue but as a personal and emotionally intimate one. This reframing is essential to the organization, because the purpose of the conversations is to destigmatize abortion by having individuals change the way that they think about the issue.

The problem with the data analysis, however, is that the definition of success beyond how PPMEAF sees itself is still unclear. The existing literature on persuasion speaks about canvassing and changing attitudes in a different way than PPMEAF thinks about its own efforts. Persuasion in the scholarly research often goes hand-in-hand with mobilization. The original Leadership LAB efforts relating to reducing prejudice towards gay people (as outlined earlier in this paper) was in direct response to policy around Proposition 8. Measuring persuasion efforts with more amorphous end goals, as is the case with the PPMEAF canvass, is still new. Below I highlight ways in which future research can build upon my analysis to create a more in-depth and methodologically sound study of deep canvassing.

Aspects of the Message to Study

For future researchers looking to study the effectiveness of deep canvassing, it would be interesting to note the effects of certain words or scripts. Although the literature largely suggests that the specific message might not hold as much weight as the medium or messenger, it would still be fruitful to understand how different variations in conversations lead to different outcomes. There are a few modes in which this could be assessed. The canvassers in the PPMEAF study differ between using personal stories (in which they specifically use "I" and talk about their own lives) and stories about others ("a friend of mine" or "I have a family member who…"). (Notably, all of the stories used by canvassers were true and were not "made up" to enhance the emotional thrust of the conversations. My

recommendation here would similarly only leverage stories that were true.) A researcher could assess the difference between personal stories and second-degree stories by training a group of canvassers to use two stories—one personal and one of a friend or a family member. The canvassers would then use the first story half the time and the second story the other half. By utilizing the same canvassers and the same stories, the researchers could mitigate some of the messenger and message variation effects.

Additionally, there are a number of topics that come up in PPMEAF's canvass. Although the scripts differ somewhat, generally the conversations touch upon abortion and unplanned pregnancy, experiences learning about sex and sexual education, relationships, and judgment and support. An important line of research could be investigating if any of these areas are more persuasive than any others. A further study could vary the specific messages to control and study one specific topic. For example, half the canvassers could only speak about relationships, while the other half only discuss sexual education.

Aside from varying the subtopics, another study could investigate the framing of the message. As I discussed in the literature review analysis on framing and campaign advertising, social movement organizations construct narratives (again, using true stories and experiences) in a way that they believe will have the greatest impact on their followers or opponents. PPMEAF is already aware of the ways in which a message could have a different impact depending on its wording, which is why it was constantly tweaking its scripts. A controlled experiment (this could be done using survey experiments or in the context of on-going canvassing efforts) could study whether or not there are tangible differences between message variances, such as whether adding, "safe and legal" before stating "abortion" is significant. It would be important for further methodological studies to emphasize assuaging

the discrepancies in the ways the canvasser delivers the script. In order for the study to be more accurate and less random, canvasser training would be need to stress standardization in the conversations at the door.

Aspects of the Messenger to Study

In addition to studying the effects of varying the message, researchers could experiment with messenger effects. This line of study is particularly relevant in deep canvassing research, because the interaction at the door is likely to vary greatly depending on the canvasser. Also, in the marriage equality study by political scientists Michael LaCour and Donald Green, the success of the study was in large part attributed to the identity of the canvassers as gay. Although that study was later discredited, the follow-up by researchers David Broockman and Joshua Kalla on attitudes towards transgender people also studied the identity of the canvassers themselves. This time, however, they found that there was little difference between trans- and cis-gender canvassers. Therefore, the importance of the identity of the canvassers is actively contended within canvassing research. A continuation of my research could vary the canvassers by those who have had an abortion and those who have not. Additionally, there are other variables by which the canvasser identity could be varied. For example, it would be interesting to study the gender-of-interviewer effect. The data I analyzed did not have a list of canvassers by demographic characteristics (as in, gender, age, etc.), thereby limiting the extent of my research into these variables.

Also, in the canvassing by PPMEAF, there were sometimes multiple canvassers. This could be because someone was in training, or holding a video camera, or it was easier to have two people canvass at once so that one could drive. The extant literature does not speak at all to the effect of having multiple canvassers. However, one could imagine that there is a

negative effect because of the intimidating nature of a two-on-one conversation. Canvassing literature could benefit from an inquiry into this effect.

Finally, an important role of the messenger in the PPMEAF canvass was the role of the canvass on the volunteers themselves. This is another aspect of the abortion canvass that has been largely ignored by the canvassing literature. PPMEAF claims that the canvass has an important role in de-stigmatizing abortion for the volunteers themselves, and creating a stronger volunteer base. Their data was not comprehensive enough to study this effect, but further research could include a more accurate canvasser feedback form that could speak to the impact of the canvassing on the canvassers.

Aspects of the Medium to Study

Lastly, deep canvassing offers a lot of possibilities within the medium field. David Broockman and Joshua Kalla in their transgender study developed a new methodology that involved calling individuals before canvassing. They suggested that people who answered the calls were also more likely to answer the door, therefore increasing the efficiency of the canvass by targeting individuals that were more likely to respond. PPMEAF abandoned phone-calling after consistently low response rates; however, researchers could attempt to mimic Broockman and Kalla's work to assess if it is more efficient.

In addition to identifying more targeted canvasses, further canvassing research could offer insight into interaction effects with other communication methods. In other words, political scientists could study what occurs when individuals are canvassed through multiple methods. Is an individual more likely to change his/her attitude when they receive a phone call and a mailer as well as an in-person conversation? Also, the research could meld the world of campaign advertising with canvassing and Get Out the Vote literature. Do certain

forms of advertisement prime individuals to become more open to changing their attitude in an in-person canvass? Would, say, exposure to a public service announcement on TV increase the likelihood that a person could be persuaded in a door-to-door canvass?

Finally, PPMEAF claimed that the widespread door-to-door canvassing efforts were unique to Maine. Some of the literature speaks to the idea that certain areas might be more accessible to canvassing efforts than others. However, the research articulates this concept in broad strokes—rural vs urban, differences between various countries. The literature could benefit from inquiry into more particular differences between U.S. states. Does PPMEAF's assertion stand? Or, could other states implement the canvass just as effectively? What baseline requirements would enable a more effective state canvass? For example, is the rate of response higher if the state is a more contentious political battleground because then it is more likely that there exists an established culture of canvassing and politicized debate? Or, perhaps states with less demographic variation are more amenable because people could be more trusting and open to canvassers. Also, it would be important for researchers to distinguish between rate of response and levels of change. It is possible that some locations are more likely to have higher response rates (more people open their doors and start conversations) but fewer people who change their attitudes? The likelihood that a canvasser could have a conversation with an individual and the likelihood of them persuading the individual are not necessarily correlated.

Longevity effect

Although PPMEAF conducted follow-up phone calls to the people whom they canvassed, the entries were not methodologically sound or comprehensive enough to study. The duration effect of the canvassing is an integral measure of its success. It seems possible

that respondents could give a higher number at the end of the conversation with the canvasser because they feel uncomfortable or they believe it might be politer. Follow-up phone calls would provide analysis into the whether or not the attitude change of individuals lasts. A more accurate study of follow-up phone calls would involve several procedural aspects. The phone calls could be done twice, perhaps six weeks and then 3 months later, to determine how lasting the effects are. Also, a follow-up could be conducted through an Internet poll instead of over the phone. Additionally, many researchers who utilize follow-ups in order to determine duration effects will mask the specific purpose of the secondary interactions. In the follow-up phone call or internet survey, the topic of the initial canvass might be just one of many subjects, thereby mitigating the likelihood that individuals will say simply what they think the organization wants to hear. These follow-up communications could also be utilized to study the impact of the canvass on the canvassers, through spread-out volunteer feedback forms.

Mobilization/Persuasion and Issue/Election

At the beginning of the literature review, I provided a table to illustrate the various categories discussed by the extant literature. The research is diverse and far-reaching, which is why I separated it into four major categories. The divisions fell largely along two lines— mobilization versus persuasion and issue verse election. I stated that my analysis, in terms of both the literature and PPMEAF's efforts, falls mainly within the persuasion and issue categories. However, my research exposed important lines of inquiry within the other areas as well.

An expansion of this research could focus on the role of deep canvassing on mobilization efforts. That aspect could be tracked through an individual's donation pattern,

or whether or not they sign up for a volunteer shift. Additionally, the mobilization research could probe beyond an individual's propensity to mobilize for that specific organization. For example, does the Planned Parenthood canvass increase the likelihood that someone votes in a future election because the conversation might increase a level of civic or political consciousness? Or, is an individual more disposed to call his or her legislator, or to attend a rally? The mobilization efforts could be looked at in conjunction with the persuasion aspect, thereby merging the two boxes that I created in my earlier table. A more in-depth study could investigate whether people who change their attitude are more likely to mobilize around that issue, and whether an individual's mobilization around an issue is an indication of an attitude change or simply an increased sense of urgency.

There is also a lot of possibility for further study on the election/issue side of the table. Firstly, the research on deep canvassing is limited to a study on marriage equality (which has been discredited), transgender attitudes, and abortion stigma. There are an infinite number of issues on which this canvass could be conducted, and it would be important to identify whether the canvassing method is more effective in certain cases than in others. As I mentioned in the introduction, researchers debate whether or not this method of canvassing could be effective for issues like abortion that are more entrenched in people's minds. A follow-up study could do a comparative analysis of two different issues to determine whether the canvass's effectiveness is issue-specific. Additionally, the three topics on which the canvass had been conducted are ones in which canvassers are able to discuss real, lived experiences. Could the canvass trainings be adapted to enable canvassers to share personal stories about less intimate subjects—like climate change or privacy rights?

Beyond the diversity of issues, further research could study the effectiveness of deep canvassing on election related persuasion or mobilization. As of now, deep canvassing has been utilized by social movement organizations for the purpose of de-stigmatizing and changing attitudes around specific issues. However, it seems possible that the format of an open in-person conversation could be effective for political campaigns as well. In this case, several important questions would emerge. Does the canvasser need to be the politician him/herself? If not, what kind of personal stories would be required? How about for a more generic Get Out the Vote canvass? Further research could study whether it would be a stretch for canvassers to develop personal stories about the importance of voting in their lives.

PPMEAF's Data

The possibilities for future study in this field are vast. There is already so much literature on mobilization and persuasion, but with the new model of deep canvassing there are innumerable opportunities for expansion. The arena is particularly exciting because of its strong foundation. Further research can connect the theories and hypotheses projected by previous political scientists with the new canvassing method and different issues. This paper is an important start to this work. Although the data are limited in several important ways, it has also enabled a crucial glimpse into the effectiveness of the canvassing efforts.

The data could have been collected in a more methodological fashion; however, it was comprehensive enough for me to assess several relevant components of PPMEAF's efforts. With 525 usable data entries, the sample size is substantial. I did not conduct regression models or more intricate data analysis, which could support or negate my claim that the sample size is substantial. That data analysis would be an important follow up to my work. However, as it stands, the data set still holds important indicators on abortion opinion

and the canvassing effectiveness. And, the sample is largely random. Although the towns chosen were calculated by the organization in terms of level of comfort, urgency and knowledge of the turf, the decision of which voters to canvass was more random. PPMEAF spoke to all voters within a reasonable canvassing area, except for those who, based on data from their VAN voter file analytics, they believed to be vehemently opposed to abortion. Therefore, the demographic layout is largely random. Indeed, the data splits 288 women to 236 men, and 228 Democrats and 139 Republicans. Those numbers are relatively well divided.

What's Next?

The work for both political scientists and PPMEAF is far from over. Researchers should feel emboldened by the possibilities of this new canvassing effort and conduct more rigorous methodological studies to better assess the effectiveness of the strategy. PPMEAF itself could be a place to start. They are planning on restarting their canvassing efforts within the next year. Although, it seems that the Maine branch might be on its own for a little while. There are no other Planned Parenthoods that are conducting identical canvassing efforts, which Aimee Martin attributes to a lack of scientific proof of its effectiveness and the organization's focus on more urgent goals. However, it seems likely that with the success of the transgender attitudes study, other organizations will be on board. The Leadership LAB has published a report that can serve as a roadmap for other groups.

As the 2016 election just passed, there is currently an opening in the political system for organizations to refocus to non-campaigning related efforts. This past election cycle focused on the use of new technologies—Twitter, YouTube, email blasts. Social movement organizations, elections, and political researchers seem ever more concerned with how new

technology efforts assist or impede communication. Perhaps what we need instead is a refocus to more traditional communication strategies. As PPMEAF has suggested, we might not even fully understand the power of the most basic one-on-one conversation. The Internet might be changing the way in which we connect with social and political issues, but door-to-door conversations might be changing how we think about them altogether.

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