

**STUDYING THE EFFECTS OF MOBILIZATION MESSAGES IN A
STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT: APPLYING THE RECEIVE-ACCEPT-
SAMPLE (RAS) MODEL**

by

Brandon W. Lenoir

B.S. in Business Management, Idaho State University, 1997

M.S. in Political Science, University of Pittsburgh, 2010

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
PhD in Political Science

University of Pittsburgh

2013

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

This dissertation was presented

by

Brandon W. Lenoir

It was defended on

December 3, 2013

and approved by

Jon Hurwitz, PhD, Professor

Chris Bonneau, PhD, Associate Professor

John Duffy, PhD, Professor

Dissertation Director: David Barker, PhD, Professor

Copyright © by Brandon W. Lenoir

2013

STUDYING THE EFFECTS OF MOBILIZATION MESSAGES IN A STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT: APPLYING THE RECEIVE-ACCEPT-SAMPLE (RAS) MODEL

Brandon W. Lenoir, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2013

The study of mobilization has presented scholars with an interesting puzzle as we attempt to identify who is responsive to mobilization messages. The framing of the debate by Kenneth M. Goldstein and Matthew Holleque (2010) pits competing theoretical arguments against one another without a satisfying conclusion. Some argue it is the least informed segments of the population who will be responsive (e.g., Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), while others posit it is those with high levels of political information and past involvement (e.g., Hillygus 2005). In this dissertation I present a third explanation that may provide a better framework for studying the debate. Applying John Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model to the study of mobilization, I find not only do individuals with moderate levels of past voting behavior respond to mobilization messages, but so do those with high and low levels. The key to the RAS model is exposure to the message. Thus understanding who is most likely to receive a mobilization message is central to this project.

I conducted field experiments during a magisterial judicial election in a major U.S. city to collect my data. The purpose of those experiments was to capture the effects of mobilization messages on an individual's probability of voting on Election Day. My results indicate including individuals who would normally not receive mobilization messages (i.e., those who do not have a history of voting) introduce selection bias. Once I control for that bias, I find not only are individuals with moderate levels of past voting behavior responsive, but so are those with high

and low levels of past turnout. Receiving a get-out-the-vote door hanger two days prior to an election increases the probability of voting by 3.76% for moderate voters, 3.82% for frequent voters, and 2.88% for infrequent voters.

The effects of mobilization messages are not limited to turnout. Perhaps more important than turnout, I found that a candidate who conducts a last minute GOTV drive can increase their vote share by as much as 25%. This dissertation breaks new ground on the effects of mobilization messages and contributes to a clearer picture of those effects.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	xi
1.0 Introduction.....	2
1.1 Exposure to Mobilization Messages: The Strategic Paradox.....	4
1.2 Implications of Strategy: Studying Mobilization.....	5
1.3 Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) Model and the Effects of Mobilization Messages.....	5
1.3.1 Effects of omitting strategy when studying a phenomenon that is inherently strategic.....	6
1.3.2 Identifying who is most responsive to mobilization messages in a strategic environment.....	6
1.3.3 Disentangling the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice from other campaign effects.....	7
2.0 Converting the Basic RAS Model from Capturing Attitude Change to Behavior Change: A Roadmap for Studying Mobilization.....	8
2.1 Received: Elite Messages vs. Mobilization Messages.....	9
2.2 Accept: The Second Step in Attitude Change.....	10
2.3 Accept: The Second Step in Behavior Change.....	11
2.4 Sample: The Effect of the New Message.....	13

2.5 Moving Forward: RAS and Mobilization.....	14
3.0 Literature Review: Setting the Stage.....	15
3.1 Reception: Who Gets Contacted During a Mobilization Drive.....	16
3.2 Accept: Identifying who is Most Responsive to Mobilization Messages.....	18
3.3 Sample: The Effects of Mobilization Messages on Mobilization and Vote Choice.....	19
3.4 Lessons Learned: Nonpartisan Mobilization.....	20
3.5 Lessons Learned: Partisan Mobilization.....	22
3.6 Who is Mobilizeable?.....	25
3.7 Vote Choice.....	29
3.8 Campaign Effects.....	30
3.9 Learning.....	31
3.10 Priming.....	33
3.11 Persuasion.....	34
3.12 Bridging Turnout Persuasion with Vote Choice Persuasion.....	35
3.13 Moving Forward.....	37
3.14 Modes of Data Collection.....	38
3.15 Campaign Salience.....	40
4.0 Campaign Setting: Judicial and Low Salience Campaigns.....	42
4.1 Judicial and Low Salience Elections.....	44
4.2 Studying Judicial Campaigns.....	44
4.3 Vote Roll-Off: Effect of Electronic Voting Machines.....	46

4.4 Studying Low Salience Local Elections.....	48
5.0 Studying Voter Mobilization: The Pitfalls of Omitting ‘Strategy’ in your	
Design.....	50
5.1 Modes of Data Collection: Potential Bias.....	51
5.2 Introduction of Selection Bias: Randomization.....	52
5.3 Practitioner Voter Targeting Approach.....	54
5.4 Selection Bias: Increased or Decreased Effects?.....	55
5.5 Non-Strategic Door Hanger Experiment.....	58
5.6 Strategic Door Hanger Experiment.....	60
5.7 Vote Roll-Off: Effect of Electronic Voting Machines.....	62
5.8 Results: Non-Strategic vs. Strategic Door Hanger Experiments.....	64
5.9 Discussion.....	66
6.0 Who is Mobilizeable?: The Effects of Mobilization Messages on Frequent,	
Intermittent and Infrequent Voters.....	69
6.1 Identifying who is Most Responsive to Mobilization Messages in a Strategic Environment.....	71
6.2 The Effect of Exposure: The Receive step in the RAS Model.....	74
6.3 Voter Propensity: Defining Frequent, Intermittent and Infrequent Voters.....	76
6.4 Data: Identifying who is Responsive to Mobilization Messages.....	77
6.5 Results: Non-strategic Door Hanger Experiment.....	78
6.6 Results: Strategic Door Hanger Experiment.....	80

6.7 Discussion.....	83
7.0 Mobilization Message Effects: Vote Choice.....	85
7.1 Vote Choice: Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) Model.....	85
7.2 Campaign Effects.....	87
7.3 Learning.....	88
7.4 Priming.....	89
7.5 Persuasion.....	91
7.6 Bridging Turnout Persuasion with Vote Choice Persuasion.....	92
7.7 Hypotheses.....	94
7.8 Testing the Vote Choice Effect.....	95
7.9 Results.....	97
7.10 Discussion.....	101
8.0 Conclusion.....	103
8.1 The Importance of Strategy When Studying Mobilization.....	104
8.2 Who Mobilizes: Mixed Results and Conclusions.....	105
8.3 Mobilization: Not Just a Tool for Turnout.....	108
8.4 Final Thoughts and Future Directions.....	109
9.0 APPENDIX A. RANDOMIZATION CHECKS.....	111
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	113

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table 5-1. Regression results for strategic and non-strategic population.....</u>	<u>66</u>
<u>Table 5-2. Testing the Difference in Treatment Effect Between the Non-Strategic and Strategic Populations.....</u>	<u>68</u>
<u>Table 6-1. Probit Regression of Voter Turnout on Mobilization Treatment (Non-Strategic)....</u>	<u>81</u>
<u>Table 6-2. Probit Regression of Voter Turnout on Mobilization Treatment (Strategic).....</u>	<u>82</u>
<u>Table 7-1. Regression of Door Hanger on Vote Share.....</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>Table 7-2. Regression of Door Hanger on Democratic Vote Share.....</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>Table 7-3. Regression of Door Hanger on GOP Vote Share.....</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>Table 7-4. Testing the Difference Between the Increase in Democratic and GOP Vote Share..</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Table 9-1. Randomization Check. Non-Strategic Experiment and Control Groups.....</u>	<u>111</u>
<u>Table 9-2. Randomization Check. Strategic Experiment and Control Groups.....</u>	<u>112</u>

PREFACE

I would like to acknowledge my dissertation committee, comprised of John Hurwitz, Chris Bonneau, John Duffy and David Barker. Your feedback and suggestions have helped make the final product of my dissertation stronger. I especially would like to thank David Barker for his guidance during my time as a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh. Not only was David the chair of my dissertation committee, but he also was my graduate advisor, sounding board, and my friend. I would also like to thank Don Green. Though not an official member of my dissertation committee, Don's guidance and suggestions about my field experiments were fundamental in the process of designing and implementing this project. I would be remiss if I did not also thank LJ Zigerell. A fellow graduate student, LJ was always available to respond when I would call or email with questions. His fresh perspective was invaluable as I finalized my dissertation. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Kristin. She endured the dissertation writing process as my girlfriend and, despite the late hours and cancelled dates, still said yes when I asked her to marry me. Thank you all for your help and support.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study of mobilization has presented scholars with an interesting puzzle as we attempt to identify who in the electorate is most responsive to mobilization messages. The framing of the debate by Kenneth M. Goldstein and Matthew Holleque (2010) pits competing theoretical arguments against one another without a satisfying conclusion. On one side is the belief that the least politically engaged and least informed segments of the population will likely be most affected by mobilization messages (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). That argument is predicated on the idea that the politically unengaged benefit most from the cost cutting nature of mobilization messages when gathering information about a particular election. On the other side is the belief that only the most informed and politically engaged will respond to mobilization messages because they are the ones paying attention to the election, and are thus most receptive to new information (Hillygus 2005). As I will discuss in the pages that follow, a third explanation may provide a better framework for studying the debate. John Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model posits that it is the people with moderate levels of political information and interest who will be most affected by media messages. The caveat to that assumption is, however, in order to have new political information affect your opinion you first have to receive it. Thus, understanding who in the electorate is most likely to receive media messages, and for the purpose of this project who is most likely to receive mobilization messages, is central to understanding the effects of those messages.

In the media setting for which Zaller applied his RAS model, television viewing (and other media consumption) habits can limit or enhance the amount of political information

exposure for which an individual comes in contact. The assumption is that individuals with moderate levels of political interest, while not intentionally seeking political information, do not intentionally opt out of exposure. As such, the combination of exposure and malleable opinions makes this group most affected by political media messages. As I will explain and explore in the pages that follow, applying the RAS model to the study of mobilization may result in an alternate conclusion.

Arguably, those at the mid-range of political sophistication and interest have malleable political opinions. A case could also be made for low sophisticates possessing movable opinions. If exposure is key, and mobilization messages delivered to the doorstep of an individual are more difficult to avoid than media messages, it may be discover the RAS model, when applied to the study of mobilization, also affects individuals with low levels of political knowledge as it does those in the mid-range of interest and knowledge.

In the media setting, individuals self-select the programming for which they are exposed. An individual who has low political interest, according to the RAS model, will seek out non-political programs (entertainment). Those decisions help insulate an individual from exposure to political information. Individuals in the mid-range of political interest may not specifically avoid political programming (news and current event shows), thus increasing the probability they will at least have passive exposure to political information. It is that passive exposure to political messages identified in the RAS model that is the mechanism which enables media messages to have an effect.

In the mobilization setting, the decision to opt in to, or out of, exposure is preempted. By taking the campaign to the doorstep of an individual, even the least politically engaged will experience passive exposure to mobilization messages. If passive exposure has an affect when

studying media effects, it seems logical the same could apply with mobilization messages. The primary difference between the media and mobilization environments is who is exposed to the messages. Thus, the conclusions of the RAS model when applied to the study of the effects of mobilization messages may differ from Zaller's earlier conclusions in the media consumption environment.

Understanding the differences in the information exposure environments of the media compared to campaign mobilization is paramount to the current project. As such, I will compare the circumstances within both environments that contribute to how an individual receives information, the conditions that improve the probability they will accept the information, and thus apply that information (sample) to their current beliefs that hold priority at the time of exposure. Thus, understanding who has the highest probability of exposure is the first step in applying the RAS model to the study of mobilization effects.

1.1 EXPOSURE TO MOBILIZATION MESSAGES: THE STRATEGIC PARADOX

In the electoral setting, not all individuals are equally important to a political campaign. Operating with limited resources of time and money, campaign practitioners strategically target individuals in the electorate who they anticipate will be most responsive or supportive to their campaign efforts. As I will explain later, one of the primary filters used by campaign practitioners to identify who in the electorate should be contacted during a mobilization drive is past voting history (e.g. Grey 2007; Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Issenberg 2012) . As such, those with a history of voting have a higher probability of being strategically targeted by a political campaign. It is important to note, however, not only do the strategically targeted

frequent voters get exposed to the mobilization message, but so do other individuals residing at the same address (e.g., Gerber and Green 2001). This is because the ability to control who is exposed to the message at a particular address is limited. Whomever answers the door or discovers the campaign literature left at their front door receives the mobilization message. Thus, when studying the effects of exposure to mobilization messages while applying the RAS model, it is important to keep in mind everyone who potentially will be exposed to the message.

1.2 IMPLICATIONS OF STRATEGY: STUDYING MOBILIZATION

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the mosaic of political science theory on mobilization by exploring the challenges scholars face when applying scientific inquiry in an inherently strategic environment. Understanding these challenges has more than trivial implications. Not only can this project provide future scholars with a better understanding of the environment for which we study, but it may also offer a roadmap for empirical study of mobilization effects and, perhaps even broader, campaign effects. By applying the RAS model to the study of mobilization we may gain a clearer picture of who in the electorate is most responsive to mobilization messages and, even broader, campaign messages.

1.3 RECEIVE-ACCEPT-SAMPLE (RAS) MODEL AND THE EFFECTS OF MOBILIZATION

MESSAGES

Utilizing the Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) Model as a framework to study the effects of mobilization messages, the three areas I plan to address in this dissertation include the effects of

omitting strategy when studying a phenomenon that is inherently strategic, how to capture which individuals are most responsive to mobilization messages in a strategic environment, and disentangling the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice from the other effects of a campaign.

1.3.1 Effects of omitting strategy when studying a phenomenon that is inherently strategic

My results indicate that omitting strategy, the kind employed by political practitioners when targeting voters, while designing a mobilization study may introduce selection bias. Ironically, it is selection bias that has prompted scholars to omit strategy when studying mobilization, and thus presents us with a strategic paradox. As I will explain in the pages that follow, it may be the steps taken to eliminate selection bias that may in fact introduce selection bias. I will demonstrate how that selection bias has ripple effects on the findings of studies using nonstrategic samples, or samples achieved by randomizing the entire registered voter population. As such, by including strategy when studying mobilization, we can get a clearer picture of who in the electorate has the highest probability of exposure to mobilization messages, and thus can measure more accurately who is most responsive to mobilization messages.

1.3.2 Identifying who is most responsive to mobilization messages in a strategic environment

Consistent with John Zaller's RAS model, receiving political information is the first step in capturing an effect. My results indicate infrequent voters residing at strategically targeted households during a campaign are, in fact, responsive to mobilization messages. Applying these findings to the RAS model supports the idea that individuals with low levels of past political

participation, individuals who would likely opt out of exposure to political media messages, may be responsive to mobilization messages when received. I will explore and discuss the conditions for which those effects are strongest.

1.3.3 Disentangling the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice from other campaign effects

Finally, studying the effects of mobilization messages on turnout only provides us with a partial picture of mobilization effects in a strategic environment. If mobilization messages only affect turnout, the value of mobilization studies may be limited. If it is found, however, that mobilization messages also affect vote choice, there may be broader implications for the study of campaign effects and voter behavior. After all, mobilization efforts are strategically implemented by political campaigns to accomplish the goal of increasing vote share for a particular candidate. My results indicate that a candidate who implements a last minute mobilization drive in a low salience primary election can boost their vote share by as much as 25%. Those findings, along with the results of the other chapters in this dissertation, contribute to our understanding of the effects of mobilization messages, and may open new paths for academic inquiry in a strategic environment.

Prior to addressing the substantive topics of this dissertation, it is first necessary to discuss in more detail John Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model, and provide a framework for applying it to the study of the effects mobilization messages. The next chapter provides a roadmap for using the RAS model for mobilization.

2.0 CONVERTING THE BASIC RAS MODEL FROM CAPTURING ATTITUDE CHANGE TO BEHAVIOR CHANGE: A ROADMAP FOR STUDYING MOBILIZATION

In his seminal work “The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion”, John Zaller (1992) outlined a model for better understanding how elite discourse affects public opinion. His “Receive-Accept-Sample” (RAS) model explored how individuals form their opinions based on what information they are exposed to and, predicated on previously held beliefs and information exposure, decide which of the new information will be used to update their opinions, and which will be simply discarded.

On the surface, it would appear the study of public opinion and the study of mobilization have little in common. Public opinion is the study of how individuals gather information and then apply that information to form a belief system or single preferences on specific issues. Mobilization, on the other hand, is the study of the effect of messages on the likelihood an individual will turn out to vote. There are reasons, however, to look to the RAS model for guidance on the study of mobilization.

At its core, the RAS model focuses on who is exposed to information (receive), how that information is processed by the exposed individuals (accept), and how that information is used to update an individual’s opinion on a specific issue (sample). As I will outline in this chapter, those three basic elements of the RAS model translate well into the mobilization environment, and may offer a useful model for assessing the effects of mobilization messages.

2.1 RECEIVED: ELITE MESSAGES VS. MOBILIZATION MESSAGES

The first step in Zaller's RAS model, and the one central to the current project, is the "Receive" component. According to Zaller, politically more aware individuals have a higher probability of being exposed to elite discourse. Due to their media consumption habits, and their general interest in politics, these more aware individuals actively seek new information. In contrast, less politically aware individuals tend to opt out of exposure to political information, and by way of their media consumption habits, insulate themselves from exposure to elite discourse. For that reason, there is a positive correlation between the probability of receiving elite messages and the level of an individual's political awareness.

When folding the receive step of the RAS model into the study of mobilization messages, some parallels can be drawn. As I will discuss in more detail in the chapters that follow, a positive correlation exists with past political participation and the probability of exposure to mobilization messages. First, political campaigns operate on limited resources of time and money. To more effectively use those limited resources, campaign practitioners often use strategic targeting to focus campaign efforts. Specifically, campaigns target individuals who are most likely to vote (e.g. Grey 2007; Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Issenberg 2012). Thus, if individuals with a voting history are more likely to be targeted for exposure to mobilization messages, and individuals who lack a voting history have a higher probability of being ignored, a positive correlation exists between the probability of receiving a mobilization message and the level of an individual's past political participation.

2.2 ACCEPT: THE SECOND STEP IN ATTITUDE CHANGE

For attitude change to take place within the RAS model, a two-step process is involved. The first, as outlined above, is exposure (reception) to new ideas. The second involves the acceptance of some of the new considerations. There are barriers, however, at the individual level that make the acceptance process conditional. Specifically, the barriers, or resistance as outlined by Zaller, can take three forms: Partisan Resistance, Inertial Resistance and Countervalent Resistance.

Partisan Resistance captures the resistance associated with an individual's underlying predispositions on a specific issue. Thus, if the individual receives a message that is inconsistent with their already held beliefs, that information will be discounted or disregarded outright. The number one heuristic in politics is party identification. As such, if a message received is inconsistent with an individual's PID, that message is not likely to be accepted.

Inertial Resistance takes into consideration the relative level of information the individual already possesses. Individuals who already have large stores of information will be better equipped to assess the value of a new message. That repository of information functions as a barrier for new information to be accepted. Individuals who have limited information, on the other hand, are more likely to accept the new message when compared to a highly informed individual. Their limited information provides them with less ability to resist the new message.

Countervalent Resistance is the final roadblock for accepting new messages. In an information environment where an individual is exposed to contradictory messages (countervalent messages), the individual is forced to decide which message to accept, and which to reject. Thus, an individual will contemplate the two or more messages and assess which message is consistent with their already held beliefs.

All three forms of resistance are conditional on the level of information the individual already possess. Thus, political sophistication is positively correlated with each type of resistance. This creates an interesting puzzle. Those individuals who are most aware have a higher probability of being exposed to (receive) new messages, but it is those same individuals who are most likely to be resistant to new information. At the other end of the spectrum, less aware individuals are much less likely to be exposed to new information, but when exposed, they are more likely to accept the new information. Once again, as I will explain in detail later, parallels can be drawn when applying the RAS model to the study of mobilization.

2.3 ACCEPT: THE SECOND STEP IN BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Applying the two step process in the RAS model for attitude change (receive and accept) to behavior change within the context of mobilization, I replace attitude with turnout. The top predictor as to whether an individual will vote in an upcoming election is their past voting behavior (e.g. Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003). Often used as a filter for strategically targeting voters during a mobilization drive, practitioners and academics use turnout as a measure for

behavior change. As such, the three forms of resistance in the context of attitude change also apply to behavior change in mobilization.

Along with attitude change, partisan resistance is an important roadblock for mobilization. Mobilization messages first have to be received, but after that, the three forms of resistance in the RAS model come into play. With PID as the most readily used heuristic by individuals, a mobilization message that is inconsistent with the partisanship of the individual voter will likely be rejected (e.g. Huckfeldt, Levine, Morgan, and Sprague 1999).

Inertial resistance comes into play when looking at past voting behavior. If voting is a habit (Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003), the longer an individual has historically voted on Election Day, the less effective we would anticipate a mobilization message to be at altering behavior. The ability to affect change is hindered when the message encourages a behavior the individual is already doing. At the mid-range of past political participation, what I label as an Intermittent Voter, the RAS model in the media environment would anticipate the largest effect for those individuals. Applied to the study of mobilization, the RAS model may also provide support for the least politically involved, what I label as Infrequent Voters, to also be affected by mobilization messages. This is an empirical question I intend to address later.

Finally, countervailing resistance comes into play when multiple campaigns are actively vying for attention. Individuals are faced with having to consider the mobilization messages from various sources. In the end, if none of those messages can overcome the status quo behavior, no alteration in turnout will be realized.

As I outlined earlier, the three forms of resistance present an interesting puzzle when studying opinion change. Individuals who have the most information are most likely to be exposed to new messages. Due to their already high levels of awareness, however, that new

message is less likely to be accepted. Consistent with those findings, when studying mobilization, individuals who vote regularly are also most likely to be exposed to mobilization messages. Similar to the resistance to attitude change, mobilization messages will likely have little effect on the voting behavior of a regular voter. Conversely, individuals who may be receptive to mobilization messages, those who do not vote regularly (infrequent voters and intermittent voters) are less likely to receive the mobilization message.

2.4 SAMPLE: THE EFFECT OF THE NEW MESSAGE

The third component of the RAS model is the use of the new information (sampling) when responding to a survey. Assuming an individual was first exposed to the new information and then accepts that information after consideration, they are left with having to update their current attitude structure. Thus, the sample stage of the RAS model is the application of the new information to update attitudes.

Bridging the sample stage within the study of attitude change to the study of mobilization, I once again replace attitude change with behavior change. Assuming an individual is exposed to a mobilization message, and after considering the message, accepts it, the sample stage would be the effect of the message on the voting behavior of the individual. An increase in the probability of turning out to vote would be an indication of the sampling by the individual exposed to the mobilization message. In the chapters that follow, I will specify how I intend to measure an increase in the probability of turning out to vote.

2.5 MOVING FORWARD: RAS AND MOBILIZATION

Prior to applying the RAS model to the current mobilization project, it is first necessary to review what is already known about the effects of mobilization messages. In the next chapter, I review the lessons learned from prior mobilization studies, and discuss how the RAS model may help fill in some of the gaps in the current extant literature on mobilization.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW: SETTING THE STAGE

In this dissertation, I set out to answer two unresolved questions regarding mobilization. The first is to address who in the electorate is most responsive to mobilization efforts. The second question focuses on the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice.

For the first question, prior studies have arrived at contradictory conclusions, providing us with an interesting puzzle. Some scholars have argued that it is the least informed and motivated segments of the population that are most mobilizeable (e.g. Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), while others contend that it is the most informed and most likely to vote who respond to mobilization messages (e.g. Hillygus 2005, 2010). In this chapter I review the body of research conducted on the effects of mobilization messages. It is those prior works that set the stage for applying John Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model to the field of mobilization research.

For the second question, I turn my attention to what has been learned about campaign effects on vote choice and apply that information to the study of the effects of mobilization messages. I explore the role of priming, learning and persuasion in the effects of campaign messages on vote choice decisions.

3.1 RECEPTION: WHO GETS CONTACTED DURING A MOBILIZATION DRIVE

To capture who in the electorate is most responsive to mobilization efforts, we must first identify who in the electorate is most likely to be contacted by a political campaign during a mobilization drive. Campaigns operate on limited resources of time and money. Because of those limits,

campaigns must prioritize whom they focus their resources. Few campaigns, if any, have the ability to contact every registered voter in the days leading up to an election. Thus, they are forced to use various winnowing techniques to narrow down the population they will attempt to contact. The criteria most often used is past voting history (e.g. Grey 2007; Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Issenberg 2012). National and state-wide campaigns often use more nuanced methods for targeting voters, but the data for those methods is often out of the price range for down ballot campaigns. As such, the vast majority of local campaigns rely on public voter data files provided by their local election offices. This data provides basic demographic information, the address of each registered voter, their party identification, and a record for which elections they cast a ballot. It is this last piece of information that is used to identify frequent voters. If past voting behavior is a good predictor of future behavior (e.g. Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003), it is rational for a campaign to target voters with a track record of voting.

This brings us to an interesting dilemma. The scientific method prompts us to take every step possible to eliminate, or at least reduce, bias in our data. As such, when conducting mobilization studies scholars opt to randomize the entire voting population. By randomizing the entire population the effects of any systematic behaviors present in the population being studied will be reduced through the aggregation of that population. Interestingly, by randomizing the entire registered voter population to implement a mobilization field experiment, we may inadvertently be introducing selection bias into a study. Political practitioners do not randomly select who they will contact during a mobilization drive. Thus, the inclusion of individuals in a study who would normally be ignored by a campaign may distance our study from the phenomenon under investigation (Goldstein and Holleque 2010).

This is not to say there is no value in understanding the effects of mobilization messages on individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign due to their past voting behavior. As I will explain in this chapter, there are theoretical reasons to take those steps when the question being explored is attempting to test a hypothetical scenario where mobilization efforts by political practitioners would be expanded to include individuals who would not normally be targeted. Once again, however, we need to return to how campaigns identify who to contact during an actual mobilization drive to better understand the effects of mobilization messages. Campaigns operate on limited resources of time and money. As such, with the priority of winning elections, they strategically target where to commit their limited resources. Both the academic community and the political practitioner discipline agree that past voting behavior is the best predictor of future behavior (e.g. Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003; Grey 2007). Because political campaigns conduct mobilization efforts, it seems logical that if the goal is to gain a better understanding of the effects of mobilization messages, the scholarly community should be cognoscente of the methods used by the practitioners implementing the phenomenon of interest.

As I will explain in the next section, folding this back into the discussion of identifying voters most receptive to mobilization efforts, if we disregard the strategies employed by political campaigns to target those they intend to mobilize, and randomize the entire population for a study, we are likely introducing selection bias into our model. That selection bias comes from the inclusion of individuals in the treatment group who would not normally be targeted by a campaign (Goldstein and Holleque 2010). Unresolved, however, is the effect of the selection bias on the results of mobilization studies. If Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) are correct, and it is the least informed and least politically motivated who are most responsive to mobilization

efforts, then the results of studies that randomize all registered voters will likely have exaggerated effects from mobilization. By including a large group of individuals who would normally be skipped by a campaign, but who are more responsive to mobilization messages, the results from that study would be artificially inflated. Conversely, if Hillygus (2005) is correct and it is only the most informed and highly politically motivated individuals who respond to mobilization messages, studies randomizing the entire population will likely have understated results from mobilization field experiments. Essentially, including a large population of individuals in a study who would normally be ignored by a campaign, and who are not responsive to mobilization messages, will water down the results of a mobilization study.

3.2 ACCEPT: IDENTIFYING WHO IS MOST RESPONSIVE TO MOBILIZATION MESSAGES

The issue of selection bias introduced by sample selection should be resolved before moving forward with identifying who is most responsive to mobilization messages. If it is found selection bias is introduced by randomizing the entire registered voter population instead of randomizing a strategically targeted sample, it will have implications for past mobilization study findings.

Some might argue that the two questions are inherently mutually exclusive. If you eliminate individuals who would not normally be targeted by a campaign from your sample, namely infrequent voters, you are removing the very people democratic theorists want to reach. That concern, however, would be misguided. Campaigns do attempt to focus the majority of their resources on those who they feel are most likely to vote and, more importantly, likely to vote for their candidate (e.g. Grey 2007; Pelosi 2007). The caveat to that assumption is that

many infrequent voters and infrequent voters live with frequent voters. Because campaigns often have no control over who at a given address will be ‘treated’ by the mobilization efforts (face-to-face contact, literature drops, direct mail, telephone calls, etc.), samples utilizing the winnowing efforts employed by campaigns will still include infrequent voters. Thus a study that employs strategic targeting can capture the different effects of mobilization efforts on frequent, intermittent and infrequent voters while reducing the selection bias introduced by conducting a study with individuals who would not normally come in contact with a mobilization message.

3.3 SAMPLE: THE EFFECTS OF MOBILIZATION MESSAGES ON MOBILIZATION AND VOTE CHOICE

As I discussed above, one of the primary goals of this project is to better identify who in the electorate is responsive to mobilization messages. In the RAS model framework, the mechanism to capture whether an individual has accepted the mobilization message is to observe the effect it has on their voting behavior. Thus, the third and final stage of the RAS model, sample, will be captured by the increased probability the mobilization message has on turnout. As I outlined in Chapter 2, for a message to have been successfully sampled it must first be received, then accepted, and finally be used as a consideration when making a decision to turnout on Election Day. As such, the increased probability of turning out to vote can serve as a measure of the sample stage of the RAS model applied to the study of mobilization.

The second primary question of this project explores the effect mobilization messages have on vote choice. Once again, this involves the sample stage of the RAS model. Not only can a mobilization message alter the considerations used by an individual when deciding to turn

out to vote, it may also affect the considerations as to whom to vote for. To address this topic, which will be expanded upon later in this literature review, I first identify the mechanisms at work when an individual makes a voting decision. To facilitate that discussion, I explore the literature on campaign effects.

With the two primary questions of this project in mind (who is mobilizeable, and the effects mobilization messages have on vote choice), the remainder of this chapter explores the extant literature on what we know about those two questions. This literature review will help provide the foundation for the present study by not only identifying what we know, but also focusing in on what is still unresolved.

To organize this literature review, I start by exploring the lessons learned from past mobilization studies. This will provide the reader with a better understanding of which modes of mobilization have been found to be most effective. I follow that discussion with a review of the studies that have attempted to identify who in the electorate is most responsive to mobilization messages. I conclude with a review of the efforts to capture the effects of campaign messages on vote choice and how that translates to the effects of mobilization messages.

3.4 LESSONS LEARNED: NONPARTISAN MOBILIZATION

Mobilization, by definition, is any effort by a campaign or political party to increase the turnout of voters favorable to their success. Mobilization efforts employed by campaigns come in multiple forms. On the list of mobilization efforts are mass media advertisements (television, radio, newspaper and the Internet), direct mail, email, telephone calls, door-to-door canvassing, and leaving campaign literature on the front door of the residences of voters (literature drops).

In the past 40-plus years there has been a shift from more personal mobilization efforts like door-to-door canvassing and literature drops, what I call doorstep politics, to less personal forms of contact via mass media advertising, direct mail and using professional phone banks. This shift has been identified as one of the leading causes for the aggregate decline in voter turnout during that period (e.g. Avery 1989; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Teixeira 1987, 1992). Testing that assertion, several scholars employed field experiments to capture the effects of various nonpartisan mobilization efforts. Aggregate increases in turnout have been achieved through door-to-door canvassing (Gerber and Green 1999, 2000b; Green, Gerber and Nickerson 2003), leaflet distribution (Gerber and Green 2000a; Nickerson, Friedrichs and King 2006), small increases via direct mail (Gerber and Green 2000b; Gerber, Green and Larimer 2008), and contrary to the belief of campaign practitioners (Grey 2007; Pelosi 2007) the use of the telephone has not proven to be an effective tool for mobilization (Gerber and Green 2000, 2001; see also Nickerson 2007). While these prior studies helped the discipline take a step forward in understanding the mechanisms that increase aggregate turnout, they left open for debate the relative effectiveness of those mobilization efforts on getting infrequent voters to the polls. The conclusions drawn from those studies, however, may be limited due to the fact they were conducted in an artificial setting, which does not accurately mimic the mobilization efforts conducted by an actual partisan campaign. As stated above, the goal of a political campaign or political party is to increase the turnout of individuals who are supportive. As such, generic get out the vote drives may not accurately capture the effects of mobilization efforts during an actual campaign.

3.5 LESSONS LEARNED: PARTISAN MOBILIZATION

Understanding the limitations imposed by conducting nonpartisan get out the vote experiments, some scholars attempted to apply the lessons learned on voter mobilization in a more realistic setting. Teaming up with the Michigan Democratic Party Youth Coordinated Campaign, Nickerson, Friedrichs and King (2006) set out to capture the effects of door hangers, volunteer phone calls and face-to-face canvassing. They concluded that all three modes of contact yielded similar cost effectiveness when identifying the time and monetary expenses used to get one person to vote. Using time as the measure of cost, the least expensive mode of contact was leaflet drops, followed by volunteer phone calls, and the most time consuming was face-to-face canvassing. Due to the efficient nature of leaflet drops, from a time and money perspective, it is one of the most accessible modes of campaigning for campaigns with limited resources. For that reason, as I will explain in more detail in the chapters that follow, leaflet distribution will be the mode of contact used for this dissertation.

The calculation for the monetary costs can vary depending on whether volunteers or paid campaign staff is used, thus one could question the formula used by Nickerson, Friedrichs and King (2006). Their calculation was based on an average hourly pay-rate for campaign staff, plus the monetary cost for printing expenses and a phone bank, divided by the number of votes (increased turnout) each mode yielded on Election Day. Their instinct to capture the time and monetary costs of mobilization efforts, both scarce resources for most campaigns, should be applauded. Their findings shed light on the tradeoffs of using different modes of mobilization. Still undetermined, however, is who, based on voter propensity, is most receptive to each mode of contact.

Building on the findings of Nickerson, Freidrich and King (2006), Panagopoulos (2009) set out to test the effectiveness of partisan messages compared to nonpartisan messages. Conducted during municipal elections in Albany, New York, a series of phone calls were made to registered Democrats and Republicans. The partisan appeal simply encouraged voters to support candidates of a particular party. No specific candidate endorsement was included in the appeal. The nonpartisan appeal encouraged people to vote with no endorsement of a political party. Panagopoulos found that partisan phone calls are no more effective at mobilization when compared to nonpartisan appeals. These findings lend support to the generalizability of prior nonpartisan mobilization studies. However, the mode used for the study, phone calls, has been found to be the least effective mode for mobilization voters (e.g. Gerber and Green 2000, 2001). Thus utilizing a mobilization mode of contact which has been demonstrated to achieve weak effects may compromise what can be taken away from that study.

Taking a different approach to conducting a mobilization study in a more realistic setting, Cardy (2005) teamed up with a pro-choice organization during a gubernatorial primary election. Often, special interest groups get involved in supporting an endorsed candidate, and thus campaign on behalf of a candidate. Utilizing direct mail and phone calls, the group contacted voters identified to be pro-choice. Similar to the Michigan youth group in the Nickerson, Freidrich and King (2006) study, the pro-choice organization openly identified itself with each mode of contact. The results indicate that direct mail and phone calls from an interest group had no effect on vote choice, as captured by a follow-up phone survey, or on turnout. The results draw into question the relative value of direct mail, and reconfirms phone calls as not an effective means to mobilize voters (Gerber and Green 2000, 2001; see also Nickerson 2007).

Additionally, it is important to note that the study was limited by the fact it did not have exact contact rates, making the results unreliable.

In both the Nickerson, Freidrich and King (2006) and Panagopoulos (2009) studies the appeals made to voters were generic partisan appeals with no specific endorsement of a candidate. The Cardy (2005) study limited its contacts to only include Democrats and Independents identified to be pro-choice. While those three studies attempted to capture the effects of mobilization efforts in a more realistic setting, they still leave open for speculation how effective mobilization efforts are when the message comes directly from a candidate for public office or his/her campaign. Additionally those studies, like the nonpartisan studies before them, only looked at aggregate turnout rates. The question remains, who is most receptive, on an individual basis, to mobilization efforts?

Building on the prior studies that have speculated who in the electorate is most responsive to mobilization messages, it becomes clear the study of mobilization lacks a coherent theory for anticipating the answer. As I pointed out earlier, some believe it is the population of least likely voters who will respond the most positively to mobilization messages (e.g. Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), while others anticipate only the most likely to vote will be receptive (e.g. Hillygus 2005). If we turn our attention to the study of persuasion and media effects, we can even make an argument that it will be voters who fall in the mid-range of voting propensity, or what psychologists call intermediate or ambivalent subjects (Armitage and Conner 2000), who will be most receptive to mobilization efforts. In his seminal work, John Zaller (1992) found that media effects are most pronounced with people who have a moderate interest in politics. He concludes that it is the most attentive members of the public who have already made up their minds about key issues or candidates, and thus are not swayed by media messages

(see also Jacks and Devine 2000). At the other end of the spectrum, he found that the least attentive are also not swayed by media messages. His reasoning is the least politically interested choose to not consume media messages (see also Albarracin and Wyer 2001). It is this lack of exposure to those messages that mitigates the effects of media messages. Thus, it is the population that has moderate levels of interest and sophistication who are most affected by media messages. If true, we can assume the least engaged will continue to be unengaged, and the most attentive are impervious to mobilization messages. Unresolved is the effect of media messages on the least engaged when the option to opt out of exposure is removed.

3.6 WHO IS MOBILIZEABLE?

To this point, no one has directly applied Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model to the study of mobilization. While some have mentioned aspects of the RAS model as a possible explanation for who in the electorate is most affected by mobilization messages, the results from those studies have provided inconsistent results. Paralleling Zaller's findings, David Niven (2001, 2004) found that voters whose propensity to vote falls in the mid-range are the most responsive to mobilization efforts. His first article (Niven 2001) looked at the effect of a door-to-door signature collection drive to get a candidate's name on the ballot as a means for boosting turnout. Niven utilized the contact records from several campaigns for State Representative in Florida to identify voters who were contacted for a signature. Neighborhoods were selected by candidates based on the geographic concentration of registered voters. While not consistent with the randomization steps needed for a field experiment, Niven found that occasional voters experienced the largest increase in turnout rates, with infrequent voters experiencing hardly any

increase in turnout. Niven's second study (2004) captured the effect of door-to-door canvassing in a nonpartisan Mayoral race in Florida. The canvassing was conducted by members of a local union who endorsed one of the candidates, and by church group volunteers who delivered a generic get out the vote message. The inconsistent mobilization messages and the lack of randomization draw into question his conclusions. His results, however, support his earlier finding that intermittent voters, or voters who fall in the mid-range between infrequent voters and frequent voters, are the most responsive to mobilization efforts.

In a more nuanced analysis of voter mobilization, Arceneaux and Nickerson (2009) found that the effectiveness of mobilization efforts is contingent on the salience of an election. Conducting a reanalysis of eleven door-to-door field experiments, they set out to identify which voters are most affected by face-to-face mobilization. The nonpartisan message delivered to each household was "please vote." They found that in highly salient elections, like a presidential election year, the voters with high and medium propensities to vote have already decided to vote. Thus it is the voters with lower propensities to vote who are most affected by mobilization efforts. However, in low salient races, it is only voters with higher propensities to vote who will respond to mobilization tactics. Those in the middle will respond to mobilization messages when the salience of the race falls somewhere in the middle, like a mayoral race. The basis for their argument is that each voter has a tipping point as to when they will decide to vote. That tipping point is contingent on the salience of a particular election. Given the majority of elections in the United States fall into the low salience category, Arceneaux and Nickerson's findings provide little comfort for advocates who want to increase the political engagement of the infrequent voting segments of the population. If mobilization messages only reach low

propensity voters during the most salient races, mobilization efforts may not be effective at getting infrequent voters to the polls on Election Day.

On the surface it would appear the debate on the effectiveness of mobilization messages to get low propensity voters to the polls has been settled. Niven (2001, 2004) found that intermittent voters are the most receptive to mobilization efforts. The setting for both of his studies was what Arceneaux and Nickerson would classify as mid-range salient elections. Thus his findings are consistent with a model that controls for the salience of an election, with mobilization efforts affecting intermittent voters during a mid-range salient election (Arceneaux and Nickerson 2009). While those prior studies provide a good framework for assessing the effectiveness, or lack of effectiveness, of mobilization efforts to get infrequent voters to the polls, they also leave room for improvement. Specifically, all three studies only look at the effect of door-to-door canvassing, the methods used by Niven draw into question his results, Arceneaux and Nickerson used data that randomized the entire population which, as I pointed out earlier, may have introduced selection bias and thus affected their results, and all three studies do not accurately capture the effect of mobilization messages employed in an actual political campaign. A study that looks at other modes of mobilization, utilizing sound strategic randomization methods, and conducted in a realistic setting that mirrors an actual campaign can help bring the discipline closer to understanding the effect of mobilization messages on voters with different turnout propensities.

Besides the normative implications attached to the conclusions reached by prior studies of mobilization that low propensity voters are not affected by mobilization messages, it appears to be theoretically inconsistent with the microfoundations of voter behavior theory. The primary disconnect stems from the issue of exposure. In the realm of media effects, an individual can opt

out of exposure to media messages. By avoiding news programming, a voter can essentially insulate oneself from exposure to political messages. This line of thought is supported by previous studies that found changes in behavior hinged on the exposure to campaign messages (e.g., Hillygus and Shields 2008; Holbrook 1996). Opting out of exposure to mobilization messages is a little more difficult. The fact that canvassers bring the message to the doorsteps of voters, the ability to avoid exposure may not be as easy as changing the channel on the television. If exposure is a key component to persuasion, one could argue that the conclusions of Zaller (1992) would be different if the least attentive were forced to watch the news. Historical analysis appears to support this argument. The average political sophistication of the American public was highest when opting out of exposure to the evening news was more difficult (e.g. Iyengar and McGrady 2006). In the late 60s to early 70s, if a television was turned on at 6:00 PM, the option was ABC, NBC or CBS evening news. Even the least interested segments of the population were exposed to current events and political information, if they watched TV during that time, thus increasing the aggregate political sophistication of the American populous. Bringing those findings into the discussion of mobilization, it can be anticipated those who would normally opt out of exposure to campaign messages can still be affected by mobilization messages, especially when that message is brought to their doorstep. Utilizing the Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model at the theoretical underpinning for the current project, the chapters that follow will test the effect of mobilization messages on individuals with different turnout propensities. Once again, the component that is central to this project is the receive stage of the model.

3.7 VOTE CHOICE

As I pointed out earlier, the goal of political practitioners is not to achieve an increase in aggregate turnout. Instead, they are focused on increasing the turnout of voters who are more likely to support their candidate. As such, a political campaign targets households who, based on past turnout history, have a higher probability of voting and who are believed to likely support their candidate. Turnout rates, however, tell us very little about how successful a mobilization drive has been for a particular campaign. The mobilization drive may have increased turnout, but that increased turnout may not have benefitted the campaign. Aggregate vote share is also limited in its ability to identify the success of a mobilization drive. Simply getting the most votes, or even losing the election, is not an accurate measure for capturing the effectiveness of a mobilization drive. It may be found that despite the ineffectiveness of a campaign's mobilization messages, they were still able to win. Concluding that the mobilization efforts contributed to the victory would be folly. For that reason, understanding the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice is a key component of the study of mobilization, and one that has largely been overlooked.

The knowledge we have gained about the effects of campaigns on vote choice centers heavily on U.S. presidential campaigns and Congressional contests, but little is known about down ballot low salience campaign effects. As I have outlined above, the renaissance of field experiments in mobilization studies has contributed to our understanding of the effects of mobilization messages on turnout. Applying Zaller's RAS model, the sample stage of the model posits once an individual has received the mobilization message and accepted the message, for it to have an effect it must then be used to alter the voting behavior (sampled) of the individual.

Turnout is one way to measure the effect of the mobilization message at the sample stage. The other measure is the effect it has on vote choice. For that reason, it is important to understand campaign effects in the vote choice process. In the next section I provide a brief overview of campaign effects research that is applicable to the vote choice process.

3.8 CAMPAIGN EFFECTS

The study of campaign effects can best be summarized by the changes over time in the way we define what constitutes a meaningful campaign effect. The earliest studies of campaign effects focused on the ability of a message to convert the voting intentions of individuals. Those studies, which found few if any people experienced such a drastic conversion, concluded that most people did not change their mind over the course of a campaign, and instead relied heavily on their predispositions of partisan attachments and policy attitudes (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1944). Scholars concluded that campaigns have minimal effects on voters.

Subsequent studies provided theoretical support for the minimal effects conclusion, arguing that campaigns are little more than political noise that signify nothing of substance (Holbrook 1996; Iyengar 2001; Shaw 1999). Furthering that argument in the U.S. presidential campaign setting, it was concluded that campaigns have only a small net effect because the candidates are balanced in both skills and money. As such, for every move one candidate makes the opposition has a counter move, thus neutralizing each other and resulting in an aggregate effect of zero (Finkel 1993). The challenge with that conclusion, however, is its applicability (or lack of) to other political contests. As with many of the theoretical conclusions drawn about

campaign effects, the minimal effects thesis is derived from studying high salience elections. The low information and low salience nature of down ballot local campaigns, which comprise the vast majority of campaigns in the United States, may not fit well into the minimal effects theory. If the assumption is that both sides are equally matched, and thus are unable to gain much momentum, it seems logical to study campaign effects in a setting where candidates are not necessarily equally matched in skills and resources (Iyengar and Simon 2000).

The focus on “conversion” as a measure of campaign effects has long been questioned as a valid measure. Instead, scholars have looked at more indirect campaign effects like learning, campaign priming, and mobilization. To that end, I need to explore the effects of campaigns on learning, priming, and voter persuasion; all factors that have been identified as contributing to vote choice.

3.9 LEARNING

At the basic core of a campaign is the effort to inform voters about a particular candidate or an issue. The goal, naturally, is to persuade voters to support (or oppose) the candidate or issue. But from a learning perspective, campaigns facilitate the learning process by providing the electorate with information germane to a particular election. Campaign learning has been shown to directly shape how voters make their vote choice (e.g, Popkin 1991). Thus, an understanding of how voters learn during a campaign is an important aspect for this project.

From a behavioral perspective, not all voters are created equal. Voters vary in their political sophistication and in their propensities to vote. As such, it is difficult to measure which mode of campaigning is best at informing the general public. Most of the factors identified as

key to the learning process in a campaign are centered heavily on campaign activities in high salience elections. Presidential debates (Chaffee 1978; Holbrook 1999), television advertising (Johnson, Hagen and Jamieson 2004; Ridout et al. 2004), and news coverage (Johnson et al. 2004) are campaign staples in well-funded high profile contests. The further down the ballot you go, the smaller the campaign budget and often the less newsworthy the office. For that reason, the theoretical underpinnings that guide our understanding of the learning process in campaigns are limited to the top of the ticket campaigns.

Further complicating the study of learning in a campaign is the consistent conclusion that average voters are cognitive misers. Voters often rely on long-term characteristics like party identification, group identity, and retrospective evaluations (Campbell et al. 1960). Those characteristics can prove useful in high salience races, but provide little guidance in a down ballot election, or a primary election when all the candidates share the same basic characteristics.

Studies that have explored the learning process outside of presidential campaigns also provide little guidance for down-ballot low salience elections. Focusing on Gubernatorial races (Carsey 2000), U.S. Senate races (Kahn and Kenney 1999), and U.S. House races (Jacobson 1983), while less salient than a presidential contest, arguably are not low salience affairs. As such, little is known about the learning process in campaigns that do not rely on televised news reports, commercials or debates. This study is breaking new ground in the study of campaign learning and its effect on vote choice. The information sharing process in this study, as I will explain in more detail later, focuses on retail politics, or what I call doorstep politics.

3.10 PRIMING

Not only do campaigns facilitate the information sharing process needed for citizen learning, they also help guide voters as to which issues and traits should be used when evaluating each campaign. Thus campaigns prime the electorate to value certain issues and traits over others (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). Naturally, a campaign will attempt to frame an issue in the most favorable way to benefit their candidate, but by simply elevating an issue in the minds of the electorate, regardless of the frame, a campaign can shape the standards by which a candidate is evaluated (Druckman 2004; Johnston et al. 1992). If this is true in high salience races like presidential campaigns, it can be deduced the effect is amplified in a race where voters have limited information about the candidates, or even less information about the function and responsibilities of a down-ballot office.

One aspect of priming that has received a lot of attention is its ability to activate partisan attachments (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; McClurg and Holbrook 2005). The belief is that by priming voters to think about partisanship, the campaign is encouraging fellow partisans to remember why they are affiliated with the political party (e.g., Finkel 1993). In the context of a primary election, when all the candidates on the ballot are of the same party, the activation of partisan attachments provides voters with little assistance when making a voting decision. As such, for priming to be useful in the decision making process, we need to identify which primes might have the most effect in down-ballot elections and primary contests. For that I turn my attention to John Zaller's work on the frequency and recency of exposure to mobilization messages.

The process by which primes work is by making information more accessible in the memory (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Valentino, Hutchings and White 2002). Thus, exposure to the prime brings that information to the "top of the head" when making decisions (Zaller 1992). Key to this assumption is the exposure to the message. If a voter is able to opt out of exposure, which is often the case with messages delivered via the television, then the message can have no effect. If the message is delivered to the front door of an individual's residence, however, the ability to avoid exposure to the message is greatly reduced. To that end, frames delivered via doorstep politics likely have a higher potential of being received than do frames delivered via the television.

3.11 PERSUASION

Ultimately, it comes down to the persuasiveness of the information learned or primed. For the purpose of this project, I define persuasion as any campaign induced changes in the attitudes or considerations that underlie the vote decision (Hillygus 2010). It is not necessary for a campaign to manipulate a voter or change her underlying predispositions for it to influence her vote choice. In the case of partisan activation, a campaign is simply reminding a voter about her partisan ties. For a low information down ballot campaign, simply providing information about the candidate or political office can facilitate the learning process, and thus affect the information used to make a vote decision. It is the learning and priming process of a campaign that has been identified as the mechanism by which individuals may change their vote choice (Hillygus and Shields 2008). In other words, campaigns persuade voters by facilitating the learning process and priming them

to value certain issues or candidate traits. Applying the RAS model, the sample stage is where the persuasiveness of a mobilization message comes into play.

3.12 BRIDGING TURNOUT PERSUASION WITH VOTE CHOICE PERSUASION

We are still a long way from fully understanding who is persuadable and under what conditions persuasion has the largest effect (Hillygus 2010). We can, however, build on what we do know about persuasion, specifically how it relates to mobilization messages and turnout, to gain a better understanding of the persuasiveness of mobilization messages on vote choice. Prior studies, including the chapters in the current project, have identify the persuasive power of mobilization messages to increase the probability an individual will cast a vote on Election Day. We now need to bridge what we know about turnout with the potential persuasive effects of mobilization messages on vote choice. Utilizing the definition of persuasion outlined above, we can now chart a path for testing the effectiveness of mobilization messages to inform and prime voters in a down ballot campaign, resulting in a change in the criteria for making their voting decision.

From a simple logic perspective, it seems improbable that a mobilization message can have an effect on the probability of turning out to vote but have no effect on the voting decision process. While it could be argued that voters in high salience races make up their minds well in advance of Election Day, and thus a mobilization message is simply a reminder to go vote, for down ballot contests, voters often lack the needed information to make a decision. In these low salience campaigns, a mobilization message not only is a reminder to vote, but also serves as a learning and priming opportunity for a voter. In Zaller's RAS model, the first assumption for a

message to have an effect is that it is received. Once received, the repetition of the message, and more importantly for the present study, the recency of the message elevates the information to the “top of the head.” Due to the low salience nature of a down ballot campaign, campaign messages often go unchallenged.

Clearly, if different voters are receiving different campaign messages, it becomes more complicated to estimate the effect of each message. This is largely the reason some have characterized campaigns as a cacophony of noise that makes little difference in the voting decisions of voters (e.g., Finkel 1993). This is especially true in high salience races that inundate voters with multiple messages. For down ballot campaigns, however, where money and volunteer time are scarce resources, there are situations when a candidate is only able to reach a voter once during an election cycle. This is especially true when a campaign relies on a doorstep politics strategy for contacting voters. As such, that contact may be the only opportunity a voter has to be exposed to information about that candidate, or even the position for which the candidate is running.

Returning to the recency effect of the RAS model, information received closer to an election is easier for a voter to retrieve on Election Day (Zaller 1992). When the information received is related to a low salience race, one for which a voter has limited information, that recent information may be the only information available when making a voting decision. If voters rely heavily on shortcuts in high salience races, it shouldn't be too much of a stretch to anticipate this same phenomenon taking place in a down ballot race, too. In the absence of traditional heuristics like partisanship, voters are relegated to less precise shortcuts (Iyengar and Simon 2000). The recognition of a name on a ballot sometimes is all that is needed for a voter to

make a voting decision. After all, voters are reluctant to vote for an unfamiliar name (Sides, Shaw, Grossman and Lipsitz 2012).

3.13 MOVING FORWARD

The quest to identify who is most receptive to mobilization efforts presents us with an interesting challenge. Prior studies have given us insight as to which modes of mobilization achieve the largest aggregate effect, and point to more personal contact as being the most effective. The modes that fall into that category are what I like to call doorstep politics -- face-to-face canvassing and literature drops take the campaign to the voter's doorstep. Because the message is delivered by someone involved in the campaign (the candidate, volunteer or campaign worker) it is viewed as being more personal than messages delivered by a postal carrier, the mass media or a phone bank system (Gerber and Green 2001). It also reduces the ability of the less politically engaged to opt out of being exposed to the mobilization message. Not coincidentally, it is those forms of campaigning that are the least expensive, monetarily speaking, when conducted by volunteers. As I pointed out earlier, the mode of contact that is most efficient with volunteer time and campaign money is leaflet distribution (Nickerson, Friedrichs and King 2006). As such, it is leafleting that is most readily available to even the most underfunded campaigns, and will be the mode of mobilization used for this project.

In addition to the mode for delivering mobilization messages, there are a few other aspects of studying the effects of mobilization messages to consider. Data collection, sample selection and campaign salience are on the list.

3.14 MODES OF DATA COLLECTION

Survey Data:

Because the goal of this study is to capture the effect of mobilization efforts, the use of survey data may not be the preferred method. Surveys rely on self-reporting of an individual on whether they were contacted by a campaign, and if they voted (e.g. Davenport, Gerber and Green 2010). Over reporting is often the result of social desirability and lapses in memory. Making matters worse, it has been observed the problem of over reporting has been on the rise because of declining response rates (Burden 2000). The external validity of survey studies, however, is desirable when seeking to generalize study findings to the population as a whole.

Lab Experiments:

If capturing the cause and effect of a treatment, with a high level of certainty the results are accurate, is the goal, a lab experiment can be an option. Like survey studies, however, it is important to consider both the strengths and weaknesses of studying a subject using this mode of data collection. First, while a lab experiment provides strong internal validity, it is limited in its ability to generalize its findings to the population as a whole. Chief among the barriers to external validity of lab experiments is the use of college students who are not representative of the general population (Sears 1986). Additionally, the artificial ways outcomes are often measured in the lab also compromise generalizability (Aronson, Wilson and Brewer 1998). Thus, the artificial setting of the lab often distances it from the actual phenomenon under investigation. If it is desired to capture the cause and effect of a treatment, but still have the

ability to generalize the results to a larger population, both survey studies and lab experiments may not be the best choice.

Field Experiments:

By defining what I hope to accomplish with this study, the best mode of data collection comes into focus. Because I want to gain a better understanding of the effects of mobilization messages, it is necessary to conduct my experiments in a real-world setting. Additionally, I want to have confidence my results will have both internal and external validity. A field experiment is the mode of data collection that best facilitates those stated goals (e.g. Druckman, Green, Kuklinski and Lupia 2006). There are four criteria, however, that need to be kept in mind while designing a field experiment to ensure it approximates real-world conditions. The first is whether the stimulus used in the experiment resembles the stimuli that would be encountered in an actual campaign. Second, whether the test subjects resemble the individuals who would normally be exposed to the stimuli. Third, whether the context with which the test subjects receive the stimuli resembles the political context one would normally be in to receive the stimulus. Finally, whether the measured outcomes resemble the actual outcomes in the real-world for which I have theoretical and practical interest (Davenport, Gerber and Green 2010). In chapter 5 I focus my attention on the second criteria; whether the test subjects resemble the individuals who would normally be exposed to the stimuli. As I will explain, disregarding that criterion may introduce selection bias.

3.15 CAMPAIGN SALIENCE

Finally, the campaign setting for measuring the effects of mobilization messages is an important consideration. The vast majority of political campaigns in the United States can be classified as low budget and low salience affairs. Campaigns for school board, city council, various advisory boards, judicial positions, and often state legislative races fall into the low budget/salience category. If the majority of campaigns fall into that category, then it seems logical to study mobilization in that setting, especially when considering the fact, based on monetary costs, doorstep politics is the most universally available mode for mobilization voters. Given low turnout levels in these low salience races, and amid limited campaigning and few newsworthy political events, it is a perfect setting to capture the effects of mobilization messages (e.g. Gosnell 1927; Green, Gerber and Nickerson 2003; Niven 2004). Unlike high salience races where voters are inundated with campaign messages from well-funded state-wide and national campaigns, for municipal elections and other low salience campaigns, voters are faced with making voting decisions based on limited information. This increases the learning costs associated with gathering the necessary information to assess each candidate, which is often too costly for the average voter (e.g. Aldrich 1995). Thus, doorstep politics efforts in a municipal election provide voters with cost-cutting information for which the effects can more easily be captured.

In the next chapter I discuss the campaign setting for this project, and explore the literature on campaign and mobilization message effects in low salience elections. Because this project utilizes data collected in a magisterial district judicial campaign, I also review what is

presently known about the effects of mobilization messages and campaign effects in judicial campaigns.

4.0 CAMPAIGN SETTING: JUDICIAL AND LOW SALIENCE CAMPAIGNS

For this dissertation I will use data collected during a 2011 magisterial district judicial primary campaign in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The office of Magisterial District Judge, a partisan elected office, was at the bottom of the ballot with the office of County Executive at the top of the ticket. By any metric, this campaign would be classified as a low salience election. No congressional or state-wide elective offices appeared on the ballot.

The judicial district for this campaign included two city council wards comprising a total of 55 voting districts, and geographically encompassed 10 square miles. The judicial district had 25,958 registered Democrats and 5,577 registered Republicans . According to state law, only registered Democrats and Republicans can participate in the closed primary system. As such, only registered Democrats and Republicans are included in the data for this study. All 55 voting districts used electronic voting machine which, as I will explain later, has implications when studying mobilization in low salience elections.

Historically, the winner of the Democratic primary in this judicial district wins the general election. As such, more resources are spent by campaigns seeking the Democratic nomination than is spent for the Republican nomination. However, according to state law, judicial candidates are allowed to cross-file, or have their name appear on both the Democratic and Republican ballots. Not all candidates take advantage of this opportunity. The benefit of cross-filing is if a candidate is able to win both the Democratic and Republican primaries they will win the office, thus negating the need for a general election campaign. The campaign for this study had four candidates on the Democratic ballot and three on the Republican ballot, with

three candidates appearing on both ballots. Of the three cross-filed candidates, two were registered Democrats and one was a registered Republican.

The candidates on the Democratic ballot each had distinct political and legal backgrounds. One candidate was a 3 term city council member who was a registered paralegal. This candidate's name only appeared on the Democratic ballot. The other three candidates were cross-filed on the Republican ballot. The first candidate was a practicing lawyer with eleven years of appointed judicial experience. The second candidate was also a practicing lawyer who had never held elective office, but was active in the local Democratic Party. The third candidate, also a practicing lawyer, had unsuccessfully run multiple times for Mayor as the Republican nominee.

The data for this project were collected by volunteers working on one of the cross-filed candidates' campaigns. The specifics of each field experiment employed during the campaign will be outline in detail in each of the substantive methodological chapters that follow. The first experiment (Chapter 5) attempts to identify the selection bias introduced in a field experiment when strategic targeting of likely voters is disregarded when randomizing the population. The second experiment (Chapter 6) focuses on identifying who in the electorate is most responsive to mobilization messages. The third and final field experiment for this project delves into capturing the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice (Chapter 7). Taken together, the three methodological chapters provide us with a better understanding of the effects of those three aspects of mobilization. The analysis in each chapter is viewed through the lens of John Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model.

4.1 JUDICIAL AND LOW SALIENCE ELECTIONS

Prior to diving into the methodological chapters of this project, it is first important to explore what is currently known about judicial campaigns and how the findings of this study contribute to the judicial literature, and may be extended to other low salience elections.

As the purpose of this project is to capture the effects of mobilization messages, and not the merits of judicial elections, I shelve the debate over whether judges should be appointed or elected. Several thoughtful articles and books have been written on this topic for readers interested in the debate (e.g., Bonneau and Hall 2009; Dubois 1980; see also Baum 2003; De Muniz 2002). The use of a Magisterial District Judicial campaign for this project was intended to facilitate capturing the effects of mobilization messages on voters in low salience elections. As such, the literature reviewed in the following sections focus on studies that have explored mobilization efforts in judicial campaigns and the unique challenges low salience campaigns face when attempting to get the attention of voters. One of the key elements of the RAS model is receiving the message being tested. Thus, understanding the steps taken to attract the attention of individuals in a down ballot low salience election is central to the current project.

4.2 STUDYING JUDICIAL CAMPAIGNS

The study of judicial campaigns offers many research opportunities. Those opportunities primarily come from the fact there has been limited resources and time dedicated to studying elections for these powerful positions. One of the key hurdles is the availability of data (Streb 2007). While the American National Election Study (ANES) provides data on presidential and

congressional elections, it offers little, if any, support for the study of the judicial branch of government. For that reason, many scholars shift their attention to electoral competitions for which they can more easily gather data. Other down ballot campaigns, like city council, school board, city planner, other city and county advisory board positions, and at times, state legislative races, also suffer from the dearth of data.

The one area of judicial elections that has been more thoroughly studied is that of state supreme courts. The discussion of mobilization in that setting primarily centers on the effect of judicial campaigns on vote roll off (e.g., Hall 2007). Vote roll off, defined as the difference in the number of votes cast in a down ballot contest compared to the total number of individuals who turned out to vote, has been used as a metric for capturing the effectiveness of judicial campaigns to garner the attention of voters. The conclusion by many judicial election scholars is the larger the vote roll-off, the less effective a campaign was at elevating the salience of the judicial contest.

Once characterized as uninteresting and placid affairs (Dubois 1984), the competition for the high court of each state has increased in visibility. Due in a large part to the influx of money, judicial campaigns have become more salient with the increased use of the media to campaign (Langer, Leonard and Polk 2010). That money is a vehicle for candidates running for judge to provide voters with information (Bonneau 2007). In the absence of that money, however, little if any information would be transmitted to voters. Such is the case for other down ballot races, including local judicial races. As such, much of what we know about voter mobilization and vote choice in judicial campaigns is limited to that of the state supreme courts. As I covered earlier, the vast majority of elective offices in the United States fall into the low salience category. Thus, it is other down ballot contests, like the one used for this project, that provide a

valuable setting to better understand political behavior by testing the importance of information and saliency to the American electorate (Langer, Leonard and Polk 2010).

4.3 VOTE ROLL-OFF: EFFECT OF ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES

Due to the fact prior judicial campaign studies have used vote-roll off as a measure for the effectiveness of a judicial campaign to mobilize voters (e.g., Hall 2007), it is necessary to discuss vote roll-off in the context of the present study. Vote Roll-Off is the difference in the number of total votes cast in an election compared to the number of votes recorded for down ballot campaigns. Those results are usually reported as a percentage. Voter fatigue, ballot confusion, disinterest in down ballot campaigns, or a lack of political sophistication have all been pointed to as possible reasons for vote roll-off (e.g. Ansolabehere 2002; Nichols and Strizek 1995; Shocket, Heighberger and Brown 1992).

Due to the nature of the first experiment in this dissertation, which I explain in detail in Chapter 5, for which I randomized the entire registered voter population, the application of vote roll-off as a measure for the effectiveness of the treatment is not applicable. Randomizing all registered voters, distributed across 55 voting districts, the average number of people exposed to the treatment in each voting district was less than 50. Thus, using an aggregate measure like vote roll-off, when hundreds of people in each voting district turned out to vote who were not exposed to the treatment, will not effectively capture the effect of the mobilization message.

There is an additional reason why vote roll-off may not be useful for the present study. Namely, the type of voting equipment used for the election used in this dissertation greatly reduces vote roll-off. The issue of vote roll-off is most pronounced in voting districts using outdated voting

equipment (Ansolabehere 2002). The United States employs five types of voting technology: hand counted paper ballots, punch cards, optically scanned paper ballots, lever machines, and electronic voting machines. The rate of vote roll-off has been directly linked to the technology used at a polling location. Of the current voting technology employed in the United States, the use of electronic voting machines has been shown to experience the lowest rate of vote roll-off (Ansolabehere 2002; Nichols and Strizek 1995; Shocket, Heighberger and Brown 1992). The reasons for the improved ballot completion rates credit the ease of use of electronic voting machines, the on screen instructions, and the automated reminders to finish voting for all offices on the ballot. If a voter wants to submit their ballot before casting a vote in all contests displayed on the ballot, a warning comes on the screen notifying the voter that their ballot is not complete. The voter then has to acknowledge they intentionally left some of the positions blank before submitting the ballot. Those prompts have been found to decrease, but not completely eliminate, the number of voters who do not complete their ballots. The conclusion is vote roll-off, when an electronic voting machine is used, may not be the best measure for mobilization for a down ballot campaign, as the voting equipment reduces the amount of people who do not complete the entire ballot. Additionally, due to the nature of the present study utilizing doorstep politics, the ability to disentangle the individuals who received the mobilization message from those who did not in the aggregate turnout numbers makes the use of vote roll-off tenable. As such, in the next chapter, I outline alternative methods to vote roll-off used by scholars to capture the effects of mobilization messages in a field experiment setting.

4.4 STUDYING LOW SALIENCE LOCAL ELECTIONS

The challenges of data availability facing the study of judicial elections is amplified when looking at down-ballot local elections. The absence of a readily available, centralized data repository for local elections has been pointed to as one of the primary reasons for the lack of scholarly interest in local elections (e.g. Caren 2007). Scholars who want to study local elections are forced to expend extensive time to gather data from multiple locations that are unorganized (Marschall 2010), or implement their own field experiments to collect their own data. The latter option was used for the data collection for the current project.

Further contributing to the limits of local election literature is, instead of looking at turnout and vote choice at the local level, scholars have focused the majority of their attention on participatory acts associated with the provision and quality of local public services (Marschall 2010). One of the primary reasons identified for the focus on non-electoral forms of political behavior at the local level is the turnout rates for off-election year contests is rather small when compared to state-wide and federal elections (Verba et al. 1995). This low turnout is then pointed to as a reason local races are low salience affairs, and thus, almost in a self-fulfilling prophesy, continue to fail to attract media attention.

Fortunately, the renewed interest in mobilization studies has focused on down ballot elections, and thus has helped provide the discipline with knowledge about voter behavior in local elections. But we still have a lot to learn. The good news is, this provides scholars studying local elections ample opportunity for scholarly inquiry. With 87,525 local governments (US Census Bureau 2002), each with multiple elective offices, the discipline has a relatively unexplored area of inquiry (Marschall 2010).

In the next chapter I outline the challenges associated with sample selection when studying mobilization at the local level. Issues of selection bias and distancing oneself from the phenomenon of interest are discussed.

5.0 STUDYING VOTER MOBILIZATION: THE PITFALLS OF OMITTING ‘STRATEGY’ IN YOUR DESIGN

The goal of a field experiment is to replicate the conditions of a real-world setting in order to study a phenomenon of interest (Davenport, Gerber and Green 2010). Voter mobilization has been the primary beneficiary of the renewed interest in field experiments by political scientists as a mode of collecting data. Some of the methods used in the sample population selection stage of a field experiment, however, may introduce selection bias. Additionally, the inclusion of individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign (infrequent voters) in a mobilization study may inadvertently distance scholars from the phenomenon of interest.

In this chapter, I explore the potential implications of sample selection when designing a mobilization field experiment. Political campaigns are inherently strategic. From designing the message to identifying who to contact, political practitioners strategically allocate their limited resources of volunteer (and paid staff) time and money. For that reason, it is necessary to understand the methods used by those practitioners when studying campaign activities. This is true for the study of mobilization. As I will explain in the sections that follow, ignoring the strategic nature of who campaigns choose to target for a mobilization drive may have implications when studying the effects of mobilization messages.

Using two leafleting field experiments during a magisterial judicial campaign in a major U.S. city, I set out to test for the potential sample bias introduced when strategic targeting tactics used by political practitioners are omitted from a field experiment design. The results of my study in this chapter indicate past voter mobilization studies, due to selection bias introduced during sample selection, have likely under reported the effects of mobilization efforts. Thus,

within the Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model (Zaller 1992), identifying who in the electorate is most likely to receive mobilization messages is a necessary step in capturing the true effects.

Prior to getting into the substantive implications of sample selection for a field experiment, it is first necessary to review the potential shortcomings of various data collection methods.

5.1 MODES OF DATA COLLECTION: POTENTIAL BIAS

The renaissance of field experiments in political science has helped the discipline move past lab experiments and survey data, and allowed scholars to study phenomenon of interest in a natural setting. Using this method of data collection helped advance our knowledge of which modes of mobilization are most effective (e.g., Cardy 2005; Gerber and Green 2003, 2001, 2000; Green and Gerber 2004), started to bring into focus who in the electorate is most responsive to mobilization messages (e.g., Arceneaux and Nickerson 2009; Niven 2004, 2001) and helped identify the conditions for which mobilization is most effective (e.g., Nickerson 2007; Panagopoulos 2009). Like many pioneering paths of inquiry before it, however, the time has come to reevaluate the methods used to study voter mobilization, and to confirm the steps taken to capture the effects of mobilization truly facilitate the measurement of the phenomenon of interest.

One of the primary concerns of any academic inquiry is the introduction of bias by way of data collection. Scholars relying on survey data must be cognizant of the potential pitfalls of social desirability, lapses in respondents' memory, and the potential for intentionally deceptive answers. Lab experiments introduce bias by virtue of the participant subject pool (Sears 1986),

use of artificial settings (Aronson, Wilson and Brewer 1998), and the Hawthorne effect . While field experiments are seen by some as the best method to overcome many of the shortcomings of survey and lab studies, it is not exempt from the potential introduction of bias. If the goal of a field study is to isolate the causal influence of an intervention while attempting to approximate the conditions under which a causal process occurs (Davenport, Gerber and Green 2010), we should ensure the methods used to implement a study mirror the phenomenon of interest.

A key component of field experiments is the use of random assignment. The benefit of the random assignment of treatment and control groups is that the process eliminates systematic differences in the two groups, thus any differences that arise between the two groups can be attributed to the experimental treatment instead of any preexisting differences (e.g., Rubin 1974). It would appear the random assignment process of a field experiment eliminates the concern of selection bias. Interestingly, it is this first step in a field experiment that may in fact be where selection bias is introduced, and thus will be the focus of this chapter.

5.2 INTRODUCTION OF SELECTION BIAS: RANDOMIZATION

There are elements of a field experiment that need to be kept in mind while designing a study. Violating one of these elements can potentially compromise the reliability of the results. Specifically, selection bias can be introduced when randomizing the sample population. To facilitate my discussion, I will utilize the four criteria outlined by Davenport, Gerber and Green (2010) that need to be kept in mind while designing a field experiment to ensure it approximates real-world conditions. The first criterion is whether the stimulus used in the experiment resembles the stimuli that would be encountered in an actual campaign. Second, whether the test

subjects resemble the individuals who would normally be exposed to the stimuli. Third, whether the context with which the test subjects receive the stimuli resembles the political context one would normally be in to receive the stimulus. Finally, whether the measured outcomes resemble the actual outcomes in the real-world for which we have theoretical and practical interest (Davenport, Gerber and Green 2010). It is the second criterion--whether the test subjects resemble the individuals who would normally be exposed to the stimuli—for which I will focus my attention for the analysis of selection bias in field experiments.

The randomization step eliminates any bias that may have existed between the treatment and control groups. By way of selecting the population to be randomized, however, I contend is where selection bias may be introduced into a study. In the context of studying voter mobilization, by including individuals in a study who would normally not be contacted by a political campaign, a researcher inadvertently introduces selection bias into a study. This argument is predicated on the potential differences in behavior between individuals who would normally be targeted by a political campaign compared to those individuals a campaign will forego contacting. If both groups have identical responses to mobilization messages, then no selection bias would be introduced by randomizing the entire voting population. However, if individuals who would normally be targeted by a campaign, or those residing at an address that would be targeted by a campaign, respond differently than those who would be skipped by a campaign, then the amount of selection bias introduced by randomizing the entire voting population may be large. Open for debate is the effect of the bias introduced when scholars omit strategy and randomize the entire voting population for a voter mobilization field experiment.

To organize my discussion, I will first explore the extant political behavior literature to guide my thoughts on the effect of the potential selection bias introduced when individuals who

would normally be skipped by a political campaign are included in a mobilization field study. Again, if individuals who would normally be targeted by a political campaign behave the same as those individuals who would normally be skipped by a campaign, then the concerns about selection bias may be unnecessary. As I will demonstrate, however, there are reasons to believe the two groups systematically behave differently, and therefore the population selection in the randomization step in a mobilization field study has far reaching implications. Within the Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model, it is necessary to keep in mind who is most likely to receive a mobilization message in an actual political campaign. As such, we must first understand how political practitioners identify which households to contact during a mobilization drive.

5.3 PRACTITIONER VOTER TARGETING APPROACH

Campaigns operate on limited resources of time and money (e.g. Grey 2007; Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Issenberg 2012). The goal of each person running for elective office is to get elected (Mayhew 1974). As such, with limited resources and a clear goal of being elected, political campaigns strategically target their scarce resources to areas they believe will provide the most return on investment (i.e. votes). At the top of the list are individuals who are most likely to turnout to vote. This is one topic where political scientists and campaign practitioners agree--- people who have voted in past elections are likely to vote again (e.g. Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003; Grey 2007). For that reason, political campaigns often target households where a frequent voter, or someone with a track record of voting, resides.

The analysis that follows explores the potential selection bias introduced into a mobilization study when the strategic targeting methods of campaign practitioners are not included. This is not to say that prior studies which did not include strategic targeting when randomizing their treatment and control groups have not contributed to the study of mobilization. There is theoretical value in knowing the effect of mobilization messages if every registered voter had an equal probability of receiving a mobilization message. That knowledge allows scholars to speculate what effect an increase in mobilization efforts would have on turning out the politically unengaged segments of the population. The fact remains, however, not every registered voter has an equal probability of being targeted for mobilization by a political campaign. As long as political campaigns are the ones conducting the bulk of mobilization activities, there is theoretical value in gaining a better understanding of the effects of mobilization messages in the current strategic political environment. Thus, it is my intent to build on the prior studies that speculated on ‘what if’ with the effects of mobilization messages on ‘what is.’ In the next section I explore what the extant literature tells us about the possible effect of selection bias when studying the effects of mobilization messages.

5.4 SELECTION BIAS: INCREASED OR DECREASED EFFECTS?

Open for debate is the effect of including individuals in a mobilization field study who would normally be skipped by a political campaign. On one hand, if the potential selection bias introduced by randomizing the entire population is consistent with the expectations of Rosenstone and Hansen (1993), the inclusion of households comprised only of infrequent voters who would normally be skipped by a political campaign may artificially inflate the effects of a

mobilization study. Because they anticipate that it is the least politically engaged segments of the population who are most receptive to mobilization messages, by including a disproportionate amount of those individuals in a study will inadvertently produce large aggregate effects. Thus, if one controls for that selection bias, we may find the effects of prior mobilization studies wash out. On the other hand, if Hillygus (2005) is correct that only the most politically active and attentive segments of the population respond to mobilization efforts, once we control for the potential selection bias introduced by including a disproportionate number of people who do not respond to mobilization efforts (i.e. infrequent voters), it may be discovered that prior studies of mobilization have underreported their effects.

The first step is to determine if randomizing the entire registered voting population introduces selection bias. Thus, we need to figure out if individuals who would normally be targeted for mobilization by a political campaign respond differently than those individuals who would normally be ignored. Once we resolve that first question, we can then focus on identifying the effect of including individuals who would normally be ignored in a mobilization study. Without an understanding of that potential selection bias, we cannot be confident the results of a mobilization study can accurately capture the effects of mobilization messages. As I have pointed out, the theoretical foundation for answering that question does not provide a consistent expectation. Understanding the goals and strategies of political practitioners as well as understanding that political scientists and practitioners agree that past voting behavior is one of the best predictors of future voting behavior (e.g. Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003; Grey 2007), the argument made by Hillygus (2005) appears to be the most logical.

Thus, I anticipate the inclusion of people who would not normally be targeted for mobilization by a campaign (a household full of infrequent voters) in a mobilization study will

negatively affect the results of a mobilization study. By including households that would normally be skipped by a political campaign, those full of infrequent voters, a researcher essentially waters down the results of a mobilization study. As such, I hypothesize randomizing the entire population for a mobilization study, instead of randomizing voters who would normally be targeted by a political campaign, will negatively affect the results. Formally stated:

H1: Exposure to the mobilization treatment is associated with a greater propensity to turnout among citizens who are likely to be targeted strategically by campaigns.

Now that I have identified the anticipated direction of selection bias introduced by omitting strategy in a voter mobilization study, it is necessary to decide the best way to test for that potential selection bias. An obvious solution to this question would be to conduct two separate field experiments. The first experiment should replicate the steps taken by prior mobilization studies that randomized the entire registered voter population. The second field experiment would then randomize a population of voters who would normally be targeted by a political campaign. As both treatment groups would be exposed to identical treatments, the only difference in the two field experiments will be the sample selection methods to randomize the same population of registered voters. The first experiment will include individuals who would normally be skipped by a political campaign, and the second experiment will only include households, consistent with the targeting methods used by campaign practitioners (e.g. Grey 2007; Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Issenberg 2012), which would normally be targeted by a political campaign. If H1 is correct, I can expect the aggregate effect of the second field experiment to be larger than the aggregate effect of the first experiment.

Using the data collected during the campaign outlined in chapter 4, the following sections detail the field experiments implemented to capture the effects of mobilization messages.

5.5 NON-STRATEGIC DOOR HANGER EXPERIMENT

For the first door hanger experiment I followed the randomization methods used by Green and Gerber (2004) to select voters . Using the registered voter list provided by the local election board, all registered Democrats and Republicans had an equal probability of being selected for the study. 1000 Democrats and 500 Republicans were randomly selected to receive a door hanger the week leading up to the election . Addresses that included apartment numbers were eliminated from the lists due to access restrictions. Those access restrictions not only were barriers for the volunteers for this study, but they would also be barriers for other campaigns attempting to make doorstep contact with the individuals living at those addresses. As such, eliminating individuals from a mobilization study who would not be accessible for any canvasser is justified (e.g. Green and Gerber 2004).

After assigning every voter a random number, the 1000 Democrats and 500 Republicans with the highest random number were then added to a walking list. A walking list is a list of addresses each volunteer carried with them to identify which houses were to receive a door hanger. There were some duplicate addresses as more than one Democrat or Republican at a given address was randomly selected. There were also some duplicate households that had a Republican AND a Democrat randomly selected residing at the same address (Split Party Household). The total number of duplicate addresses was small enough to not negatively affect the N for the study. The decision to select based on individual registered voters instead of

selecting based on street addresses is consistent with the selection methods used by Green and Gerber (2004). Additionally, the advantage of individual-level randomization is that the design generates a great deal of statistical power (Arceneaux 2005). Some addresses had multiple registered voters and others only one, so to truly gather a random sample, every registered voter was included on the list of potential voters to receive a door hanger. Had I selected based on addresses, it would have biased the selection process toward households with only one registered voter. As such, my sample gave every voter an equal chance of being selected.

It is important to note that the randomized N for Democratic and Republican households was 1000 and 500 respectively, however, the total N for the treatment group was 3123. As there is no way to control who at a given address received the treatment –which individuals at an address discovered the door hanger- all residents at an address are included in my treatment group. Again, this is consistent with the steps taken in prior mobilization studies (e.g. Green and Gerber 2004). Volunteers were instructed to place the door hanger on the door knob of the front door of each address on their list. Volunteers did not knock on the doors and did not speak with voters for this experiment. Addresses on the list that were vacant were noted on the walking lists and removed from the data. A residence was classified as vacant if the volunteer was able to observe the house was void of furniture or personal belongings.

Republican, Democratic and Split Party Households (houses with a Democrat and a Republican) received the same door hanger. The door hanger displayed a picture of the candidate, the campaign logo, a list of the candidates' experience, and **VOTE THIS TUESDAY** in bold lettering.

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual registered voter that lived at a residence that received a door hanger. As it is unknown which resident at a given address found

the door hanger, I am including all registered voters in this study who resided at an address that received a door hanger. Again, this is consistent with prior mobilization studies.

For my control group, all remaining voters on the voter registry were randomly assigned to a control group of equal size to the treatment group. For robustness, I created three different randomly selected control groups and ran a probit regression using each of the control groups with the treatment group. The findings using all three control groups achieved consistent results.

5.6 STRATEGIC DOOR HANGER EXPERIMENT

For the strategic door hanger experiment, past voting history was used as the criteria for selecting the households that would receive the treatment. All households where at least one individual resided who voted at least once prior to the election under consideration were included. Admittedly, this is not as stringent of a selection criterion that most political practitioners would use for selecting which households to contact. Due to the relative low cost of time for this mode of contact, however, campaigns often include a larger swath of the voting population when conducting a literature drop compared to when conducting face-to-face canvassing (e.g. Grey 2007; Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Issenberg 2012). It also facilitates the ability to capture the effect of randomizing the entire registered voter population on a mobilization study compared to using a strategically targeted sample. The sample included both Democratic and Republican households. Consistent with the steps taken by campaign practitioners and as outlined by Arceneaux (2005), the randomization for this experiment was conducted at the voting district level.

Due to the volunteer pool for this experiment, primarily composed of junior and senior high school students who did not have access to a car, considerations had to be made regarding the distance from the staging point for the campaign activity to the voting districts where the literature (door hangers) would be distributed. As such, a map of the judicial district was physically laid out on a table and a circle was drawn with roughly a one mile radius from the central staging point. Thus, the farthest each volunteer would have to walk to get to their distribution point was roughly one mile. The treatment group had an N=3123 and the control group had an N=8206 .

As with the first experiment, volunteers were given walking lists with the addresses of houses to deliver a door hanger. Because campaigns are interested in contacting likely voters (Grey 2007) during a mobilization drive, and past voting behavior has been demonstrated to be the best predictor of future voting behavior (Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003), all households with only non-voters were removed from the lists. The control group consists of households in voting districts that did not receive the door hanger treatment and that have a registered Democrat and/or Republican living at that address who voted in at least one election prior to the election under consideration for this study.

Identical to the first experiment, volunteers were instructed to place a door hanger on the front door. This was strictly a literature drop. No personal contact was made by a volunteer with a voter.

A randomization check using past voting histories for the treatment and control groups was conducted, and no statistically difference was found between the groups prior to conducting the experiments. Randomization checks for each experiment in this project are displayed in the Appendix. That extra step provided me with confirmation prior to conducting the field

experiments that I achieved comparable treatment and control groups. The inclusion of past voting behavior in a probit regression, however, will account for the influence of past voting behavior on the effectiveness of the treatment, and thus will account for any disparities between the treatment and control groups had they existed.

5.7 VOTE ROLL-OFF: EFFECT OF ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES

Prior to proceeding to the results section, I want to address the issue of vote-roll off. Due to the fact prior judicial campaign studies have used vote roll-off as a measure for the effectiveness of a judicial campaign to mobilize voters (e.g., Hall 2007), it is necessary to discuss vote roll-off in the context of the present study. Vote roll-off is the difference in the number of total votes cast in an election for the top of the ticket contest compared to the number of votes recorded for down ballot campaigns. Those results are usually reported as a percentage. Voter fatigue, ballot confusion, disinterest in down ballot campaigns, or a lack of political sophistication have all been pointed to as possible reasons for vote roll-off.

The issue of vote roll-off is most pronounced in voting districts using outdated voting equipment (Ansolabehere 2002). The United States employs five types of voting technology: hand counted paper ballots, punch cards, optically scanned paper ballots, lever machines, and electronic voting machines. The rate of vote-roll off has been directly linked to the technology used at a polling location. Of the current voting technologies employed in the United States, the use of electronic voting machines has been shown to result in the lowest rate of vote roll-off (Ansolabehere 2002; Nichols and Strizek 1995; Shocket, Heighberger and Brown 1992). The ease of use of electronic voting machines, the on screen instructions, and the automated

reminders to finish voting for all offices on the ballot is credited for the improved ballot completion rates. If a voter wants to submit their ballot before casting a vote in all races displayed on the ballot, a warning comes on the screen notifying the voter that their ballot is not complete. The voter then has to acknowledge they intentionally left some of the positions blank before submitting the ballot. Those prompts have been found to decrease, but not completely eliminate, the number of voters who do not complete their ballots. The conclusion is vote roll-off, when an electronic voting machine is used, may not be the best measure for the effect of mobilization messages for a down ballot campaign, as the voting equipment reduces the amount of people who do not complete the entire ballot.

All of the polling locations for the present study used electronic voting machines. As such, the use of vote roll-off as a measure for the effect of mobilization messages may not be the best option. It is also inconsistent with the methods used to measure the effects of mobilization messages by scholars studying mobilization (see all cited mobilization studies in this dissertation). Due to the nature of the present study's focus on capturing the effects of exposure to a mobilization message, and the fact not all registered voters received the treatment, the use of aggregate vote roll-off is not theoretically justified. In the RAS model, the first assumption is an individual received the message. Because a message can have no effect if not received, using aggregate vote roll-off, which includes voters who did not receive the mobilization message, does not accurately capture the effect of the treatment. As such, utilizing individual turnout data will be used for this project to test for the effect of receiving a mobilization message.

5.8 RESULTS: NON-STRATEGIC VS. STRATEGIC DOOR HANGER EXPERIMENTS

To analyze my data I used a probit regression analysis, controlling for past voting behavior and partisanship, to capture the effect of the treatment. As the population for this study was identical for each experiment, and the only difference was the randomization steps taken to select the treatment and control groups from the full population, I ran one probit regression sorted by each experiment regressing turnout on the experimental treatment for each experiment. Table 4-1 shows the results of the probit regression analysis. The probit coefficients were converted to changes in predicted probabilities using Scott Long's method for conversion (Long and Freese 2003). The results are reported as two-tailed tests.

TABLE 5-1

	Non-Strategic Experiment		Strategic Experiment	
	b	Robust Standard Errors	b	Robust Standard Errors
Received Door Hanger	0.72	.0111	5.10	.0107***
Lifetime Voting History	45.65	.0003***	55.99	.0003***
Partisanship	6.52	.0125***	4.55	.0123***
	Note: ***p<.001, **p<.01 N=7428 Pseudo R2=0.264		Note: ***p<.001, **p<.01 N=11329 Pseudo R2=0.259	

Comparing the coefficients for the treatment groups from both experiments, an apparent difference can be seen. In the experiment where the entire registered voter population was randomized for the treatment and control groups, the treatment coefficient (0.72) does not achieve statistical significance. The treatment coefficient in the field experiment that randomized a strategically targeted population for the treatment and control groups has a larger magnitude (5.10) and is statistically significant. Those findings appear to support my hypothesis

that a larger effect will be observed in the strategically targeted population. Keeping in mind the only difference between the two experiments is the sample selection from the same population, it appears the inclusion of individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign in a mobilization study artificially reduces the effects of the treatment. In other words, past studies which randomized the entire registered voting population likely have underreported the effects of mobilization messages.

Consistent with mobilization theory, past voting behavior for both experiments had statistically significant effects on the probability of turning out to vote, as did partisanship. Even after controlling for those key contributors to the probability of voting, receiving a door hanger in a low salience race within the strategically targeted populations increased the probability of turning out to vote by more than 5%.

An eyeball examination indicates there is a difference in treatment effects between the strategic and nonstrategic experiments. To test the difference between the increases in effect on turnout, I followed the steps outlined by Garfield (1984) to compare regression coefficients between two groups. I can compare the regression coefficients of Turnout for the strategic experiment with the effect of the treatment in the nonstrategic experiment to test the null hypothesis $H_0: B_{\text{nonstrat}} = B_{\text{strat}}$, where B_{nonstrat} is the regression coefficient for the nonstrategic experiment, and B_{strat} is the regression coefficient for the strategic experiment. To do this analysis, I first made a dummy variable for the Strategic Experiment, and an interaction variable that was the product of Strategic Experiment and Treatment. Table 5-2 displays the results from regressing the treatment, Strategic Experiment and the interaction term on turnout, controlling for voting history and partisanship.

TABLE 5-2

Testing the Difference in Treatment Effect Between the Non-Strategic and Strategic Populations

	b	t	Standard Errors
Received Door Hanger	0.012	1.63	.009
Strategic Population	0.009	0.11	.007
Treatment*StratPop	0.036	2.97	.012***
Lifetime Vote History	0.015	94.41	.000***
Partisanship	0.056	8.27	.007***
-cons	0.009	1.09	.008

Note: ***p<.001, **p<.01 and *p<.05

N=18757

R2=0.3159

Interpreting the results, the Interaction Term tests the null hypothesis $H_0: B_{\text{nonstrat}} = B_{\text{strat}}$, or the treatment effects in the nonstrategic experiment is statistically equal to the treatment effect in the strategic experiment. It is the t value, not the coefficient, which is used to assess the significance between two groups. The t value for the Treatment*StratPop variable is 2.97 and is significant, indicating that the regression coefficient B_{strat} is significantly different from B_{nonstrat} . The positive t value indicates the slope for the effect of the treatment increases in the strategic door hanger experiment. Thus, comparing the two experiments, the effect of the door hanger on the probability to turnout in the strategic experiment is larger than the effect of the door hanger in the nonstrategic experiment. Based on those findings, I can reject the null that the effect of the door hangers on individuals in the nonstrategic experiment is the same as the effect on the individuals in the strategic experiment.

5.9 DISCUSSION

The basic finding of this chapter indicates the effect of selection bias introduced when individuals who would normally be skipped by a political campaign are included in a

mobilization study has more than trivial implications. Not only do these results draw into question the findings of prior mobilization studies that randomized the entire voting population, with the results of those prior studies likely under-reporting the effects of mobilization messages, it also provides support for the application of John Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model to the study of mobilization. Understanding who is likely to receive a message is the first step in understanding the effects of a mobilization message.

Future studies can test to see if the selection bias introduced by randomizing the entire voting population is consistent across other modes of mobilization. Because this project was conducted in an urban setting, replicating my experiments in a rural and suburban setting is called for. Finally, due to the low salience nature of the campaign used for this study, testing the effects of a strategic mobilization study in a more salient election would contribute to the generalizability of these effects.

With those limitations, however, this chapter provides a solid foundation for moving forward with the goal of identifying who in the electorate, based on voting propensities, is responsive to mobilization messages. Demonstrating the dangers of including individuals in a mobilization study who would not normally be contacted during a mobilization drive is an important first step in the quest to identify who is responsive to mobilization messages. Including a sample of individuals who not only are not likely to be contacted by a political campaign, but also are less responsive to mobilization messages, would introduce selection bias in a study attempting to capture who, based on past voting behavior, is affected by mobilization messages. Thus, utilizing a randomly selected population of individuals who would likely be contacted by a campaign will provide us with a more accurate picture of who in the electorate is responsive to mobilization messages.

The key take away point from this chapter is that scholars need to be aware of the potential selection bias introduced in a voter mobilization study when campaign strategy is omitted from the design. If the goal is to gain a better understanding of the effects of mobilization messages in an actual campaign setting, the steps taken when selecting the individuals to include in the treatment and control groups has implications for the reliability of the study results. By including individuals in an experiment who would not normally be contacted by a campaign, a scholar is potentially distancing herself from the phenomenon of interest, therefore ignoring strategy when studying a topic that is inherently strategic may weaken the results. Thus, from the RAS model perspective, it is necessary to understand who in the electorate is likely to receive a mobilization message. From there, we can better understand who will accept, and then sample from, the mobilization message.

In the next chapter I attempt to identify who in the electorate, based on past voting behavior, is responsive to mobilization messages.

6.0 WHO IS MOBILIZEABLE?: THE EFFECTS OF MOBILIZATION MESSAGES ON FREQUENT, INTERMITTENT AND INFREQUENT VOTERS

In the prior chapter, I set out to test the potential selection bias introduced in a mobilization study when including individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign. The results indicate the inclusion of households with no frequent voters residing at an address, the criterion most readily used by political practitioners to target households (e.g., Grey 2007; Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Issenberg 2012), appears to water down the results of a mobilization study. Thus, randomizing the entire registered voter population, essentially including individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign, may not give an accurate picture of the effects of mobilization messages when a political campaign conducts a mobilization drive.

In the aggregate, it appears the debate over who in the electorate is responsive to mobilization messages has been resolved. After all, it was the households which had an individual who voted in the past residing at the address that experienced the increase in the probability to turnout to vote when receiving the mobilization message. That conclusion, however, would not be completely accurate. The aggregate numbers only tell us that households without an individual who had voted in the past are less likely to be affected by mobilization messages compared to households with a person who developed the habit of voting. This may be a disappointing finding for democratic theorists who hoped an increase in mobilization efforts would reach the infrequent voting population. It is, however, theoretically consistent with the Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model (Zaller 1992) within the mobilization field experiment context. Those houses without a voter residing at the address would likely not receive a mobilization message in the first place.

Within the television media environment of the RAS model, the media consumption habits and political sophistication of each individual play roles in the likelihood someone will receive political information, accept that information, and then use the information (sample) when forming political attitudes or opinions. The same is true within the mobilization field experiment context. As I pointed out in the previous chapters, the winnowing technique most readily available to political practitioners when strategically targeting individuals for a mobilization drive is past voting behavior. Thus, past voting behavior affects the probability an individual will receive a mobilization message. Additionally, past voting behavior may be a proxy for political awareness, as individuals who have not developed the habit of voting may actively insulate themselves from exposure to the political information (Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003). Thus, individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign---people who normally will not receive mobilization messages---have characteristics that contribute to the way they respond (or don't respond) to those messages when exposed. Still unresolved, however, is the effect of the mobilization messages on each individual residing at a strategically targeted household. After all, not everyone living at each address has identical voting propensities. It is likely that frequent voters live with infrequent and intermittent voters, thus providing the opportunity to test the effects of mobilization messages on people with different propensities to vote within a strategically targeted sample.

The first step in the RAS model is identifying who will receive a message (Zaller 1992). The key criterion for implementing a field experiment is ensuring that the individuals included in the experiment resemble the individuals who would normally come in contact with the stimuli of interest (Davenport, Gerber and Green 2010). Understanding who is most likely to receive a mobilization message is paramount in gaining a better understanding of who is responsive to

mobilization messages. As such, this chapter takes a closer look at the individuals residing at households strategically targeted by political practitioners for mobilization efforts. Within those households there is variation in the past voting behaviors of each individual. Some households have more than one frequent voter, while others have a frequent voter living with someone who has never voted in the past. That variation affords the ability to test for the effects of mobilization messages on individuals with different propensities to vote.

6.1 IDENTIFYING WHO IS MOST RESPONSIVE TO MOBILIZATION MESSAGES IN A STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

To set up my discussion, I first need to explore the findings of prior studies that have looked at which individuals in the electorate are responsive to mobilization messages. It is this brief review that brings into focus the need to resolve the debate.

The first wave of research identifying who is mobilizeable focused on the extremes of voter propensity. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) argued it should be the least likely to vote that will be most responsive. After all, frequent voters are already going to vote, thus a mobilization message will have no effect. It is the voters who have the lowest propensities to vote who can be most swayed by mobilization efforts. These voters have very limited political information, undeveloped political opinions, and thus are more malleable to persuasive communication. At the other extreme, Hillygus (2005) concluded that frequent voters are most likely to respond to mobilization messages. The rationale is, frequent voters are most attentive to campaign activities and thus will be most likely to pay attention to mobilization messages.

Taking a different approach, studies have explored the effects on voters with medium propensities to vote, known as intermittent voters. Following the logic of John Zaller (1992), Niven (2001, 2004) posited that frequent voters, who are most attentive and informed, are not likely to be swayed by mobilization messages. At the other extreme, infrequent voters are disinterested and uninformed, thus these individuals avoid exposure to mobilization messages. If a message is not received, he concludes, there can be no effect. For that reason, Niven hypothesized, and demonstrated, voters in the mid-range of voter propensity are the most responsive to mobilization messages.

Arceneaux and Nickerson (2009) take a slightly different approach and conclude the effectiveness of a mobilization message is conditional on the salience of a political campaign. Their argument rests on an assumption that the tipping point for an individual voter to go from not voting in an election to committing to cast a ballot is not static. Instead, the probability of an individual voter casting a ballot on Election Day is conditioned on the salience of a campaign. The more salient races, often better funded and more publicized, gain the attention of frequent and intermittent voters, and even enter into the consciousness of infrequent voters. The high saliency of that race will lower the threshold for persuading voters to participate. For that reason, Arceneaux and Nickerson argued that it will be infrequent voters who will be most affected by a mobilization drive, as the onslaught of campaign activity is difficult to avoid. Frequent and intermittent voters likely already intend to vote. Therefore, it is voters with lower propensities to vote who may need extra encouragement to go to the polls. A mobilization drive may provide that additional push. Conversely, in low salience races, campaigns where there is no high profile race and limited advertising, only the most attentive voters will be aware that a campaign is underway. As such, mobilization messages will have little to no effect on

intermittent and infrequent voters. For frequent voters, however, all they may need is a reminder of the date of the election. Thus, a mobilization drive will prompt frequent voters to head to the polls. Finally, continuing with their model, mobilization messages in medium salience races, like those involving the election of a mayor, will be most effective with voters with mid-range propensities to vote.

Each of the prior studies has contributed to the extant literature on mobilization. Unresolved, however, is who in the electorate is mobilizable. If it is conditioned on the level of attention an individual focuses on politics, then we would assume only the most attentive voters will respond to mobilization messages (e.g. Hillygus 2005) in the present study. If the most attentive segment of the population is already likely to vote, and it is the least attentive who need the most encouragement, then we would assume the least attentive are most responsive to mobilization messages (e.g. Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). If Zaller (1992) is correct, as applied by Niven (2001, 2004) and the individuals at each extreme of voter propensities have already decided to vote or are unreachable, then the voters with medium propensities to vote will be most responsive. Finally, if the key condition for identifying who in the electorate is most mobilizable is the salience of an election, we would conclude that the only time mobilization successfully reaches infrequent voters is during the most salient campaigns, like a presidential election cycle (e.g. Arceneaux and Nickerson 2005). Thus, depending on the salience of the race, the findings of Hillygus (2005), Rosenstone and Hansen (1993), and Niven (2001, 2004) may support Arceneaux and Nickerson's (2005) conditional model. The limitation of those conclusions, however, is the consideration of who is most likely to receive a mobilization message. As such, I turn my attention to the RAS model to help guide my efforts to better understand who is responsive to mobilization messages.

6.2 THE EFFECT OF EXPOSURE: THE RECEIVE STEP IN THE RAS MODEL

The prior studies, while informative, may be misleading when identifying who in the electorate is most affected by mobilization messages. First, applying the logic outlined by Zaller (1992), the key to persuasion is exposure to media messages . When an inattentive voter wants to avoid exposure to political messages on TV, they simply have to change the channel. The same can be said for avoiding newspapers, internet articles, and political information on the radio. It becomes more difficult, however, to avoid political messages when those messages are delivered to your doorstep by a campaign volunteer (e.g. Gerber and Green 2001). Thus doorstep politics reduces the ability to ‘opt out’ of exposure to mobilization messages. It is important, however, to also keep in mind who is most likely to receive mobilization messages.

As I outlined in chapter 2, applying the RAS model to the study of mobilization, we must first acknowledge the necessity to receive a message for it to have an effect, and then to understand who is likely to receive the message. In chapter 5 I demonstrated that individuals residing in households that would normally be ignored by political campaigns during a mobilization drive are less responsive than those residing in a strategically targeted household. This would appear to support the conclusion that infrequent voters are less responsive to mobilization messages. The problem with that conclusion, however, is the fact infrequent voters also reside in strategically targeted households. The presence of at least one frequent voter increases the probability everyone residing at an address will receive a mobilization message. As such, exploring the effect of mobilization messages on individuals with different voting histories can be facilitated by conducting a study with strategically targeted households.

Prior studies have found a link between the political behavior of people residing at the same address (e.g. Nickerson 2008). That finding suggests a mechanism by which civic participation norms are adopted by family members and possibly roommates. This may contribute to the effect of mobilization messages on infrequent voters residing at an address that is strategically targeted during a mobilization drive. Still unresolved is whether a frequent, intermittent or infrequent voter at a targeted household will be responsive to a mobilization message. Applying Zaller's (1992) RAS model to the discussion offers some guidance as to who we can anticipate will respond to mobilization messages.

In the media setting, where individuals opt in or out of exposure to media messages, Zaller found that individuals with mid-levels of political awareness and interest were most affected by media messages. Their limited knowledge was credited for the ability for the messages to have an effect. More importantly, however, for the present study was the probability those individuals would receive the messages. Thus, a combination of limited information and the probability of receiving the message set the stage for an effect. Applying that logic to the study of mobilization, if limited information and the likelihood of exposure to a mobilization message is key, we could conclude that not only individuals with mid-levels of political interest and past political involvement will experience an effect. We can also anticipate those individuals at the bottom of knowledge and participation will also respond. I anticipate it will be individuals with limited information and political knowledge, but who have a high probability of receiving a mobilization message, who will be most responsive. As I discuss in the next section, by taking the campaign to the doorsteps of voters, a mobilization message greatly cuts the costs associated with information gathering. As such, I hypothesize mobilization

messages will have an effect on voters who have lower propensities to vote, in addition to those with mid-level propensities to vote. Formally stated:

H1: Exposure to the mobilization treatment is associated with a greater propensity to turnout among citizens who do not vote regularly or vote intermittently.

6.3 VOTER PROPENSITY: DEFINING FREQUENT, INTERMITTENT AND INFREQUENT VOTERS

Prior to outlining how I intend to test for the effects of mobilization messages on voters with different propensities to vote, I need to define the three voter propensity categories I will use for this study. Following the steps outlined by Niven (2001, 2004), I will sort each individual into three different groups based on past voting behavior in the three election cycles prior to the election under consideration for this chapter. Those three election cycles include a gubernatorial and U.S Senate general election, a contested gubernatorial primary election, and a municipal election with the office of Mayor at the top of the ticket. These three election cycles will provide the necessary variance in voting behavior to categorize voters into three groups .

The first group is Frequent Voters. To be a frequent voter an individual must have voted in all three prior elections. Intermittent Voters are those who turned out for two of the elections, while Infrequent Voters only voted in one or less of the three elections. For parsimony, Niven (2001, 2004) combined individuals who voted once with those who did not vote at all. It is this third category of voter propensity that is of primary interest for the current project.

6.4 DATA: IDENTIFYING WHO IS RESPONSIVE TO MOBILIZATION MESSAGES

To test for the effects of mobilization messages on individuals with different voting propensities, I utilize the door hanger experiments from Chapter 5. Using the same experiments provides a nice continuity for the theoretical story I am telling in this project. By first establishing the need to include strategy when studying mobilization, we are one step closer to being able to more accurately identify who in the electorate, based on past voting behavior, is responsive to mobilization messages. Applying the RAS model, the first step is understanding who is most likely to receive the mobilization message. Consistent with the strategic targeting methods employed by campaign practitioners, as I discussed in detail in Chapter 5, past voting behavior is the most readily available information to assist in strategic targeting efforts. Building on those earlier findings, I now explore the effect of mobilization messages on individuals with different propensities to vote.

Once again, I will use both field experiments. The first experiment, which randomized the entire registered voter population for its treatment and control groups, replicates the steps taken in prior mobilization studies. The findings from that experiment will provide a baseline comparison for my second experiment, which employed strategic targeting methods to identify the population of registered voters to randomly assign to treatment and control groups. This second experiment provides a more realistic setting for studying the effects of mobilization messages on individuals with different voting propensities. Those who received the mobilization message in the second experiment resemble the individuals who would normally be contacted by a campaign during a mobilization drive. This puts me in a better position to identify who is responsive to mobilization messages during an actual mobilization drive.

Replicating the steps taken by Niven (2001, 2004), I used the voting history of each individual in the two experiments to divide the population into the three voter propensity categories. By using the three election cycles prior to the election under consideration for this project, I am able to capture the variation between individuals in their propensity to vote. This also provides a better measure for recent voting behavior when compared to a composite voting history score which consists of a raw number from the lifetime turnout rates of each individual (Green and Gerber 2004). Using the composite score would inevitably bias the study toward those individuals who have lived in the area longer, or simply lived longer. By using the past three election cycles, the data will capture the voting behavior of all age groups, and will include individuals who recently moved into the area (e.g. Niven 2004)

6.5 RESULTS: NON-STRATEGIC DOOR HANGER EXPERIMENT

To analyze my data I used a probit regression analysis, controlling for voting history and partisanship, to capture the effect of the treatment sorted by each individual's propensity to vote. Table 6-1 shows the results of the probit regression analysis regressing turnout on the experimental treatment for the first door hanger experiment which randomized the entire registered voter population to select the treatment and control groups. The probit coefficients were converted to changes in predicted probabilities, using Scott Long's method for conversion (Long and Freese 2003).

TABLE 6-1
Probit Regression of Voter Turnout on Mobilization Treatment (Non-Strategic)

	Infrequent Voters dy/dx (z)	Intermittent Voters dy/dx (z)	Frequent Voters dy/dx (z)
Treatment	0.69 (.008)	2.14 (.031)*	-0.21 (.021)
Lifetime Vote History	12.49 (.000)***	7.76 (.001)***	11.15 (.001)***
PID	2.01 (.008)*	3.78 (.037)***	3.94 (.031)***
N	4732	1126	1570

Note: ***p<.001, ** p<.01 and *p<.05

Two-Tailed tests

Of the three voter propensity categories, the only one that achieves statistical significance is Intermittent Voters. While the aggregate effect of the treatment after controlling for Lifetime Voting History and PID is relatively small (2.14%) it is statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval.

Putting the results from Table 6-1 into context with prior mobilization studies, the results are consistent with prior findings. Specifically, the studies that have explored who in the electorate are responsive to mobilization messages have concluded it is those individuals who fall in the mid-range (Intermittent) of voting propensities who will experience an effect (e.g. Niven 2001, 2004). It is important to remember that those studies randomized the entire registered voter population to conduct their studies, which is the same process I used to identify my treatment and control groups for this experiment. As I will demonstrate in the next section, and discussed in detail in chapter 5, the inclusion of individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign distorts the findings of a mobilization study attempting to identify who is responsive to mobilization messages.

6.6 RESULTS: STRATEGIC DOOR HANGER EXPERIMENT

Repeating the steps outline above, I used a probit regression analysis to capture the effect of the treatment on each propensity to vote category within a strategically targeted population. Table 6-2 shows the results of the probit regression analysis regressing turnout on the experimental treatment for the second door hanger experiment which randomized a strategically targeted population of voters who would normally be contacted by a political campaign. From that population I randomized my treatment and control groups. Once again, the probit coefficients were converted to changes in predicted probabilities, using Scott Long's method for conversion (Long and Freese 2003).

TABLE 6-2
Probit Regression of Voter Turnout on Mobilization Treatment (Strategic)

	Infrequent Voters dy/dx (z)	Intermittent Voters dy/dx (z)	Frequent Voters dy/dx (z)
Treatment	3.82 (.008)***	3.76 (.026)***	2.88 (.017)**
Lifetime Vote History	16.71 (.000)***	11.57 (.001)***	13.73 (.001)***
PID	0.04 (.009)	1.53 (.036)	4.00 (.030)***
N	7009	1835	2485

Note: ***p<.001, ** p<.01 and *p<.05

Two-Tailed tests

It can be observed in Table 6-2 the treatment had a positive effect on all three categories. Unlike the non-strategic door hanger experiment where only Intermittent Voters experienced a statistically significant increase in their probability of turning out, in the strategic door hanger experiment Infrequent and Frequent voters also experienced an effect. In the order of the size of the coefficients, the largest is Infrequent Voters (3.82) followed closely by Intermittent Voters (3.76), with the Frequent Voter category (2.88) in third place.

Comparing Tables 6-1 and 6-2, it can be observed there was a large increase between the strategic and non-strategic door hanger experiments by the Infrequent Voter category. A jump from statistically insignificant results (.69) to statistically significant results (3.82) constitutes an impressive shift. It also appears to support my hypothesis that including individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign in a mobilization study will affect the results of a mobilization study attempting to capture who is responsive to mobilization messages. Thus, prior conclusions that Infrequent Voters are not responsive to mobilization messages may be an artifact of the selection bias introduced in a study when randomizing the entire registered voter population.

It is also interesting to note that the Frequent Voter category also experienced a large increase in effect. While the coefficient in the strategic experiment (2.88) appears to be smaller than the effect for the Infrequent Voter category, it still signifies a large increase from the non-statistically significant results (-.21) in the non-strategic experiment.

An eyeball check of the results in Table 6-2 appears to support my hypothesis (H1) that exposure to the mobilization treatment is associated with a greater propensity to turnout among citizens who do not vote regularly or vote intermittently. Interestingly, however, Frequent Voters also experienced an effect from the mobilization messages. I will discuss these findings in more detail in the conclusion of this chapter. Prior to rejecting the null, however, I first need to test for a difference in effect between each of the propensities to vote. Replicating the steps taken in chapter 5 to test the effect between the two experimental groups, I tested for a difference in effects between the three propensities to vote. The results indicated there was no statistical difference in effects. Thus, mobilization messages delivered to strategically targeted households

has an effect for infrequent, intermittent and frequent voters in a down ballot low salience election.

The effect of the treatment on infrequent voters does provide support for my theoretical argument that infrequent voters residing at households that would normally be contacted by a political campaign can in fact be reached by mobilization messages. Folded back into the RAS model framework, when an infrequent voter who is likely to receive a mobilization message is contacted, they have an increased probability to accept the message, and then adjust their voting behavior (sample). Thus, it appears infrequent voters are receptive to mobilization messages.

Interestingly, all three theories on who is most responsive to mobilization messages are partially supported from the results of this study. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) anticipated it was the least informed and politically engaged segments of the population who would be responsive. Within the strategic sample, infrequent voters did experience an increase in the probability of turning out to vote when they received the mobilization messages. Hillygus (2005) posited it would be the most engaged and politically active segments of the population who would respond to mobilization messages. The results of this study demonstrate that frequent voters did experience an effect from receiving the mobilization message. Finally, Niven (2001, 2004) argued that individuals in the mid-range of political involvement and interest would be responsive to mobilization messages. The results above indicate intermittent voters do respond to mobilization messages.

Taken together, when a mobilization study includes strategy, it can be observed individuals with varying voter propensities will respond positively to mobilization messages in a down ballot campaign. Unlike in prior studies, which anticipated the effect would be experienced by only one of the three groups, my findings indicate infrequent, intermittent and

frequent voters all respond to mobilization messages. Again, these results are realized when applying the RAS model to the study of mobilization. Identifying who is likely to receive the mobilization message is a necessary step in identifying who in the electorate is responsive to mobilization messages.

6.7 DISCUSSION

The findings in this chapter draw into question the assumption that mobilization messages are ineffective at mobilization politically disinterested segments of the population. Once strategic targeting, consistent with the steps employed by campaign practitioners, is accounted for, it can be observed infrequent voters do in fact respond. That conclusion, however, does come with some qualifications.

First, not every infrequent voter responds the same way to mobilization messages. This study opens the discussion about the influence of family members and roommates on the propensity to vote (see also Nickerson 2008). If true, these results indicate infrequent voters living with a frequent voter are more responsive to mobilization messages than are infrequent voters living with other infrequent voters. Future studies can test other modes of mobilization to see if the pattern of effect is consistent across other mobilization methods. This study only utilized a door hanger experiment. Replicating this study with phone calls, direct mail or door-to-door canvassing will help contribute to this discussion.

Second, once strategic targeting has been included in a study, I find infrequent voters are just as responsive to mobilization messages as are frequent voters. If Arceneaux and Nickerson's (2009) campaign salience condition was applied to the present study, we would

expect only frequent voters would be responsive to the door-to-door mobilization efforts. Arceneaux and Nickerson's model posited that during low salience races, only the most politically engaged segment of the population will be responsive to mobilization messages. By any metric, the campaign used for this study would be classified as a low salience election. The top of the ticket was a primary election for County Executive, and the Magisterial Judicial race was at the bottom of the ticket.

Finally, the findings of this study must be couched as a case study. Even though the judicial district used for this study is demographically similar to other districts in other states, I must be cautious about how much I generalize these results. Replicating this study in a rural setting or suburban setting may yield different results.

Building on the findings in chapter 5, and this chapter, in the next chapter I explore the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice.

7.0 MOBILIZATION MESSAGE EFFECTS: VOTE CHOICE

The study of mobilization has primarily focused on the effects of mobilization messages on the probability an individual will turn out on Election Day. Turnout, however, is only one piece of the mobilization puzzle. As I stated in the prior chapters, aggregate increases in turnout are not a priority for political campaigns. Instead, it is the goal of practitioners to increase the turnout of individuals who support their candidate. Arguably, if a mobilization drive increased aggregate turnout but resulted in a loss for the campaign conducting the mobilization efforts, it is doubtful they would consider the mobilization drive a success. As such, the important missing element in the study of mobilization is the effect mobilization messages have on vote choice.

In this chapter I set out to capture the effect a last minute mobilization drive has on the vote share for a down ballot campaign. Folding the discussion into the broader campaign effects literature, I find that a literature drop two days prior to Election Day can increase the vote share of a candidate in a four-way primary by as much as twenty five percent. With the neutralization of the key heuristic (Party Identification) in a primary election, and the limited media coverage of down-ballot campaigns, mobilization messages appear to have a significant effect on vote choice as well as turnout rates.

7.1 VOTE CHOICE: RECEIVE-ACCEPT-SAMPLE (RAS) MODEL

The knowledge we have gained about the effects of campaigns on vote choice centers heavily on U.S. presidential campaigns and Congressional contests, but little is known about down ballot low salience campaign effects. As I have outlined in the prior chapters, the renaissance of field

experiments in mobilization studies has contributed to our understanding of the effects of mobilization messages on turnout. By applying John Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model to the study of mobilization, however, it may guide our expectations regarding the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice in a down ballot campaign.

In chapter 5 I focused on the receive step of the RAS model. By understanding who in the electorate is likely to receive mobilization messages, it is possible to design a more realistic mobilization study to capture the effects of those messages. In chapter 6 I focused on the accept and sample stages of the RAS model. Once I identified who in the electorate was most likely to receive a mobilization message, I was then able to concentrate on identifying who, within that population of likely recipients, is responsive to those messages. Once a message has been received, the recipient contemplates the information and decides whether to accept the new information. Once accepted, the measure of the sampling of that information, within the mobilization application of the RAS model, is the change in behavior that information causes. In chapter 6, the measured behavior was the probability of an individual to turn out to vote. An increase in the probability to turn out is an indication the received information was accepted and then sampled when making the decision to cast a ballot on Election Day. Turnout, however, is not the only voting behavior that can be measured to capture the effect of mobilization messages. Accepting a received mobilization message can be sampled when an individual contemplates for which candidates to vote. As such, this chapter focuses on the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice. To facilitate my analysis, I start by providing a brief overview of campaign effects research that is applicable to the vote choice process.

7.2 CAMPAIGN EFFECTS

The study of campaign effects can best be summarized by the changes over time in the way campaign effects have been defined. The earliest studies of campaign effects focused on the ability of a message to convert the voting intentions of individuals. Those studies, which found few if any people experienced such a drastic conversion, concluded that most people did not change their mind over the course of a campaign, and instead relied heavily on their predispositions of partisan attachments and policy attitudes (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1944). Scholars concluded that campaigns have minimal effects on voters.

Subsequent studies provided theoretical support for the minimal effects conclusion, arguing campaigns are little more than political noise that signify nothing of substance (Holbrook 1996; Iyengar 2001; Shaw 1999). Furthering that argument in the U.S. presidential campaign setting, it was concluded that campaigns have only a small net effect because the candidates are balanced in both skills and money. As such, for every move one candidate makes the opposition has a counter move, thus neutralizing each other and resulting in an aggregate effect of zero (Finkel 1993). The challenge with that conclusion, however, is its applicability (or lack of) to other political contests. As with many of the theoretical conclusions drawn about campaign effects, the minimal effects thesis is derived from studying high salience elections. The low information and low salience nature of down ballot local campaigns, which comprise the vast majority of campaigns in the United States, may not fit well into the minimal effects theory. As I will discuss later, the absence of countervailing information in a campaign can help facilitate the measurement of campaign effects. If the assumption is that both sides are equally

matched, and thus are unable to gain much momentum, it seems logical to study campaign effects in a setting where candidates are not necessarily equally matched in skills and resources (Iyengar and Simon 2000).

The focus on “conversion” as a measure of campaign effects has long been questioned as a valid measure. Instead, scholars have looked at more indirect campaign effects like learning, campaign priming, and persuasion. As my earlier chapters focused on mobilization, I shift my attention to the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice. To that end, I look at the literature on campaign effects focusing on the role of learning, priming, and voter persuasion; all factors that have been found to contribute to vote choice.

7.3 LEARNING

At the basic core of a campaign is the effort to inform voters about a particular candidate or an issue. The goal, naturally, is to persuade voters to support (or oppose) the candidate or issue. But from a learning perspective, campaigns facilitate the learning process by providing the electorate with information germane to a particular election. Campaign learning has been shown to directly shape how voters make their vote choice (Popkin 1991). Thus, an understanding of how voters learn during a campaign is central to the current project.

From a behavioral perspective, not all voters are created equal. Voters vary in their political sophistication and in their propensities to vote. As such, it is difficult to measure which mode of campaigning is best at informing the general public. Most of the factors identified as key to the learning process in a campaign are centered heavily on campaign activities in high salience elections. Presidential debates (Chaffee 1978; Holbrook 1999), television advertising

(Johnson, Hagen and Jamieson 2004; Ridout et al. 2004), and news coverage (Johnson et al. 2004) are campaign staples in well-funded high profile contests. The further down the ballot you go, the smaller the campaign budget and often the less newsworthy the office. For that reason, the theoretical underpinnings that guide our understanding of the learning process in campaigns are limited to the top of the ticket campaigns.

Further complicating the study of learning in a campaign is the consistent conclusion that average voters are cognitive misers. For that reason, voters often rely on long-term characteristics like party identification, group identity, and retrospective evaluations (Campbell et al. 1960). Those characteristics can prove useful in high salience races, but provide little guidance in a down ballot election or a primary election when all the candidates share the same basic characteristics.

Studies that have explored the learning process outside of presidential campaigns also provide little guidance for down-ballot low salience elections. Focusing on Gubernatorial races (Carsey 2000), U.S. Senate races (Kahn and Kenney 1999), and U.S. House races (Jacobson 1983), while less salient than a presidential contest, arguably are not low salience affairs. As such, little is known about the learning process in campaigns that do not rely on televised news reports, commercials or debates. This study is breaking new ground in the study of campaign learning and its effect on vote choice. The information sharing process in this study, as I will explain in more detail later, focuses on retail politics, or what I call doorstep politics.

7.4 PRIMING

Not only do campaigns facilitate the information sharing process needed for citizen learning, they also help guide voters as to which issues and traits should be used when evaluating each

campaign. Thus, campaigns prime the electorate to value certain issues and traits over others (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). Naturally, a campaign will attempt to frame an issue in the most favorable way to benefit their candidate, but by simply elevating an issue in the minds of the electorate, regardless of the frame, a campaign can shape the standards by which a candidate is evaluated (Druckman 2004; Johnston et al. 1992). If this is true in high salience races like presidential campaigns, it can be deduced the effect is also present in a race where voters have limited information about the candidates or even less information about the function and responsibilities of a down-ballot office.

One aspect of priming that has received a lot of attention is its ability to activate partisan attachments (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; McClurg and Holbrook 2005). The belief is that by priming voters to think about partisanship, the campaign is encouraging fellow partisans to remember why they are affiliated with the political party (e.g., Finkel 1993). In the context of a primary election, when all the candidates on the ballot are of the same party, the activation of partisan attachments provides voters with little assistance when making a voting decision. As such, for priming to be useful in the decision making process, we need to identify which primes might have the most effect in down-ballot elections and primary contests. For that I return to John Zaller's RAS model (1992) and his study of the frequency and recency of exposure to mobilization messages.

The process by which primes work is by making information more accessible in the memory (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Valentino, Hutchings and White 2002). Thus, exposure to the prime brings that information to the "top of the head" when making decisions (Zaller 1992). Key to this assumption is the reception of the message. If a voter is able to opt out of exposure, which is often the case with messages delivered via the television, then the message can have no

effect. If the message is delivered to the front door of a voter's residence, however, the ability to avoid exposure to the message is greatly reduced. To that end, frames delivered via doorstep politics have a higher probability of being received than do frames delivered via the television.

7.5 PERSUASION

Ultimately, it comes down to the persuasiveness of the information learned or primed. For the purpose of this project, I define persuasion as any campaign induced changes in the attitudes or considerations that underlie the vote decision (Hillygus 2010). Within the RAS model, this would be the sample stage. The learning and priming effects of campaign messages would represent the receive and accept stages of the RAS model.

It is not necessary for a campaign to manipulate a voter or change her underlying predispositions for it to influence her vote choice. In the case of partisan activation, a campaign is simply reminding a voter about her partisan ties. For a low information down ballot campaign, simply providing information about the candidate or political office can facilitate the learning process, and thus affect the information used to make a vote decision. It is the learning and priming processes of a campaign that has been identified as the mechanism by which individuals may change their vote choice (Hillygus and Shields 2008). In other words, campaigns persuade voters by facilitating the learning process and priming them to value certain issues or candidate traits.

7.6 BRIDGING TURNOUT PERSUASION WITH VOTE CHOICE PERSUASION

We are still a long way from fully understanding who is persuadable and under what conditions persuasion has the largest effect (Hillygus 2010). We can, however, build on what we do know about persuasion, specifically how it relates to mobilization messages and turnout, to gain a better understanding of the persuasiveness of mobilization messages on vote choice. Prior studies, including the chapters in the current project, have identified the persuasive power of mobilization messages to increase the probability an individual will cast a vote on Election Day. We now need to bridge what we know about turnout with the potential persuasive effects of mobilization messages on vote choice. Utilizing the definition of persuasion outlined above, we can now chart a path for testing the effectiveness of mobilization messages to inform and prime voters in a down ballot campaign, resulting in a change in the criteria (sample) for making their voting decision.

From a simple logic perspective, it seems improbable that a mobilization message can have an effect on the probability of turning out to vote but have no effect on the voting decision process. While it could be argued that voters in high salience races make up their mind well in advance of Election Day, and thus a mobilization message is simply a reminder to go vote, for down ballot contests, voters often lack the needed information to make a decision. In these low salience campaigns, a mobilization message not only is a reminder to vote, but also serves as a learning and priming opportunity for a voter. In Zaller's RAS model (1992), the first assumption for a message to have an effect is that it is received. Once received, the repetition of the message, and more importantly for the present study, the recency of the message elevates the

information to the “top of the head.” Due to the low salience nature of a down ballot campaign, campaign messages often go unchallenged.

Due to the lack of ability to identify which candidate an individual citizen voted for, I am limited in what I can deduce about the voting decision behavior of individual voters based on their political sophistication. In my earlier chapters, I was able to analyze voters with different voting propensities based on their exposure to the treatment and subsequent increase in the probability of turning out to vote. Once they walk into the voting booth, however, my data at the individual level ends because there are no public records indicating who each citizen voted for. Therefore I am unable to directly identify who in the electorate is most persuadable by mobilization messages when making their voting decision. I can, however, use aggregate vote share results and randomization and treatment strategies to isolate the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice. Later in this chapter I will explain those steps in detail. Prior to that, however, I will use what is known about the effects of heterogeneity in campaign messages to guide this project.

Clearly, if different voters are receiving different campaign messages, it becomes more complicated to estimate the effect of each message. This is largely the reason some have characterized campaigns as a cacophony of noise that makes little difference in the voting decisions of voters (e.g., Finkel 1993). This is especially true in high salience races that inundate voters with multiple messages. For down ballot campaigns, however, where money and volunteer time are scarce resources, there are situations when a candidate is only able to reach a voter once during an election cycle (e.g. Grey 2007; Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Issenberg 2012). This is especially true when a campaign relies on a doorstep politics strategy for

contacting voters. As such, that contact may be the only opportunity a voter has to receive information about that candidate, or even the position for which the candidate is running.

Returning to the recency effect of the RAS model, information received closer to Election Day is easier for a voter to retrieve when they go to their polling location (Zaller 1992). When the information received is related to a low salience race, one for which a voter has limited information, that recent information may be the only information available when making a voting decision. If voters rely heavily on shortcuts in high salience races, it shouldn't be too much of a stretch to anticipate this same phenomenon taking place in a down ballot race. In the absence of traditional heuristics like partisanship, voters are relegated to less precise shortcuts (Iyengar and Simon 2000). The recognition of a name on a ballot sometimes is all that is needed for a voter to make a voting decision. After all, voters are reluctant to vote for an unfamiliar name (Shaw 2011).

7.7 HYPOTHESES

Considering what has been established about the persuasive effects mobilization messages have on the probability to turnout to vote, coupled with the learning and priming effects of campaign messages and the subsequent effect they have on the vote decision process, I am ready to offer my hypothesis. The purpose of this chapter is to capture the effect mobilization messages have on vote choice. Given the low information nature of down ballot campaigns, and the propensity of voters to seek shortcuts when making a voting decision, I anticipate a mobilization message delivered in close proximity to Election Day will provide a voter with the “top of the head” information needed to make a vote choice. Thus, a registered voter who receives a mobilization

door hanger from a campaign, which prior studies have shown to increase the probability of turning out by 1-3%, will have a higher probability of voting for the candidate (campaign) who delivered the door hanger compared to a registered voter who does not receive a door hanger.

Formally stated:

H1: Exposure to the mobilization treatment is associated with a greater propensity to vote for the candidate named in the mobilization treatment.

7.8 TESTING THE VOTE CHOICE EFFECT

Returning to the second door hanger experiment in chapters 5 and 6, I utilize the 19 voting districts (10 treatment and 9 control districts times 2 political parties results in an N=38) to test the effects of mobilization messages on vote choice. For that field experiment, all households where a registered Republican or registered Democrat resided who had voted at least once prior to the election under consideration for this study were selected. Consistent with the steps taken by campaign practitioners, and as outlined by Arceneaux (2005), the randomization for this experiment was conducted at the voting district level. Randomizing an entire voting population is both impractical and inefficient. The amount of distance a canvasser must cover to distribute a mobilization message becomes onerous when randomizing an entire voting population. As such, randomizing by voting district allows a campaign to saturate an area, thus reducing the distance between houses to contact. It also enables the testing of the effect of the treatment on vote share in the treatment districts.

Using the voting districts for the second door hanger experiment, I calculated the vote shares of each of the candidates in the Democratic Primary (4 candidates) and the Republican Primary (3 Candidates). As I pointed out earlier, the state of Pennsylvania allows candidates running for Magisterial District Judge to cross-file, or have their name appear on both the Democratic and Republican primary ballots. The candidate in the campaign used to collect the data for this project was cross-filed. As such, I analyze the results for both primary elections.

In the following section, I discuss the results from regressing the treatment (Door Hanger) on Democratic and GOP vote share.

For my first model, I regressed the treatment on vote share, controlling for party ID and vote roll-off, and clustered on each voting district. The reason I am clustering on voting district is because two separate elections took place in each voting district. Thus, my unit of analysis is each election (N=38) within each voting district (19).

The challenge with clustering on voting district is I am inviting serial heteroskedasticity. Regression analysis using heteroscedastic data will still provide an unbiased estimate for the relationship between the predictor variable and the outcome, but standard errors and therefore inferences obtained from data analysis are suspect. Biased standard errors lead to biased inference, so results of hypothesis tests are possibly wrong. As such, I used the Huber-White method (Huber 1967; Primo, Jacobsmeier and Milyo 2007; White 1980) of clustering standard errors by the source of the heteroskedasticity (voting district) to adjust the estimates of the standard errors to account for non-independence.

The inclusion of a control for PID is to capture any effect associated with voters in each election. Because the primary elections were conducted as closed primaries, and individuals

self-select into a political party, there may be systematic differences between Democratic and GOP voters.

Finally, the control for vote roll-off is included to account for any effect associated with the drop in the number of individuals who vote on Election Day, but fail to register a vote in down ballot elections. Because the campaign used for this project was the last elective office on the ballot, there is the potential for a vote roll-off effect in that race . As I discussed in chapter 4, the use of electronic voting machines greatly reduces the presence of vote roll-off. I include it as a control in an attempt to account for any effect it may have on vote choice. Vote roll-off is reported as a percentage capturing the difference between the total number of votes cast in a voting district for the top of the ticket contest compared to the total number of votes cast for the down ballot election used to collect data for this study.

7.9 RESULTS

Table 7-1 displays the results from regressing the treatment on vote share for the candidate in this study.

TABLE 7-1
Regression of Door Hanger on Vote Share

	b	Robust Standard Errors
Received Door Hanger	18.360	3.913***
PID	-30.012	3.972***
Vote Roll-Off	0.250	0.411
_cons	49.979	4.101***

Note: ***p<.001

N=38

R2=0.733

The regression coefficient for voters who received a door hanger is statistically significant and indicates the campaign conducting the leaflet drop experienced more than an 18 percent (18.36) increase in vote share. Those results appear to support H1, and indicate a leaflet drop conducted two days prior to Election Day in a down ballot campaign can positively increase vote share for the candidate who conducts a mobilization drive.

Party ID is also significant and indicates the effect of the treatment on Democratic voters is larger than the effect on GOP voters. Consistent with the literature on electronic voting machines and their effect on vote roll-off, vote roll-off is not statistically significant.

Because Party ID is statistically significant, I reran my regression analyses for Democratic and GOP voters, respectively. By separating Democratic and GOP voters into two separate models, I am halving my N, and thus ending up with a smaller sample size than I would like. As such, these results should be viewed as a first step. Future studies will need to replicate this study with a larger N. There is value, however, in testing the same hypothesis twice in an effort to capture the relative generalizeability of my findings.

Table 7-2 displays the results from regressing the treatment on Democratic vote share for the candidate in this study.

TABLE 7-2
Regression of Door Hanger on Democratic Vote Share

	b	Standard Errors
Received Door Hanger	25.473	6.340**
-cons	48.016	4.600**

Note: **p<.001

N=19

Adj R2=0.457

The regression coefficient for Democratic voters who received a door hanger is statistically significant and indicates the campaign conducting the leaflet drop experienced more than a 25 percent (25.47) increase in vote share. Those results support H1, and indicate a leaflet drop conducted two days prior to Election Day in a down ballot campaign can positively increase vote share for the candidate who conducts a mobilization drive.

Table 7-3 displays the results from regressing the treatment on Republican vote share for the candidate in this study.

TABLE 7-3
Regression of Door Hanger on GOP Vote Share

	b	Standard Errors
Received Door Hanger	10.356	3.109*
-cons	24.255	2.255**

Note: **p<.001 and *p<.01

N=19

Adj R2=0.359

Once again, the regression coefficient for Republican voters who received a door hanger is statistically significant and indicates the campaign conducting the leaflet drop experienced more than a 10 percent (10.36) increase in vote share. Those results also appear to support H1, and indicates a leaflet drop conducted two days prior to Election Day in a down ballot campaign can positively increase vote share for the candidate who conducts a mobilization drive.

There appears to be a difference in the effect between Democrats and Republicans. To test the difference between the increases in vote share, I followed the steps outlined by Garfield (1984) to compare regression coefficients between two groups. I can compare the regression coefficients of Vote Share for Democrats with Republicans to test the null hypothesis $H_0: B_{gop} = B_{dem}$, where B_{gop} is the regression coefficient for Republicans, and B_{dem} is the regression

coefficient for Democrats. Table 7-4 displays the results from regressing the treatment, party ID and the interaction term on vote share.

TABLE 7-4
Testing the Difference Between the Increase in Democratic and GOP Vote Share

	b	t	Standard Errors
Received Door Hanger	25.47	5.10	4.993***
Democratic Contest	-23.22	-4.53	5.123***
Treatment*Democrat	-15.12	-2.14	7.062*
-cons	48.02	13.25	3.623***

Note: ***p<.001, **p<.01 and *p<.05

N=38

Adj R2=0.7404

Interpreting the results, the Interaction Term tests the null hypothesis $H_0: B_{gop} = B_{dem}$. It is the t value, not the coefficient, which is used to assess the significance between two groups. The t value for the interaction term is -2.14 and is significant at the 95-percent confident interval, indicating that the regression coefficient B_{dem} is significantly different from B_{gop} . This indicates the increase in vote share for the Democratic treatment group and the increase in vote share for the Republican treatment group are statistically different. Thus, the increase in vote share for the candidate in the four-way Democratic primary is not the same increase in vote share the candidate received in the three-way Republican primary.

All I can do is speculate about why the difference in effect was observed. The first is to look at the self-selection process when an individual chooses a political party. There are likely systematic differences between those who select the Democratic Party with those who choose to be Republicans. That systematic difference may affect the effect of mobilization messages. Second, due to the partisan makeup of the judicial district, and the fact GOP candidates have historically not performed well at the polls, Republicans may feel like they live in “enemy

territory” and are less likely to vote (Gimpel, Dyck and Shaw 2004). Future studies can explore the reasons for the difference in observed outcomes. It appears, however, a last minute door hanger get-out-the-vote push has a larger effect on vote choice for Democratic voters than it does for Republicans.

7.10 DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate a last minute mobilization drive can have significant effects on the vote share for a candidate conducting the drive. These results appear to support the argument that mobilization messages can affect electoral outcomes. If a candidate is able to boost his/her vote share by double digit percentages in a down ballot primary election, it appears mobilization messages have a larger effect on vote choice than they do on turnout. If you consider the data from chapter 5 indicates the last minute literature drop used for this chapter netted an aggregate increase of turnout by roughly 5.1%, the net gain in vote share easily eclipses the boost in turnout. I need to put those results in context, however.

A 25% increase in vote share does not mean a candidate who had 26% of the vote share in an election can expect to raise their vote share to 51%. Measuring an increase in vote share is a measure of the percentage increase of an individual candidate’s votes. Thus, if a candidate received 4 votes in a control voting district, but in the treatment district received 5 votes, the result is a 25% increase in vote share for that candidate. If their opponent had 30 votes, the difference of that one vote increase (a 25% jump in vote share) would not make a difference in the outcome of the election. If the two candidates were closely matched, however, a 25% increase in vote share can make a difference. Due to the low salience nature of the campaign,

and the relative low number of votes for each of the 4 Democratic candidates in each voting district (3 GOP candidates), the percentage increase in vote share seems plausible.

As this is the result of one mobilization field experiment in a single campaign, caution needs to be taken before we get too excited. While the results do appear to support the value of mobilization messages on affecting the vote choice of voters, these results need to be replicated in other campaign settings before we can be confident in the outcome of this study. Regardless, the results are promising.

Future studies can test to see if a mobilization drive for other down ballot campaigns will result in comparable increases in vote share. Additionally, because the election for this study was in an urban setting, replicating the field experiment in a suburban and/or rural setting is called for.

Another aspect of a future study could directly test the recency effect of mobilization messages. For this study, the literature drop took place two days prior to Election Day. The underlying assumption, consistent with the RAS model of John Zaller (1992), is the close proximity to Election Day helps elevate the mobilization message to the “top of the head” of the voters who received a door hanger. Implementing multiple literature drops on different days leading up to the election would provide an opportunity to test the limits of the recency effect.

The key take away point from this study is that mobilization messages affect more than just turnout. In a low salience and low information contest, a last minute mobilization drive can provide voters with enough information to prompt them to change their consideration when making their voting decision. This project has provided a first step at capturing the effect mobilization messages have on vote choice. Again, future studies will be able to build on and refine these findings.

8.0 CONCLUSION

I started this project by describing the puzzle presented to scholars who seek to identify who in the electorate respond to mobilization messages. An exploration of the extant literature brought into focus the need for a coherent theoretical underpinning. Not only were there conflicting theoretical expectations for who responds to mobilization messages, there was also reason to believe the conflict in theory had implications for the validity of prior mobilization study results. By applying John Zaller's (1992) Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model to the study of mobilization message effects, I have offered a theoretical story that may resolve some of the prior theoretical inconsistencies.

The first step in bridging the RAS model from the study of media message effects to the study of mobilization message effects was to identify who in the electorate is most likely to receive mobilization messages. As Zaller (1992) pointed out, if a media message is not received, it can't have an effect. Thus, understanding who, in the media message environment, was most likely to be exposed to the messages was central to his model. Keeping in mind that an important aspect of a field study is to ensure the individuals included in a field experiment resemble the individuals who would normally come in contact with the stimuli of interest (Gerber, Green and Shachar 2010), it became apparent the receive step was also crucial for this project. Without a realistic understanding of who is likely to receive a mobilization message, it is impossible to accurately identify who will respond to those messages. As such, the first step in this dissertation was to gain a better understanding of who is likely to receive a mobilization message. By reviewing political science voter behavior literature and campaign strategy guides

written for political practitioners, past voting history emerged as the primary contributor to the probability an individual will receive a mobilization message (e.g. Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003; Grey 2007; Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Issenberg 2012). As such, in Chapter 5 I set out to test for the potential selection bias introduced in a mobilization study that includes individuals who would not normally receive a mobilization message.

8.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGY WHEN STUDYING MOBILIZATION

Not every registered voter has an equal probability of receiving a mobilization message. Operating on limited resources of time and money, campaigns strategically target voters when deciding who to contact. As I demonstrated in Chapter 5, that has implications for the study of the effects of mobilization messages. Individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign systematically respond differently to those messages when compared to individuals who would be strategically targeted. As such, a study including individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign is likely introducing selection bias. The inclusion of individuals who would not normally come in contact with mobilization messages distances a researcher from the phenomenon of interest and essentially waters down the effects of those mobilization messages. By incorporating the strategic targeting methods used by political practitioners, and then randomizing treatment and control groups within that population, I was able to gain a more realistic picture of the effects of mobilization messages.

As I pointed out earlier, there is value in understanding the effects of mobilization messages if all registered voters were to be contacted. That hypothetical scenario provides scholars with information needed to speculate about the effects of expanding mobilization efforts

to include individuals who would normally be ignored by a political campaign. This project is not a criticism of that goal. Instead, I was focused on gaining a better understanding of the effects of mobilization messages in the current political environment where practitioners strategically target likely voters when conducting a mobilization drive (Goldstein and Holleque 2010). We now have a more accurate picture of the effect of mobilization messages in an actual campaign setting.

Aggregate increases in turnout are useful for capturing the effects of including individuals in a study who would normally be ignored by a political campaign. Aggregate numbers, however, do not tell us who within the strategically targeted population respond to mobilization messages. Thus, the receive step of the RAS model does not fully complete the mobilization puzzle. To answer who is responsive to mobilization messages I turned my attention in Chapter 6 to the accept and sample stages of the RAS model.

8.2 WHO MOBILIZES: MIXED RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

In Zaller's media message application of his RAS model, his measure for capturing the accept and sample stages of his model came in the form of measuring attitude and opinion change. After an individual received a media message, (s)he would consider the new information and decide whether to accept or reject it. Once accepted, the individual then sampled that new information when updating their attitudes and opinions about a political issue. Applying the RAS model to the study of mobilization message effects, the accept and sample stage is measured by capturing behavior change. In Chapter 6 I set out to capture the effect of mobilization messages on individuals with different propensities to vote. Thus, the measured

behavior was an increase in the probability an individuals who received a mobilization message, accepted the message and then sampled it, would turn out to vote.

Using the nonstrategic sample selection methods used in prior mobilization studies (e.g. Niven 2001, 2004) as a baseline for comparison, I found, consistent with those prior studies, it was only individuals with intermittent voter propensities who responded to mobilization messages. Once the strategic targeting methods used by political practitioners were incorporated, however, not only did intermittent voters respond, but so did infrequent and frequent voters. Theoretically, I anticipated the effect for infrequent voters. Admittedly, however, the effect for frequent voters was a surprise. While I was surprised by the results, it is not totally inconsistent with the theoretical underpinning for this project.

If you remember my discussion in Chapter 3 about the application of the RAS model to the study of mobilization messages, I explored the various forms of resistance identified by Zaller (1992) which potentially reduce the effectiveness of media messages. Inertial Resistance takes into consideration the relative level of information the individual already possesses. Individuals who already have large stores of information will be better equipped to assess the value of a new message. That repository of information functions as a barrier for new information to be accepted. Individuals who have limited information, on the other hand, are more likely to accept the new message when compared to a highly informed individual. Their limited information provides them with less ability to resist the new message. It would be anticipated that a frequent voter has larger stores of information when compared to an infrequent voter. Due to the low salience nature of the campaign used for this study, however, there may be reason to believe even frequent voters have limited information about down ballot campaigns.

Thus, in light of that limited information, it is not that big of a surprise frequent voters can also be reached by mobilization messages in a low salience election.

The finding that infrequent, intermittent and frequent voters respond to mobilization messages, once you control for selection bias, offers support for the theories that appeared to be at odds with each other. Specifically, it was Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) who anticipated it was infrequent voters who are most responsive to mobilization messages, Hillygus (2005) who anticipated it was frequent voters, and Niven (2001, 2004) who concluded it was intermittent voters who were most responsive. Through the lens of the RAS model, in a way, they each receive some support from my findings. The discrepancy in conclusions of those earlier theories can be traced to the sample selection methods used. The inclusion of strategy when studying the effects of mobilization messages provides a more accurate picture of who is mobilizeable.

Interestingly, the one theory that appears to not be supported by my findings is Arceneaux and Nickerson (2009). Their campaign salience model posits that the effect of mobilization messages is conditional on the salience of a given election. Applying their model to the present study, I would anticipate only frequent voters to be responsive to mobilization messages. By any metric, the magisterial judicial race used to collect the data for my dissertation would be classified as a low salience campaign. According to Arceneaux and Nickerson, in low salient races, it is only voters with higher propensities to vote who will respond to mobilization messages. Those in the middle will respond to mobilization messages when the salience of the race falls somewhere in the middle, like a mayoral race. The only time infrequent voters will respond to mobilization messages is during the most salient elections, like a presidential campaign. My results clearly contradict that conclusion.

8.3 MOBILIZATION: NOT JUST A TOOL FOR TURNOUT

An increase in the probability of turning out to vote is not the only behavior that can potentially be affected by mobilization messages. Once an individual receives the message, decides to accept it and then samples that message when making behavior decisions, it is possible that information can affect the criteria used to make a vote choice. As such, vote choice is an important piece of the mobilization puzzle.

An aggregate increase in turnout will not be considered a success by a political campaign if the end result is a loss on Election Day: The goal of political practitioners is to win elections. The academic community also has interest in understanding the effects of mobilization messages on the vote choice process. The findings of this dissertation contribute to the broader campaign effects literature.

In Chapter 7, I set out to capture the effect a last minute get-out-the-vote drive has on the vote share for a candidate who conducts the drive. My findings indicate voters reward candidates handsomely for GOTV efforts. While the aggregate turnout increase was consistent with prior findings, the bump in vote share was as high as 25% in a four-way primary. Considering the deciding vote margin in many elections is in the single digits, those findings lend support to the effect mobilization messages have on electoral outcomes. Not only do they have an effect on aggregate turnout, but mobilization messages also can affect the vote share for the candidate employing the mobilization efforts.

8.4 FINAL THOUGHTS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Admittedly, the findings in this project need to be interpreted as a case study. The judicial race used to collect the data for my field experiments is not representative of all political contests. Additionally, the off election year primary campaign provides a setting that is not replicated in every state or locality. Many states hold their local elections in conjunction with federal and state-wide office seekers. It does, however, provide insight into the potential effects of mobilization messages in other down ballot low salience elections. A magisterial judicial election in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania arguably attracts roughly the same limited media coverage as a city auditor election in Barstow, California. Thus, doorstep politics may provide voters in various localities and in different electoral settings the needed information to prompt them to not only cast a ballot on Election Day, but to also support the candidate conducting the mobilization drive. The point is, while the results of this study may not apply to all elections, there are lessons to be learned in this project that can be applied to at least some of the roughly 300,000 elective offices in the United States.

Like any case study, replication of my field experiments is called for. Not only should they be retested in a similar setting to confirm the results of my study, but they should also be expanded to include other elective offices in other electoral settings. Only then will we be able to better understand the effects of mobilization messages on city council races or school board elections, or their effects in small to medium sized municipalities. Population density, homogeneity of residents, and type of office may all affect the effect of mobilization messages.

In the end, the chapters in this dissertation provide compelling support for the effects mobilization messages have on turnout and vote choice. Far from definitive, my findings

contribute to the body of literature on mobilization, and open the door for new directions of academic inquiry. Mobilization messages appear to cut the information collection costs for voters in down ballot low salience campaigns. By taking the campaign to the doorstep of voters, candidates increase the probability that a low propensity voter will be exposed to political messages. That exposure, combined with living with a frequent voter, appears to have positive effects on turnout and vote share. Future studies can explore the applicability these findings have in other political settings.

9.0 APPENDIX A

RANDOMIZATION CHECK

Table 9-1

Non-Strategic Door Hangers

TREATMENT: Door Hanger Experiment Randomizing All Voter Eligible Population

	Treatment	2010 Vote	Turnout %
Total	3714	2021	54.42
Republican	1010	554	54.85
Democrat	2704	1467	54.25

Non-Strategic Door Hangers

CONTROL: Door Hanger Experiment Randomizing All Voter Eligible Population

	Control	2010 Vote	Turnout %
Total	14969	8468	56.57
Republican	2529	1277	50.49
Democrat	12440	7191	57.81

Table 9-2
Strategic Door Hangers

TREATMENT: Door Hanger Experiment Randomizing All Voter Eligible Population

	Treatment	2010 Vote	Turnout %
Total	3183	1905	59.85
Republican	498	253	50.80
Democrat	2685	1652	61.53

Strategic Door Hangers
CONTROL: Door Hanger Experiment Randomizing All Voter Eligible Population

	Control	2010 Vote	Turnout %
Total	3831	2407	62.83
Republican	515	314	60.97
Democrat	3316	2093	63.12

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ansolahehere, Stephen. "Voting machines, race, and equal protection." *Election Law Journal* 1, no. 1 (2002): 61-70.
- Ansolahehere, Stephen, and Alan Gerber. "The Effects of Filing Fees and Petition Requirements on Us House Elections." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (1996): 249-64.
- Arceneaux, Kevin. "Using Cluster Randomized Field Experiments to Study Voting Behavior." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 601, no. 1 (2005): 169-79.
- Arceneaux, Kevin, and David W. Nickerson. "Who Is Mobilized to Vote? A Re-Analysis of 11 Field Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science* 53, no. 1 (2009): 1-16.
- Berelson, B., P.F. Lazarsfeld, and W.N. McPhee. *Voting*. 1954
- Bonneau, Chris.W. "The Effects of Campaign Spending in State Supreme Court Elections." *Political Research Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (2007): 489-99.
- Bonneau, Chris W. "Campaign Fundraising in State Supreme Court Elections*." *Social Science Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (2007): 68-85.
- Bonneau, Chris W. "What Price Justice (S)? Understanding Campaign Spending in State Supreme Court Elections." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (2005): 107-25.
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. *The American Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Cardy, Emily Arthur. "An Experimental Field Study of the Gotv and Persuasion Effects of Partisan Direct Mail and Phone Calls." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 601, no. 1 (2005): 28-40.
- Caren, Neal. "Big city, big turnout? Electoral participation in American cities." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 29, no. 1 (2007): 31-46.
- Chaffee, Steven H. "Presidential Debates—Are They Helpful to Voters?" (1978).

- Claibourn, Michele P. "Making a Connection: Repetition and Priming in Presidential Campaigns." *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 4 (2008): 1142-59.
- Davenport, Tiffany C., Allan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green. "Field Experiments and the Study of Political Behavior." In *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*, edited by Jan E. Leighley, 69-88. Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Dragojlovic, Nicolas Isak. "Priming and the Obama Effect on Public Evaluations of the United States." *Political Psychology* 32, no. 6 (2011): 989-1006.
- Druckman, James N. . "Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)Relevance of Framing Effects." *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 04 (2004): 671-86.
- Druckman, James N. "Priming the Vote: Campaign Effects in a U.S. Senate Election." *Political Psychology* 25, no. 4 (2004): 577-94.
- Dubois, Philip L. "Voting cues in nonpartisan trial court elections: A multivariate assessment." *Law and Society Review* (1984): 395-436.
- Finkel, Steven E. "Reexamining the 'Minimal Effects' Model in Recent Presidential Campaigns." *Journal of Politics* 55, no. 1 (1993): 1-21.
- Fowler, James H., Laura A. Baker and Christopher T. Dawes. "Genetic Variation in Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 02 (2008): 233-48.
- Fowler, James H., and Christopher T. Dawes. "Two Genes Predict Voter Turnout." *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 03 (2008): 579-94.
- Garfield, Eugene. 1984. This week's citation classic: "Chow, G.C. 1960. 'Tests of equality between sets of coefficients in two linear regressions.' *Econometrica* 28:591-605." *Current Contents* 49:16.
- Gerber, A. S., D. P. Green, and M. Green. "Partisan Mail and Voter Turnout: Results from Randomized Field Experiments." *Electoral Studies* 22, no. 4 (2003): 563-79.
- Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. "Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout?: A Field Experiment." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2001): 75-85.
- Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. "The Effect of a Nonpartisan Get-out-the-Vote Drive: An Experimental Study of Leafletting." *Journal of Politics* 62, no. 3 (2000): 846-57.

- Gerber, Alan, and Donald Green. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 3 (2000): 653-63.
- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Ron Shachar. "Voting May Be Habit-Forming: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (2003): 540-50.
- Goldstein, Kenneth M. and Matthew Holleque. "Getting up Off the Canvass: Rethinking the Study of Mobilization." In *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*, edited by Jan E. Leighley, 577-94. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Goldstein, Kenneth, and T.N. Ridout. "Measuring the Effects of Televised Political Advertising in the United States." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 7 (2004): 205-26.
- Green, Donald P. and Alan S. Gerber. *Get out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004.
- Grey, Lawrence. *How to Win a Local Election: A Complete Step-by-Step Guide*. Lanham, MD: M. Evans, 2007.
- Hall, Melinda Gann. "Voting in state supreme court elections: Competition and context as democratic incentives." *Journal of Politics* 69, no. 4 (2007): 1147-1159.
- Hall, Melinda Gann, and Chris W. Bonneau. "Mobilizing interest: The effects of money on citizen participation in state supreme court elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 3 (2008): 457-470.
- Heckman, James J. "Sample Selection Bias as a Specification Error." *Econometrica: Journal of the econometric society* (1979): 153-61
- Hillygus, D. Sunshine. "Campaign Effects on Vote Choice." In *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*, edited by Jan E. Leighley, 326-45. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Hillygus, D. Sunshine. "Campaign Effects and the Dynamics of Turnout Intention in Election 2000." *Journal of Politics* 67, no. 1 (2005): 50-68.
- Hillygus, D. "Sunshine, and Todd G. Shields. 2008." *The persuadable voter: wedge issues in presidential campaigns*.
- Hogan, Robert E. "Institutional and District-Level Sources of Competition in State Legislative Elections*." *Social Science Quarterly* 84, no. 3 (2003): 543-60.
- Holbrook, Thomas M. "Political Learning from Presidential Debates." *Political Behavior* 21, no. 1 (1999): 67-89.

- Holbrook, Thomas M. *Do Campaigns Matter?* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1996.
- Holbrook, Thomas M., and Scott D. McClurg. "The mobilization of core supporters: Campaigns, turnout, and electoral composition in United States presidential elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 4 (2005): 689-703.
- Iyengar, Shanto. "Effects of Media-Based Campaigns on Candidate and Voter Behavior: Implications for Judicial Elections, The." *Ind. L. Rev.* 35 (2001): 691.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. "News that matters: Agenda-setting and priming in a television age." *News that Matters: Agenda-Setting and Priming in a Television Age* (1987).
- Iyengar, Shanto, and A. F. Simon. "New Perspectives and Evidence on Political Communication and Campaign Effects." *Annual review of psychology* 51 (2000): 149-69.
- Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Theda Skocpol. "Restoring the Tradition of Rigor and Relevance to Political Science." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39, no. 01 (2006): 27-31.
- Jacobson, Gary C., and Samuel Kernell. *Strategy and choice in congressional elections*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Jennings, Kent, Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers. "Politics across Generations." (2001).
- Johnston, Richard, M.G. Hagen, and K.H. Jamieson. *The 2000 Presidential Election and the Foundations of Party Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Kahn, Kim Fridkin, and Patrick J. Kenney. *The spectacle of US Senate campaigns*. Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Lazarsfeld, P.F., B. Berelson, and H. Gaudet. "The People's Choice." *New York* 332 (1944).
- Lenoir, Brandon W. "Studying Voter Mobilization: The Pitfalls of Omitting 'Strategy' in your Design." *Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association*, New Orleans, LA (2011)
- Long, J. S., & Freese, J. (2003). *Regression models for categorical dependent variables using Stata*. College Station, Texas, USA: Stata Press, Stata Corporation.
- Marschall, Melissa J. "The Study of Local Elections in American Politics." *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior* (2010).

- Mayhew, David R. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*: Yale University Press, 1974.
- McDermott, Monika L. "Voting Cues in Low-Information Elections: Candidate Gender as a Social Information Variable in Contemporary United States Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* (1997): 270-83.
- Murray, David M. *Design and Analysis of Group-Randomized Trials*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Nichols, Stephen M., and Gregory A. Strizek. "Electronic voting machines and ballot roll-off." *American Politics Research* 23, no. 3 (1995): 300-318.
- Nickerson, David W. "Experimental Approaches to the Diffusion of Norms." In *Social Capital: Reaching out, Reaching In*, edited by Viva Ona Bartkus, 369: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009.
- Nickerson, David W. "Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments." *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 1 (2008): 49.
- Nickerson, David W. "Quality Is Job One: Professional and Volunteer Voter Mobilization Calls." *American Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 2 (2007): 269-82.
- Nickerson, David W., Ryan D. Friedrichs, and David C. King. "Partisan Mobilization Campaigns in the Field: Results from a Statewide Turnout Experiment in Michigan." *Political Research Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2006): 85-97.
- Niven, David. "The Mobilization Solution? Face-to-Face Contact and Voter Turnout in a Municipal Election." *Journal of Politics* 66, no. 3 (2004): 868-84.
- Niven, David. "The Limits of Mobilization: Turnout Evidence from State House Primaries." *Political Behavior* 23, no. 4 (2001): 335-50.
- Nuño, Stephen A. "Latino Mobilization and Vote Choice in the 2000 Presidential Election." *American Politics Research* 35, no. 2 (March 1, 2007 2007): 273-93.
- Panagopoulos, Costas. "Partisan and Nonpartisan Message Content and Voter Mobilization." *Political Research Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2009): 70-76.
- Panagopoulos, Costas, and Peter W. Wielhouwer. "Polls and Elections The Ground War 2000-2004: Strategic Targeting in Grassroots Campaigns." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2008): 347-362.
- Plutzer, Eric. "Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources, and Growth in Young Adulthood." *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 01 (2002): 41-56.

- Popkin, Samuel L. "Information Shortcuts and the Reasoning Voter." *Information, participation and choice: An economic theory of democracy in perspective* (1995): 17-35.
- Popkin, Samuel L. *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*. University of Chicago Press, 1991, 1994.
- Price, Vincent, and John Zaller. "Who gets the news? Alternative measures of news reception and their implications for research." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (1993): 133-164.
- Raudenbush, Stephen W. "Statistical Analysis and Optimal Design for Cluster Randomized Trials." *Psychological Methods* 2, no. 2 (1997): 173-85.
- Ridout, Travis N., D.V. Shah, K.M. Goldstein, and M.M. Franz. "Evaluating Measures of Campaign Advertising Exposure on Political Learning." *Political Behavior* 26, no. 3 (2004): 201-25.
- Rosenstone, Steven and John M. Hansen. *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America*: Macmillan, 1993.
- Sandell, Julianna, and Eric Plutzer. "Families, Divorce and Voter Turnout in the Us." *Political Behavior* 27, no. 2 (2005): 133-62.
- Shaw, Daron R. "A Study of Presidential Campaign Event Effects from 1952 to 1992." *The Journal of Politics* 61, no. 02 (1999): 387-422.
- Streb, Matthew, ed. *Running for judge: The rising political, financial, and legal stakes of judicial elections*. NYU Press, 2007.
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Hutchings, Vincent L. and Ismail K. White. "Cues That Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns." *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 01 (2002): 75-90.
- Zaller, John. "The myth of massive media impact revived: New support for a discredited idea." *Political persuasion and attitude change* (1996): 17-78.
- Zaller, John. (1992). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.