

# **Intensive Spanish-Language Youth GOTV: Voter Mobilization prior to the 2018 Midterm Elections**

## **PRE-ANALYSIS PLAN**

November 5, 2018

### **Introduction**

It is often argued that low turnout in this group reflects a vicious circle: political campaigns are often unwilling to spend resources to reach out to people who are very unlikely to vote, and this inattention leaves these voters disengaged. The aim of this study is to demonstrate the extent to which same-language mobilization efforts can break this cycle by promoting substantially higher turnout. We work with a group of Spanish-speaking students to reach out to likely Spanish-speaking voters, in the hopes of increasing their turnout on November 6<sup>th</sup> 2018.

### **Hypotheses**

The principal hypothesis is that those randomly targeted for same-language mobilization will vote at higher rates than their control group counterparts.

We also will follow-up on the groups that were randomized in previous elections to see if there are enduring effects.

In order to assess spillover effects, we will assess the voter turnout of others living at targeted addresses relative to the control group.

### **Sample**

Experiments are conducted in the following locations.

- San Mateo County, California

After receiving the voter file for San Mateo County, California, we conducted a match of surnames to identify likely Spanish-speaking voters by sub setting the dataset to include only those who requested Spanish language voting materials. We then extracted only those individuals who included phone numbers in their voter data. We identified which numbers were likely cell phone numbers by using a number validation service. This left us with about 1,888 individuals who had both cell phone numbers and requested Spanish language materials.

We selected another 180 to assign to our treatment group, while the other 1,708 were left to the control group.

### **Intervention**

The outreach efforts include 18 research assistants who are Spanish-speaking. Each assistant received a random set of 10 individuals selected into the treatment group. Each assistant was instructed to reach out to each individual via text messaging in Spanish. These messages were designed to mobilize these individuals to vote in the November 6<sup>th</sup> 2018 elections.

### **Data and Outcome Measures**

Voter turnout will be assessed by obtaining updated voter files and calculating turnout rates for the randomly assigned treatment and control groups.

### **Method for Estimating Average Treatment Effects**

We will report 95% confidence intervals for the average treatment effect, using a margin of error equal to the estimated standard error multiplied by the appropriate critical value from the  $t$ -distribution. This estimate will be generated by regressing turnout on treatment assignment, using the covariates listed below to generate more precise estimates.

To assess robustness, we will also report a simple regression result with only block and treatment indicator, omitting prior turnout statistics. We expect these results to be similar but less precisely estimated due to the exclusion of prognostic covariates. When interpreting the results, we will rely primarily on the covariate-adjusted estimates.

### **Covariates to use in Regression Adjustment**

We plan to include several covariates in our estimation in order to produce a more precise estimate of the treatment effect of election festivals. These covariates will be age as well as lagged versions of our dependent variables. We will include as covariates:

- Voter turnout in the 2016 and 2017 elections.