

**Intensive Latinx Youth GOTV:
Voter Mobilization prior to the 2018 Midterm Elections**

PRE-ANALYSIS PLAN

November 5, 2018

Introduction

Latinx voters 18-23 years of age are often characterized as low-propensity voters; in federal midterm elections, it is not unusual for registered voters in this demographic group to turnout at rates under 10%. 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 intensive mobilization efforts can break this cycle by promoting substantially higher turnout.

Hypotheses

The principal hypothesis is that those randomly targeted for intensive 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.

- NYC (Washington Heights, Harlem, other neighborhoods in northern Manhattan and South Bronx)
- Redwood City, CA
- Gainesville, FL
- Dallas, TX
- Houston, TX (maybe)

In each location, the coordinator of that site obtained a voter file, identified likely Latinx voters using a model based on last names and Census information, and then restricted the sample to those 18-23 years of age. Treatment groups of 10 to 20 people (depending on the site coordinator's capacity for outreach) were randomly selected as the treatment group.

Intervention

The outreach effort varied somewhat by site but basically consists of the following elements: (1) an initial handwritten letter/postcard that introduced the canvasser (and gave contact information) and emphasized the importance of the election, (2) a visit to the target voter's address, culminating in either a conversation about the importance of the election, communication with friends or relatives, or a note saying that the canvasser had visited, and (3) follow-up text messages or calls.

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

Since the experiment is blocked by location with somewhat different probabilities of assignment, our regression models will include indicator variables for each block in the hopes of reducing disturbance variability.

We will report 95% confidence intervals for the intent-to-treat 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. We will also estimate the CACE using instrumental variables regression of turnout on (any form of) contact, with random assignment to treatment as an instrument.

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

Consistent with the Green Lab SOP, we plan to include several covariates in our estimation in order to produce a more precise estimate of the treatment effect of intensive GOTV efforts. These covariates will be age as well as lagged versions of our dependent variables. We will include as covariates:

- Voter turnout in the 2016, 2017, and 2018 (primary) (where applicable) elections.

Heterogeneous Treatment Effects and Additional Analyses

Although the study is not well powered to compare site-level effects, we nevertheless intend to explore the possibility that intensive mobilization is more effective (1) where people can vote early and (2) in locations where there are closely contested elections (e.g., Texas).

Default Procedures for Decisions Not Explicitly Specified

For any decisions not explicitly specified in this pre-analysis plan, we plan to follow the "standard operating procedure" document of Donald P. Green's research group (version 1.05, June 7, 2016), which can be found on [GitHub](#).